

**North Hertfordshire
Local Plan
2011-2031
Preferred Options**

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Preface

[To be added]

Councillor David Levett
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enterprise

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The need for development is significant. Like much of southern England, North Hertfordshire is experiencing shortages of enough development, especially housing, to meet the needs of the population. The Council needs a Local Plan to try and ensure that these needs are met in the most sensible and sustainable way. All development has impacts, both positive and negative. Having a plan to guide development ensures that the impacts of development can be properly assessed. This allows mitigation measures and supporting infrastructure to be put in place.
- 1.2 This plan caters for growth of an additional 14,200 dwellings over the period 2011-2031, representing a 26% increase in the number of dwellings. The plan also encourages growth of 3,600 additional jobs. Sites are identified for this growth. The plan also sets out policies on town centres, retail, open space, design, parking and a range of other policies which will be used to determine planning applications.
- 1.3 This is a preferred options draft of the Local Plan, prepared under regulation 18 of the Local Planning Regulations. It is not the final version of the plan. After considering the responses to this plan the Council will publish a proposed submission draft of the plan, which will be the last opportunity for people to comment. A Government appointed inspector will then conduct an examination to see if the plan is legally compliant and sound. The Council will only be allowed to adopt the plan if the inspector finds the plan sound.

Evidence Base

- 1.4 This plan has been informed by extensive background research and information gathering. This includes a range of background papers including those focussed on housing needs, transport, infrastructure and economic development. A 'Sustainability Appraisal' has also been undertaken and this looks at the economic, environmental and social impacts of the Local Plan. The full range of background documents can be found on the Council's website at: www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan
- 1.5 Each evidence base document should be read in conjunction with all other studies, which have all been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan preferred options paper. Collectively these studies have informed the site selection process. An overview of the conclusions can be found in the Site Selection Matrix.

How to make your comments

- 1.6 This Local Plan Preferred Options consultation document, together with the background papers, are all available on the website: www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan or hard copies can be viewed at the Council Offices.
- 1.7 In addition a copy of the Preferred Options Local Plan and the representation form is available to view at the Council Offices and in the following libraries:

Baldock, Hitchin, Knebworth, Letchworth Garden City, Royston, Stevenage Central, Stevenage Old Town and Luton Central.

- 1.8 There are three ways in which you can comment on this Local Plan Preferred Options consultation document:
- Online:
- www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan
- By post to:
- Planning Policy
NHDC
PO Box 480
Sale
M33 0DE
- Or by email to:
- localplans@north-herts.gov.uk
- 1.9 A representation form is available on the website, at local libraries or on request.
- 1.10 The deadline for responses is **Friday 6th February 2015**.

2. Vision and Objectives

Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The Council's overall priorities for the plan are informed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which at paragraph 156 sets the strategic priorities that any local plan needs to consider.

Figure 1: NPPF paragraph 156 and Local Plan objectives

| NPPF paragraph 156: | Objectives for the Local Plan |
|---|---|
| Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver: | The Local Plan will: |
| - the homes and jobs needed in the area; | - identify locations for a range of types of homes, including affordable homes, to meet identified needs and provide adequate housing for the growing population; - provide opportunities for new and existing businesses to grow and thrive; |
| - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development; | - recognise the changing functions of the district's town centres and encourage them to be destinations for social, employment and leisure purposes as well as their traditional retail roles; - protect, promote and enhance village and neighbourhood centres, and provide for appropriate facilities in major new developments; |
| - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat); | - identify infrastructure to support new and existing communities and businesses and work with partners towards their delivery; |
| - the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and | - seek to ensure good access for residents to social and cultural infrastructure, including appropriate provision in major new developments; |
| - climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscapes. | - minimise the impacts of growth and development on the environment, climate emissions and natural resources, and use the opportunities provided to seek to enhance the wider environment. |

Spatial Strategy

- 2.2 This preferred options Local Plan takes forward a spatial strategy which distributes growth across the district, taking account of economic and environmental constraints but also opportunities provided by services and the location of new development.

- 2.3 The sustainability appraisal (SA/SEA) has played a key role in the identification of the preferred spatial strategy. Different spatial options have been considered as the Local Plan has developed which have been assessed against the key sustainability criteria to help identify which options are the most sustainable for North Hertfordshire. Assessment of the different elements of the spatial strategy has contributed to the overarching approach chosen, including the use of Green Belt. A summary of this process is contained in Appendix 4 of the SA/SEA¹.
- 2.4 New housing development is identified in and adjoining all towns, and in villages with an appropriate range of facilities.
- 2.5 New employment land is identified in locations adjoining existing employment areas and complementing new housing, seeking to deliver a better balance between housing and jobs.
- 2.6 New retail development will be delivered through the filling of vacant shops in the short term and the review of town centre strategies and within urban extensions in the longer term, with a view to continue to maintain the district's market share.
- 2.7 The levels of growth required in North Hertfordshire and lack of suitable brownfield sites or sites within settlement areas mean that it is not possible to accommodate all the identified housing and employment needs in sustainable locations outside of the Green Belt. Therefore as a result of these exceptional circumstances a review of the Green Belt has taken place as part of this local plan to accommodate the identified levels of growth.

Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which is described as having three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Development therefore needs to support the local economy, provide social benefits in the form of new homes and community facilities and protect and enhance the natural and built environment. The principles of sustainable development will be taken into account when considering applications for new development in accordance with the following policy.

Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

¹ SA/SEA of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Preferred Options (CAG Consulting, November 2014)

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

1. any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole;
or
2. specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

3. Economy & Town Centres

- 3.1 The Council is preparing an economic development strategy to positively and proactively encourage sustainable economic growth. It states that the Council will support new and existing businesses to deliver sustainable, smart economic growth by encouraging entrepreneurship and seeking to build on the district's strengths, location and offer.
- 3.2 The Council wants to see sustainable economic growth within North Hertfordshire, with skills, housing and economic development being appropriately balanced. This will be done in part through influencing and working with other partners and through delivery of the Council's own economic development plans and projects.
- 3.3 North Hertfordshire District Council is a member of both the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP. This reflects its location and the varying economic influences on the district's settlements and rural area. Both LEPs will be important stakeholders regarding how the North Hertfordshire economy grows and develops in the future. In particular the Hertfordshire LEP is seeking to regain the county's competitive edge by encouraging increased employment growth and enterprise.
- 3.4 Compared to national averages there is a higher concentration of people employed in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, retail, motor trades, property, entertainment and recreation in North Hertfordshire. These are not particularly highly skilled in nature and many higher skilled residents commute out of the district for employment. Nonetheless sectors such as science, finance and insurance and information and communication make a substantial contribution to the district's overall economic output, although not employing a huge number of people. These represent opportunities for future expansion and development.
- 3.5 The district's town centres are the economic drivers and provide key sources of employment and economic activity. They remain a corporate focus and provide a number of opportunities for economic activity in the future.
- 3.6 This chapter addresses three main subjects:
- the requirement for additional, appropriate employment;
 - the protection of centres; and
 - the requirement for additional retail floorspace.

Policy ETC1: Provision and distribution of employment land

- 3.7 For a prosperous local economy, particularly when there are changes in the economic climate, the Local Plan must ensure that there is enough well-located employment land to support existing and future businesses and jobs.

- 3.8 The Council has undertaken an Employment Land Review (ELR)², which has been most recently updated in 2013. The 2013 update has sought to derive employment figures using the East of England Forecasting model to provide an integrated approach to housing, population and the economy.
- 3.9 The baseline run of the East of England Forecasting Model provides a potential job figure of 3,600 up to 2031, recognising that a large proportion of the workforce commute out of the district. Due to the good levels of connectivity to other centres of employment, such as Stevenage, Welwyn Hatfield, and London it is unlikely that all the extra economically active population will take up jobs in the district. In 2011, over a quarter of the district's working population worked in these three employment centres, and another quarter worked elsewhere outside the district³. The East of England Forecasting Model identifies an increase in out-commuting in the district over the plan period, however, through an increase in support for skilled jobs and businesses the Council will seek to provide the opportunity for skilled workers to work locally reducing the level of out-commuting.
- 3.10 Employment development should be located in combination with housing growth to promote sustainable patterns of development and access by non-car modes. As set out elsewhere in this Local Plan housing growth will be taking place within the four main settlements of the district namely Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston as well as at additional strategic sites adjoining Stevenage and Luton, therefore, existing employment land will be safeguarded and additional employment land will be required in a number of these locations. In addition the Employment Land Review has identified that there is evidence of a steady demand for rural employment land and premises, however, owing to the size and extensive spread of rural settlements these types of development are best dealt with on a case by case basis rather than through allocations. There are however quite sizeable employment sites in villages such as Codicote, Ashwell, Weston and Kimpton, which provide rural jobs and should be protected.
- 3.11 The settlements of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock are very close together. They are only separated by small areas of Green Belt. There is a significant amount of commuting within the Hitchin/Letchworth Garden City/Baldock area, but in comparison with Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City, Baldock has a relatively low amount of employment land per person. With the proposed increase in residential development and recent loss of existing employment land at Baldock and proposed losses in Letchworth, increasing employment provision at Baldock is considered a sustainable approach. Over the plan period this should reduce commuting that occurs within the district redressing the employment balance.
- 3.12 Additional land is also safeguarded in Baldock to take account of the long term needs which may arise within the functional economic market area (FEMA). The Council's and Stevenage's employment modelling predicts a potential shortfall of employment land in the Stevenage area. These models assume continued commuting growth from North Hertfordshire residents to Stevenage, yet there is insufficient land in Stevenage to cater for such

² *Employment Land Review Part 1* (Bone Wells, Feb 2006); *Employment Land Review Part 2* (Bone Wells, Nov 2006); *Employment Land Review Update* (Bone Wells, Aug 2009); and *Employment Land Review Update* (Bone Wells, Mar 2011)

³ Annual population Survey (ONS, 2010-2011)

growth. It therefore seems more sustainable to provide for this employment growth at Baldock.

- 3.13 Royston is somewhat separate from the Hitchin / Letchworth Garden City / Baldock area, in geographical terms and in employment and labour market terms. The Royston economy is influenced by both Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire economies and as such the employment area has a low vacancy rate. The allocation of further employment land in this location is also considered a sustainable approach to enable flexibility in the long term, especially in conjunction with the additional residential growth allocated to this area.
- 3.14 Only a certain proportion of jobs are located in employment areas and fall within the B use classes (B1 business, B2 general industrial, B8 distribution and warehousing). The rest of the jobs in the local economy consist of 'services' such as: retail, health, education and leisure, amongst others. Therefore, when making provision for jobs and employment land, any additional land to be allocated will only be for jobs falling into the B use classes. Studies have estimated that approximately 45% of all jobs fall into the B uses classes.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC1: Provision and distribution of employment

The Council will bring forward or safeguard an adequate supply and range of employment land in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston to meet the requirements of the local economy over the plan period to 2031. The Proposals Map designates appropriate employment areas to enhance and safeguard employment potential. Additional employment land is identified at the former Power Station, Letchworth Garden City (1.5ha); east of Baldock (8ha); and west of Royston (10.9ha).

Through the master planning process in major new developments the Council will work with landowners and developers, and (for developments on the edge of the district) adjoining authorities, to identify an appropriate amount of employment land to be included.

The Council will regularly monitor employment floorspace and the creation of jobs. Should monitoring show that there is an under-provision of employment which is harming the local economy, the Council may bring forward some of the safeguarded land identified on the Proposals Maps during the plan period.

Policy ETC2: Promoting the knowledge economy

- 3.15 North Hertfordshire is not performing as well as some other districts in Hertfordshire with regard to the knowledge economy. It has a higher than average percentage of workers in the least knowledge-intensive industries, and a lower than average percentage in the most knowledge-intensive industries. The weekly average earnings in North Hertfordshire are below the county average; however the residence-based weekly average earnings are higher in North Hertfordshire than any other district in Hertfordshire (ONS, 2013). The skill levels are also higher than the county average. This indicates that many skilled residents are commuting out of the district to work.

- 3.16 In partnership with key stakeholders such as the Hertfordshire and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), UK Trade and Investment, Job Centre Plus, North Hertfordshire College and the University of Hertfordshire, the Council wants to increase the number of highly skilled jobs in the district. This will be done through targeting priority economic growth sectors which are knowledge-intensive, such as research and development (R&D), life sciences, advanced manufacturing computer related activities, and other business activities in combination with growth of the low-carbon economy. With other stakeholders, the Council will:
- encourage business start-ups in the knowledge economy;
 - help develop existing local businesses in the knowledge economy;
 - target knowledge based businesses into North Herts; and
 - promote the take up of any new jobs by local people by promoting specific training and targeting recruitment at local residents.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC2: Promoting the knowledge economy

The Council will promote and support the expansion of the knowledge based economy in the district. It will be supportive of proposals for the redevelopment of existing employment sites and the development of new allocated employment sites which increase the level of knowledge-intensive employment.

Policy ETC3: Appropriate uses in employment areas

- 3.17 Within the four main towns there are a number of established employment areas, where the majority of employment-generating premises are located. They include B1 business, B2 general industrial and B8 storage and distribution uses. They are well-established areas and are a valuable resource to the district.
- 3.18 In order to maintain an adequate level of employment land to meet the needs of the local economy, the Council wants to protect defined employment areas from uses which would be better located in other areas of the district. The Council does not wish to inhibit the ability of existing firms to expand. It will be supportive of the redevelopment of sites which would lead to an improvement in the quality of employment floorspace suited to modern day needs.
- 3.19 However, the Council recognises that employment areas are often sought after locations for a number of uses other than those in Use Class B. Whilst the Council will seek to retain designated employment areas for uses within Use Class B, it is recognised that there is a need for some flexibility to meet the needs of uses such as: tyre and exhaust centres, trade wholesalers, vehicle hire, plant hire, motor trade uses and taxi vehicle depots. These are often partial B uses, combining a retail element with a predominantly business, industrial or storage use, or are *sui generis*⁴. These uses tend to cause conflict in other parts of the towns, such as town centres or residential areas as a result of impacts on residential amenity.

⁴ 'Sui generis' is a term used to mean any use which does not fall within the use classes defined in the Use Classes Order.

- 3.20 Some of these uses which involve an element of retailing may be acceptable if the retail is clearly ancillary to the primary use, and mainly for trade as opposed to the general public. In appropriate cases, conditions will be imposed on planning permissions to prevent the loss of employment as the primary use.
- 3.21 Proposals for retail and leisure uses in the designated employment areas will also need to demonstrate that they accord with the sequential and impact assessment (if necessary) as set out in the NPPF.
- 3.22 Motor vehicle premises usually include a mixture of sales and repairs. The sale of motor vehicles is a *sui generis* use which tends to provide lower density employment than normally expected in an employment area. The Council considers that within employment areas it is appropriate to restrict the amount of the retail sales element on larger developments in order to protect the availability of, and maximise the use of, employment land. In addition, in order to prevent the change of use of buildings to Class A1 (shops) a condition will be imposed on any grant of permission removing permitted development rights. These considerations apply to the sale of all types of vehicles.
- 3.23 In situations where it can be clearly demonstrated that existing land or premises are no longer required to meet future employment requirements and business and community needs, the Council may in exceptional cases, grant planning permission for other, non B, uses having regard to market signals and relative need for different land uses in line with the NPPF.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC3: Appropriate uses in employment areas

A. Employment uses in employment areas

In allocated employment areas development proposals for B1, B2 or B8 uses will be permitted subject to other relevant policies in the Local Plan. Proposals for Class B8 development must be easily accessible from the primary road network. Within those parts of the employment areas designated for business use only, the Council will resist proposals for employment uses other than B1. Employment areas and business use only areas are identified on the Proposals Map.

B. Other uses in employment areas

There will be a presumption against the loss of existing employment land and premises (B1/B2/B8) in the allocated employment areas, as well as a presumption against any new development proposals which are not in these use classes.

Development proposals which are partly B class uses, or which are *sui generis*, such as: tyre and exhaust centres, trade wholesalers, vehicle hire, plant hire, taxi vehicle depots, motor trade uses and other uses, will be assessed on their merits. When assessing such proposals, the Council will give consideration to:

1. employment generation on site;
2. impact on relevant town centres;
3. where appropriate, the level and type of retail involved on the site;
4. any potential benefits to the community or surrounding businesses from the proposed use;
5. the proportion of the site to be used for sales and display as opposed

- to repairs and servicing, in the case of motor trade uses; and
6. accessibility by non car modes of transport.

In addition to the bullet points above, and in line with the NPPF, the Council will permit proposals for other non-employment uses not mentioned so far, where it can be clearly demonstrated (through marketing information, feasibility and viability studies) that:

- a. the land or premises is no longer required to meet future employment needs of the district; and
- b. the land or premises is inappropriate or unfeasible for employment use, based on market conditions or amenity problems; and
- c. it would be accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and those travelling by passenger transport; and
- d. no other suitable sites outside designated employment areas are viable and available.

For non-B uses, the Council will consider applying conditions restricting the use of the site to the specific use permitted.

In all cases where permission is granted for employment uses travel plans will need to be implemented.

Policy ETC4: Employment development outside employment areas

- 3.24 There are a number of employment sites across the district that are outside the designated employment areas but which provide sources of local employment and services. These are in other parts of the main towns including town centres, in villages, and sometimes within the countryside as part of the re-use or redevelopment of agricultural buildings. Some have been there for a long time, and may not be in the most appropriate location, while others exist perfectly well adjacent to other uses such as residential.
- 3.25 These sites are often small scale, although there are larger office developments in Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City town centres for example. The retention of dispersed employment sites can be important for their contribution to sustainable development aims by reducing the need to travel for local residents, something which is advocated in the NPPF.
- 3.26 Business uses within town centres can add to the vitality and viability of centres. Office workers within a town centre will create more custom for shops and services. The Council is therefore generally supportive of new office development in town centres in accordance with the sequential test. Office development should be encouraged above ground floor retail. However, due to the constrained nature of the district's town centres, and the competition from other land uses, much of the new office development is likely to be within employment areas.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC4: Employment development outside employment areas

The Council will permit development proposals for employment uses outside of designated employment areas, where consistent with the principles of sustainable development and where there are no significant impacts on living conditions.

More significant developments will need to provide evidence that there are no more suitable and available sites within the existing employment areas.

The Council is supportive of B1 office developments in the four main town centres of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston, where they do not conflict with retail policies and proposals, or relevant aspects of adopted town centre strategies.

The Council will only permit the loss of existing employment uses, where it can be demonstrated that:

1. the land or premises is no longer required to meet future employment needs of the local community; and/or
2. the existing use has an adverse impact on the amenities of surrounding land uses; and/or
3. the existing use is detrimental to highway safety.

The Council will permit sustainable development proposals for farm and other land based diversification schemes that benefit the rural area. Proposals for the re-use or redevelopment of rural buildings for employment purposes will be subject to Policy CGB5: Existing Rural Buildings.

Policy ETC5: Tourism

- 3.27 Although North Hertfordshire is not a major tourist destination, the inclusion of a tourism policy reflects this sector's growing significance as a form of economic development, and its potential to diversify both urban and rural economies. There is a wide range of attractions in the district, particularly those based on heritage and the countryside. Some, such as Letchworth, the world's first Garden City, Royston Cave and the British Schools in Hitchin are unique, whilst Knebworth House and grounds is a major day visitor destination and venue for music events in the region.
- 3.28 Tourism can bring benefits to an area both directly as a source of employment and income for the local tourism industry, and indirectly through tourism expenditure (e.g. retail, catering, and accommodation). The three historic market towns of Hitchin, Baldock and Royston, along with Letchworth Garden City make North Hertfordshire attractive to visitors. Its rural area is also a place for people to visit, for tourism as well as leisure.
- 3.29 Tourism fulfils some of the aims of sustainable development because its survival depends upon conserving and maintaining the quality of the resources upon which it depends. Tourism provides an incentive and income to protect the built and natural environment, promoting these features for the enjoyment of local people and visitors, and enhancing local diversity and cultural traditions.
- 3.30 The Council supports proposals for new or extended tourist developments as a means to strengthen the local economy and increase visitors to the area in line with policies in the NPPF. To encourage sustainable forms of tourism, this policy prioritises the location of possible developments within urban areas in line with the sequential approach. Here, passenger transport can best be utilised and so limit associated traffic congestion. For rural proposals, the need is to protect the countryside for its own sake, with

aspects such as nature conservation, landscape and agricultural land in mind.

- 3.31 Hotels and guest houses provide for both business and tourist visitors. The Council considers that additional hotel bed-spaces should be encouraged in sustainable locations. The preferred locations for large hotels will be in town centres. Where there are no suitable sites, edge of town centre or other locations easily accessible by public transport may be considered. Small hotels and guest houses may be appropriate in residential areas of towns and in identified villages.
- 3.32 Tourism growth trends indicate that the demand for bed and breakfast accommodation will increase. It is likely that the regular use of even one or two rooms of a house for bed and breakfast accommodation will be a material change of use requiring planning permission. In the rural area the Council will be supportive of appropriately located facilities that support the rural economy and rural businesses and which respect the character of the countryside. The Council will weigh the degree to which proposals can be accessible by a variety of modes of transport with benefits to the rural economy and the potential of widening access to the countryside.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC5: Tourism

The Council supports development proposals which increase the attractiveness of the district as a tourist destination, or which improve visitor accommodation. It will permit proposals for sustainable tourist and visitor attractions, facilities and accommodation within town centres, outside of primary shopping frontages and other locations within settlements.

In the rural area proposals will need to provide evidence why they cannot be accommodated within existing settlements and how they will support the rural economy.

The Council will consider all development proposals in terms of:

1. the sustainability of the location, scale and extent of the development;
2. the expected level of activity;
3. the number of visitors;
4. the intensity of use; and
5. the impact on the highway network.

Policy ETC6: Town and Local Centres

- 3.33 The district contains a range of retail and service centres, from medium sized towns to small village and neighbourhood centres. Each one performs a particular role to meet the needs of its catchment population, and is part of network of centres within the district. The Council is committed to protecting the vitality and viability of all centres. This policy is needed to show what the different centres are, and where they sit within the network of centres across the district.
- 3.34 The district lies within complex shopping catchment areas, which include Cambridge as a regional centre and Bedford, Luton, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City as major town centres. The district itself has four town centres: Hitchin is the largest, followed by Letchworth Garden City and then the smaller town centres of Royston and Baldock. There are also a number of

local village and neighbourhood centres. The potential growth of the district may require additional centres to be provided to serve any development.

- 3.35 The Council is committed to promoting the well-being of the four town centres in the district. It has produced town centre strategies for Hitchin, Baldock, Letchworth Garden City, and Royston. The strategies are tools to promote the vitality and viability of the centres and cover all those aspects of policy guidance with a spatial dimension relevant to town centres, including economic, environmental and social well-being and matters such as community safety, community facilities, traffic management, marketing and delivery. The strategies provide a method of keeping town centre development up-to-date and flexible to take account of ongoing changes in the retail environment.
- 3.36 The village centres of Ashwell, Codicote and Knebworth, and the suburban neighbourhood centres in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Great Ashby comprise the district's local centres. There are also a number of rural settlements in the district which contain a single, or a very small number of shops or services. For example, as at December 2013, there were twelve other settlements which had a shop.
- 3.37 The village centres of Codicote and Knebworth are large enough to provide a focus for the communities local to them and a range of everyday shopping facilities and services. The village centre of Ashwell contains a more limited range of shops and services, and is more fragmented than Codicote and Knebworth's village centres. However, Ashwell still has enough shops, services and facilities to have a designated centre, unlike many other small settlements in the district. The suburban neighbourhood centres in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Great Ashby vary considerably, in terms of size, range of shops and services and catchment area. However, they are all worthy of a level of protection. The Council wants to improve and protect the district's centres, reduce the need for unnecessary travel to alternative facilities and ensure that the proportion of expenditure going outside the district does not increase.
- 3.38 Retail and other main town centre uses within North Hertfordshire as part of the potential strategic growth may provide further district or neighbourhood centres, which will be incorporated into this policy.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC6: Town and local centres

The Council will promote, protect and enhance the retail and service functions of the following centres:

The town centres as shown on the Proposals Map:

- Hitchin
- Letchworth Garden City
- Baldock
- Royston

The local centres as shown in Chapter 12:

Village centres

- Ashwell
- Codicote
- Knebworth

Neighbourhood centres in Hitchin:

- Grove Road
- Nightingale Road
- Ninesprings
- Redhill Road
- Walsworth Road
- Walsworth (Cambridge Road)
- Westmill (John Barker Place)

Neighbourhood centres in Letchworth Garden City:

- Grange (Southfields)
- Jackmans (Ivel Court)

Neighbourhood centres elsewhere:

- Great Ashby

The Council will also identify any new centres associated with the sites being master planned under policy ID2: Masterplans.

Proposals in town and local centres must also be appropriate to the size, scale, function, catchment area, historic and architectural character of the centre.

Policy ETC7: Additional retail floorspace

- 3.39 The NPPF says that local authorities should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of town centre uses needed in town centres and that it is important that need for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability.
- 3.40 In assessing where new main town centre uses, including retail development, should go, the Council must consider policy in the NPPF which sets specific sequential and impact tests for town centre uses. The Council will also consider:
- the availability of sites in the centres;
 - the requirements of retailers;
 - the likelihood that retailers would move into a particular centre;
 - any identified gaps in the range and type of retailing and services represented in a centre; and
 - that the scale of new retail development should relate to the role and function of the centre within the retail hierarchy.
- 3.41 The Council's figures for additional retail floorspace have most recently been updated as part of the *Town Centre and Retail Study Update* (Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners (NLP), 2014) to look at floorspace implications of the preferred spatial strategy associated with the housing target of 12,100 for North Hertfordshire's own needs and 2,100 dwellings as an allowance at land to the east of Luton. The figures are based on forecast increases in population and consumer expenditure and the district maintaining its current share of the available consumer spending. The NLP study found that 52% of the available comparison goods spending was being spent outside of the district.

- 3.42 The Town Centre and Retail Study Update (2014) forecasts a need for an additional 6,360m² of town centre floorspace up to 2021 and 28,440m² up to 2031. The delivery of additional retail floorspace requires the Council to work with a variety of interests, including retailers, traders, landowners and developers. The Council has been actively involved in negotiations with such parties both in preparing town centre strategies and in ongoing project work.
- 3.43 In the first instance filling vacant shops will be the priority as this could account for 12,190m² of the required additional floorspace meeting the districts retail needs up to and beyond 2021.
- 3.44 From 2021 town centre strategies will help review the amount and location of future development, in order to meet these requirements and promote the retail hierarchy, as set out in Policy ETC6: Town and local centres. The Council will review town centre strategies to identify potential sites in Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston for the latter part of the plan period. For Baldock the urban extension North of Baldock will provide additional retail floorspace to meet the long term needs of the town.
- 3.45 For the urban extensions within North Hertfordshire but adjoining towns outside the district the Council will work with adjoining authorities to identify the additional provision required in these areas. The provision of new local centres within urban extensions could make a contribution towards meeting the longer term retail floorspace projections as well; however this will need to be kept under review.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC7: Additional retail floorspace

The main focus for new additional floorspace will be the four town centres, maintaining the district's current hierarchy and market share between centres. The identified additional need in gross floorspace is as follows:

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Comparison goods (e.g. clothes, shoes, furniture, carpets) | 17,500m ² |
| Convenience (e.g. food, drink, toiletries) | 6,200m ² |
| Other town centre uses | 4,740m ² |
| Total | 28,440m² |

The Council will keep under review the likely levels of retail floorspace required for the period 2021 to 2031 through the preparation of town centre strategies.

Through the master planning process in major new developments the Council will work with landowners and developers, and (for developments on the edge of the district) with adjoining authorities, to identify an appropriate amount of additional retail floorspace to be included in these developments.

- North of Stevenage
- West of Stevenage
- East of Luton
- Blackhorse Farm, North of Baldock

Policy ETC8: New retail, leisure and other town centre development

- 3.46 The *Town Centre and Retail Study* (2009, 2011, 2013, 2014), amongst other things, assesses the need for additional retail and commercial leisure

floorspace in the district. The Local Plan needs to show how the Council will deal with planning applications for new retail, leisure and other town centre development when they come forward.

- 3.47 With regard to the location for new retail, leisure and other town centre development (as defined in the NPPF), the Council will adopt the 'sequential approach' as set out in the NPPF. This states for retail that the first preference should be for town, district or local centre sites, where suitable sites are available, followed by edge-of-centre sites, and only then out-of-centre sites. With regard to edge-of-centre and out-of-centre, locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport and well connected to the town should be a preference.
- 3.48 The NPPF states that local authorities should define areas within their town centres as primary shopping areas. These areas comprise the parts of the town centre where retail development is concentrated. It is the primary shopping areas of the town centres which are the preferred location for new retail development. According to the NPPF, the primary shopping area should contain the primary shopping frontages and those secondary shopping frontages adjacent and closely related to the primary shopping frontages.
- 3.49 The district has a number of local scale leisure facilities such as leisure centres and swimming pools. However the provision of large scale leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities within the district is limited but this reflects the size of its catchment and the fact that residents also have good access to facilities in neighbouring towns such as Stevenage, Luton and Cambridge. The district's location within the catchment area of these larger centres will limit the potential for further commercial leisure and entertainment facilities. Nevertheless, the first preference for the location of leisure facilities encompasses a wider area than retail as leisure uses should not be re-directed from the wider town centre areas to the primary shopping area. Therefore, the first preference for leisure facilities includes both the primary shopping area and wider town centre area.
- 3.50 With regard to retail use, the edge of centre is generally taken to mean up to 300m from the primary shopping frontage. For other main town centre uses, edge of centre means up to 300m from the town centre boundary as defined in the NPPF.
- 3.51 The issue of scattered shops is dealt with specifically by Policy ETC11.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC8: New retail, leisure and other town centre development

The Council will apply a sequential approach to sites for retail, leisure and other town centre uses (as set out in the NPPF).

Retail uses will be considered in the following order of preference:

1. within the primary or secondary shopping frontages of town centres, on allocated sites within town centres, or in local centres;
2. other parts of the town centres;
3. the edge of centres; and
4. out of centre, only where there are no available, suitable and viable sites which are sequentially preferable.

For leisure and other town centre uses the test will start at number 2 in the list above.

Proposals for main town centre uses in town and local centres must be appropriate to the size, scale, function, catchment area, historic and architectural character of the centre. Proposals of over 500m² gross will not generally be suitable in local centres.

Retail, leisure and office proposals on sites outside the town centres not in accordance with the development plan, where 500m² and above⁵, must also be assessed against the impact considerations set out in the NPPF before planning permission will be granted.

New build retail proposals will also be expected to contain a mix of uses.

Planning permission will be refused for development which would cause unacceptable harm to the vitality or viability of a designated centre.

Within primary shopping frontages, the preferred location for residential, leisure and other town centre uses will be at upper floor levels.

Policy ETC9: Primary and secondary shopping frontages

- 3.52 The Council wants to ensure that the town centres maintain their primary retail function whilst increasing their diversity with a range of complementary uses, promoting competitive, flexible town centre environments. The concept of shopping as a leisure activity supports the encouragement of uses which increases the vitality throughout the day, extending the range of services for local people throughout the day and into the evening. The main function of the primary shopping area is retail, but town centres in general need a variety of other services such as banks, restaurants, pubs and personal services, which add interest and vitality and extend the use of the centres into the evening.
- 3.53 The Council monitors all retail units within the four main town centres on an annual basis, as well as those in the local centres. There is evidence in some centres that shop (A1 use class) units are being lost to non-shop uses in the core shopping areas. Therefore, the Council has identified Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages within the town centres. These have been identified based on the existing uses and functions within the centres and evidence in the Town Centre and Retail Study Update (2013). The Primary Shopping Frontages have a high proportion of retail uses, while the secondary shopping frontages have a greater diversity of uses. Different levels of protection will be given to retail uses in the primary and secondary shopping frontages.
- 3.54 Within Primary Frontages the Council wishes to retain the attractiveness of the essential and continuous shopping cores of its town centres; only retail (A1) will generally be permitted here. Exceptionally the addition of a restaurant (A3) or similar use within this core may add to its attractiveness.

⁵ North Hertfordshire Town Centre and Retail Study Update (NLP, 2011)

Evidence in the form of predicted footfall, opening times and linked trips will be expected to accompany any application for non-A1 uses.

- 3.55 For Secondary Frontages the policy is more flexible, controlling alternative uses to retail and eating and drinking places (A1, A3 and A4) based on their contribution to vitality and viability and their ability to attract people to the centre. Similarly evidence in the form of predicted footfall, opening times and linked trips will be expected as evidence to accompany any application.
- 3.56 Where a shop unit has been vacant for an extended period of time and documentary evidence has provided that all reasonable attempts to sell or let the premises for similar uses have failed, the Council will only permit the loss of a unit if the proposed use adds to the vitality and viability of the centre, it would not diminish the provision of local shopping facilities and the proposed use is in the public interest.
- 3.57 Too many non A1 uses can create 'dead frontages' (units not normally open during normal shopping hours or which attract relatively few customers), reduce the interest and attraction of the primary shopping area, and harm the retail function. This is particularly a problem where there are a number of units in a row which are not shops.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC9: Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages

The Council will support a mixture of uses in North Hertfordshire's town centres to promote vitality and viability and meet the needs of all users of the town centres. Different controls will apply in primary and secondary shopping areas to promote an appropriate balance.

Primary Shopping Frontages

In Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston town centres designated primary shopping frontages are shown on the Proposals Map. There will be a strong presumption against the loss of ground floor retail units within the primary shopping frontages. Within these areas, ground floor units should remain predominately in shop (A1 use class) use, unless, exceptionally a restaurant (A3) or similar use is demonstrated as being acceptable, by being essential to promote the vitality and viability of that part of the town centre. Any proposal will need to show that it does not undermine the retail function of the centre and will not disrupt the shopping pattern and will attract people to the centre, enhancing the centre's vitality and viability.

Secondary Shopping Frontages

In Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston town centres designated secondary shopping frontages are shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals for retail and restaurant / drinking places (A1, A3 or A4) will be acceptable in secondary shopping frontage. Other uses will only be permitted if they do not undermine the retail function of the centre and where the proposal will attract people to the centre, enhancing the centre's vitality and viability.

In secondary frontages, where planning permission is required, acceptable alternative uses at ground floor level will be confined to A2 (financial and professional services), A5 (takeaways), D1 (non-residential institutions), D2 (assembly and leisure).

Policy ETC10: Local centres

- 3.58 Local centres consist of village centres such as Codicote, Knebworth and Ashwell, and neighbourhood centres such as Walsworth (Hitchin), Jackmans (Letchworth Garden City) and Great Ashby. These centres vary in size from five units up to around twenty five units. Their composition also varies with some being almost all retail units, while others contain a mix of retail, food and drink and community facilities. The local centres are defined in Policy ETC6: Town and local centres.
- 3.59 The village centres of Codicote and Knebworth are large enough to provide a focus for the communities local to them and a range of everyday shopping facilities and services. This includes: convenience stores, post offices, hairdressers, dry cleaners and food and drink establishments.
- 3.60 The Council considers that it is important that the neighbourhood centres continue to provide a mix of shopping, services and community facilities, and in particular retail units. A predominance of shops is considered to be necessary to secure future viability of these centres. However, some non-retail uses may be appropriate in the centres where this does not harm the mainly retail function.
- 3.61 In all local centres, the Council wants to retain local facilities and at the same time prevent changes to non-retail uses that would be more appropriate in larger centres or employment areas.
- 3.62 Where a vacant shop premises is subject to a proposed change of use, then documentary evidence will be necessary to show that all reasonable attempts to sell or let it for use as a shop for a year or more have failed. If there are other vacant units in the centre this will also be taken into account.
- 3.63 The Council may consider other non-retail uses, such as surgeries or other community and leisure uses appropriate, if it can be demonstrated that they would meet a local community need.
- 3.64 The policy is trying to strike a balance between retaining the mainly shopping function of these centres and allowing some other uses to create diversity, where this would not be harmful to the vitality and viability of the centres. It also seeks to avoid over-concentration of non-shop (A1) uses within each centre. At the same time it seeks to avoid units in such centres remaining vacant for a long period of time, where there is no longer a demand for them for retail use.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC10: Local centres

In the local centres the Council supports the provision of shopping and service facilities for local people. The Council will only permit the loss of a shop (A1 use class) to use classes A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 or D2 in a local centre where:

1. the proposed use would add to the vitality and viability of the centre; and
2. it would not seriously diminish the provision of local shopping facilities.

Where the unit is vacant, and the proposal does not comply with the criteria above the Council will only permit the loss if it can be demonstrated that the

unit has remained vacant for a year or more, and documentary evidence has been provided that all reasonable attempts to sell or let the premises for similar uses in that period have failed.

The Council will only grant development proposals for a change of use from use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 or D2 at ground floor level, to residential or other use not listed above, in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated through documentary evidence that the proposal is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

Policy ETC11: Scattered local shops, services and facilities in towns and villages

- 3.65 Scattered local shops, services and other facilities in towns and rural areas provide residents with access to important goods and services. They also minimise the need to travel. The less mobile are particularly reliant on these facilities. They include such things as shops, post offices, pubs, petrol filling stations, community and health care facilities.
- 3.66 Given the high value of residential land in the rural area, there is often pressure from landowners to change the use or redevelop such facilities for residential purposes. This may be the case even where the business is thriving, if the return on a shop is less than can be gained from residential development.
- 3.67 *Manual for Streets* (Department for Transport, 2007) states that “Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes (up to about 800m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot”. Therefore, convenient walking, as set out in the policy, will be taken to be up to 800m.
- 3.68 These facilities should be protected wherever possible and the policy seeks to prevent their loss. However, where it can be shown such facilities are no longer needed and not viable, then permission may be granted for a change of use.
- 3.69 The provision of scattered shops and facilities, especially in the rural area, depends on a number of factors, including the number of people living nearby, the number of people working nearby and the relative accessibility of alternative facilities. However, in many parts of the district the high price of residential property is creating an additional pressure for the change of use of shops and facilities, especially where the freehold of the building is in a different ownership to the shop or facility.

Economy & Town Centres Policy ETC11: Scattered local shops, services and facilities in towns and villages

The Council will support small scale proposals providing new shops and services within existing settlements which serve a local need.

Development proposals which result in the loss of an individual shop, service or facility outside the town and local centres will not be permitted unless:

1. there is another shop, service or facility of a similar use available for customers within a convenient walking distance; and
2. the proposed new use would complement the function and character

of the area.

In the absence of such an alternative facility, the Council will only permit the loss if it can be demonstrated that the unit has remained vacant for a year or more, and documentary evidence has been provided that all reasonable attempts to sell or let the premises for similar uses in that period have failed.

4. Countryside and Green Belt

- 4.1 The policies in this chapter seek to promote sustainable development in the countryside as well as to positively protect the countryside from urban development, whilst allowing the needs of the rural population and economy to be met.
- 4.2 The vast majority of land in North Hertfordshire is countryside. Whilst nearly 77% of the district's homes are in the towns, the land area of the towns covers less than 7% of the district. The remainder is rural in some form – either designated as identified villages, Green Belt or rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Policy CGB1: Green Belt

- 4.3 Restraint on unsustainable development in rural areas is a well established policy in this area. The district previously had two areas of Green Belt – the London (Metropolitan) Green Belt which covers Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock, Stevenage and nearby areas, and the Luton Green Belt which covers parts of the west of the district. There are also rural areas beyond the Green Belt.
- 4.4 This Local Plan takes into consideration to the conclusions of the Green Belt Review 2014, parts 1 and 2. Due to the scale of Green Belt releases necessary to meet housing needs, particularly in the Stevenage, Hitchin and Luton area it is felt necessary to designate an additional area of Green Belt around Offley and Whitwell which was not previously Green Belt. This has the effect of linking the formerly separate Metropolitan and Luton Green Belts. This new area of Green Belt is intended to strengthen protection in the area of the district between Stevenage and Luton.

Countryside and Green Belt Policy CGB1: Green Belt

Development proposals will only be allowed in the Green Belt which the National Planning Policy Framework defines as appropriate.

Green Belt is reviewed at the locations referred to in Policy HDS1: Housing Targets, and in defining boundaries for villages referred to in Policy HDS 2: Settlement Hierarchy, which fall within the Green Belt and did not previously have boundaries defined.

The Green Belt review shows that new areas of Green Belt should be provided. The Green Belt, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be extended in general terms to cover the area bounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt to the east, the Luton Green Belt to the west and the A505 Offley bypass to the north to ensure longevity of Green Belt protection to Hitchin and that there is no overall reduction in the amount of Green Belt in the district.

Policy CGB2: Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt

- 4.5 In North Hertfordshire the rural area beyond the Green Belt covers the majority of the east of the district including most of the land between Baldock and Royston as well as the villages and countryside to the south of Royston. The Council considers that the rural areas beyond the Green Belt are of comparable importance to that of the Green Belt itself, with the only

difference being that they are not recognised for the purpose of maintaining the separation of existing towns and cities. As such restraint on inappropriate development is required as set out in the following policy.

Countryside and Green Belt Policy CGB2: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt.

In Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt, the Council will maintain the existing countryside and villages, and their character. Except in those settlements identified in Policy HDS2: Settlement Hierarchy, a development proposal will normally only be allowed if:

1. it is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture, forestry or a proven local need for community services;
2. it would meet an identified rural housing need, in compliance with Policy CGB3 'Exception Sites in the Rural Area';
3. it would provide appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries.

Policy CGB3: Exception sites in the rural area

- 4.6 The cost of housing in the district's villages is often higher than in the towns. As such, whilst there are problems of affordability across the district, they are most acute in the rural area. In the previous North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations 1996 the Council had a policy on allowing affordable housing to meet identified rural needs on sites where housing would not otherwise be allowed. However, housing is not the only form of development. On occasion, a need may be identified for other types of community facilities to meet rural needs which cannot be met within the existing built up area of the village.
- 4.7 This exception sites policy does not override other policies, notably relating to biodiversity and landscape. Where a need is identified there may therefore need to be some work to identify an appropriate site for the development.
- 4.8 The policy aims to continue the current policy of allowing affordable housing on exception sites, but extends its application to include community facilities where there is an identified need. It also takes account of the provisions of the NPPF for the cross subsidy of market housing with affordable housing in circumstances where an identified need for affordable housing could not otherwise be met. In these circumstances the Council may allow the provision of market housing where it can be shown that this would make the delivery of the required affordable housing viable, this should be demonstrated by the submission of viability evidence which will be independently tested at the cost of the applicant.
- 4.9 The Localism Act (2011) includes powers such as Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build, which may also be used to deliver development and facilities. The Council believes that it is still appropriate to have a planning policy allowing for exceptions in addition to these measures, as there may be instances where it is easier for such needs to be met through a planning application than via the examination and referendum route of the mechanisms set out in the Localism Act.

Countryside and Green Belt Policy CGB3: Exception sites in the rural area

Where the Council recognises proven local needs for affordable housing or community facilities which cannot be met within an identified settlement but would ordinarily be unacceptable in a rural area, that development may be provided in or adjoining the Category A, B and C villages listed in Policy HDS2, Settlement Hierarchy.

The Council will use legal agreements to ensure that such development is used to meet local needs in perpetuity.

The Council will also consider limited market housing to cross-subsidise affordable housing exception sites where it can be demonstrated that the level of market housing proposed is necessary in order to make the required affordable housing deliverable.

Policy CGB4: Rural Workers' Dwellings

- 4.10 The vast majority of land in North Hertfordshire remains rural and in productive agricultural use. Agriculture and other rural businesses underpin both the rural economy and the landscape character of the rural areas.
- 4.11 In order to sustain some rural businesses it is accepted that in some cases there may be a required need to have workers living in close proximity to a specific location or use. The issue of agricultural workers' dwellings is briefly considered at paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework. A functional need test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the functioning of the business for one or more workers to be available at the location of the business at all times.
- 4.12 A functional need will have to be established and capable of being sustained over a period of time. If a new dwelling is essential to support a rural business, it should, for the first three years be provided by temporary accommodation such as a caravan. Any temporary or permanent dwelling permitted will normally be restricted to the occupancy of a worker associated with the business.
- 4.13 The Council will consider the history of the business and land holding to establish the recent pattern of use of the land and buildings and whether, for example, any dwellings, or buildings suitable for conversion to dwellings, have recently been sold separately from the land holding concerned. Such a sale could constitute evidence of a lack of need.
- 4.14 Where dwellings are granted subject to agricultural occupancy conditions, this is generally because permission would not otherwise have been granted. Therefore, the removal of such conditions gives rise to dwellings in locations which may potentially undermine policies of restricting new dwellings in the countryside.
- 4.15 The policy therefore deals with two specific areas. First, the circumstances in which a rural worker's dwelling may be accepted and the criteria that will apply. Secondly, it limits the circumstances in which agricultural occupancy conditions will be removed.

Countryside and Green Belt Policy CGB4: Rural Workers' Dwellings

New dwellings will be allowed to support existing agricultural, forestry and other rural businesses, where:

1. There is a clearly established existing functional need;
2. The unit and the rural business concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and should remain so; and
3. The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned.

Where agricultural occupancy conditions have been imposed upon a dwelling, permission will only be granted for the removal of those conditions where the circumstances which led to the granting of the permission subject to the occupancy condition have significantly changed and where there is clear evidence that there is no need in the locality for an agricultural worker's dwelling.

Policy CGB5: Existing Rural buildings

- 4.16 North Hertfordshire has a large number of rural buildings. The traditional houses in the rural area tend to be small cottages which would have been occupied by agricultural labourers. Many of the other rural buildings are barns and agricultural buildings. Such buildings define the character of parts of the district. However, there are pressures for change to rural buildings which need to be managed. The small houses might be attractive, but often come under pressures for large extensions or complete rebuilding to a larger scale. Likewise, non-residential rural buildings sometimes become obsolete for their original purpose and come under pressure for re-use or replacement.
- 4.17 The Council must take care when considering such proposals that they do not cause harm to the rural area. Such harm may come from a variety of sources. The extension, alteration or replacement of buildings can change their character negatively, for example where a modest cottage becomes a mansion.
- 4.18 The policy tries to ensure that the extension, alteration or replacement of rural buildings is controlled. The National Planning Policy Framework advises local authorities that in rural areas planning should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings. Housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided other than in specific circumstances. This policy interprets that national guidance by expressing a preference for existing rural buildings to be re-used for economic development purposes where possible. The policy also acknowledges that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for an existing building to be re-used for residential or other purposes.
- 4.19 The extension of rural buildings is also controlled by this policy.

Countryside and Green Belt Policy CGB5: Existing rural buildings

The Council will support the re-use of redundant rural buildings where the building would be capable of conversion without major extension or

reconstruction.

The replacement or extension of buildings located in the Green Belt or rural area beyond the Green Belt will be allowed when the resulting building has no materially greater impact than the original building.

Outbuildings which require planning permission are subject to the same restriction as extensions above and should be sited as close as possible to the main building and be visually subordinate to it.

5. Transport

- 5.1 North Hertfordshire has a relatively good transport network, although the strategic road and rail links are better for north-south access than for east-west access. There is also an extensive local road network.
- 5.2 National and local policies and guidance seek to reduce the growth of car usage and achieve greater use of more sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.3 The overarching transport policy document for the area is the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) which provides the framework for achieving better transport systems in Hertfordshire for the plan period 2011-2031. The plan covers all modes of transport including walking, cycling, public transport, car based travel and freight.
- 5.4 The LTP identifies some specific schemes for implementation in the district; however the majority of transport schemes are identified through a continuous programme of Urban Transport Plans (UTPs) which identifies how the objectives of the LTP can be delivered at a local level. Within North Hertfordshire there are three UTPs; the Hitchin UTP, the Royston UTP and the Letchworth and Baldock UTP. From time to time the County Council publishes other documents and strategies which will also need to be taken into account in preparing development proposals.
- 5.5 The primary responsibility for delivering transport provision in North Hertfordshire rests with Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority. The involvement of North Hertfordshire District Council relates mainly to the planning system and the management and enforcement of parking.
- 5.6 New development can help to improve the range of transport opportunities available in the district by helping to improve existing facilities and providing new components where required. This chapter sets out policies relating to sustainable transport and parking.

Policy T1: Sustainable transport

- 5.7 Sustainable development, including sustainable transport, underpins national planning policy and the Council seeks to promote this in new development. However, paragraph 29 of the National Planning Policy Framework does state that “different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas”. As such, the Council recognises that the scope for passenger transport and/or other sustainable transport measures may be more limited in some locations. However, best endeavours should be made to ensure that the best possible sustainable transport outcomes can be achieved for all new developments, regardless of their location and applicants will be expected to demonstrate where specific circumstances indicate otherwise.

Transport Policy T1: Sustainable Transport

To help deliver accessibility improvements and the promotion of sustainable transport, development proposals should:

1. be in locations which enable sustainable journeys to be made to key

- services and facilities;
2. comply with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan and other supporting documents as considered necessary;
 3. ensure that a range of alternative transport options are available to occupants or users. This may involve new or improved pedestrian, cycle and passenger transport links and routes;
 4. in the construction of strategic sites, allow for the early implementation of sustainable travel infrastructure in order to influence the behaviour of occupiers or users and in order that sustainable travel patterns become embedded at an early stage; and
 5. protect existing rights of way, cycling and equestrian routes and, should diversion be unavoidable, provide replacement routes to the satisfaction of the Council.

Policy T2: Parking

- 5.8 Virtually all development proposals generate demand for parking of various types of vehicles, be it for visitors, residents, employees or solely for operational purposes. This policy is therefore required to ensure parking is provided at a level appropriate to location, type and scale of development.
- 5.9 Parking is one tool that can be used to influence travel demand and mode of travel. Previous policies to influence car ownership based on standards of parking provision at trip origin are acknowledged to be flawed. Limiting parking availability at trip origins does not necessarily reduce car ownership and can push vehicles onto the adjacent public highway, diminishing the streetscape and potentially obstructing emergency vehicles. It is now recognised and accepted that, in most locations, demand management through parking is most appropriate at the trip destination. The main priority of this policy is, therefore, to seek to influence car use as opposed to car ownership. Car parking can also impact on the design quality of development and as such, consideration should be given to this in accordance with Policy D1: Design and Sustainability.
- 5.10 Parking is a complex issue and the Council's Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) contains the main detail behind Policy T2. The detailed SPD is the Council's determination of what is required in the district for all vehicle parking standards. Alongside this the Council will also seek to implement the aims and objectives of its parking strategy.
- 5.11 The policy is seeking to direct developments to the most sustainable locations and influence travel patterns in favour of sustainable modes whilst ensuring that there is a balanced provision of parking provided. The policy will also ensure that all forms of parking are provided, including parking for people with disabilities, cyclists, powered two wheelers and for operational purposes.
- 5.12 This policy will direct developments towards the detailed SPD and ensure that appropriate levels of parking are provided for the intended use and location. Consideration of the appropriate levels of parking for larger developments will take place as part of a Transport Assessment. Ongoing management of the use of car parking facilities should form part of a Travel Plan.

Transport Policy T2: Parking

Development proposals should make provision for parking in accordance with the standards set out in the Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development Supplementary Planning Document.

Applications should clearly identify how they provide for all likely types of parking demand and that overspill parking from development will not give rise to safety or amenity concerns on existing streets.

6. Housing and development strategy

- 6.1 The need for housing is one of the biggest issues for Local Plans to address. A balance needs to be struck between the large and pressing need for housing with the desirability of protecting the countryside. Green Belt boundaries in North Hertfordshire were last reviewed between 1984 and 1992. At that time access to housing was comparatively much easier than it is today, especially for younger newly-forming households. The Council therefore has to look again at Green Belt boundaries and ensure that it is enabling development in the district to meet the needs of today's population. The Council believes sensible planned expansion of towns and villages is the best way of delivering the growth needed whilst protecting the largely rural character of the remainder of the district.
- 6.2 Questions of how many houses are required and where they should go have long been amongst the most contentious planning issues. This chapter sets out the policies relating to housing. It identifies the objectively assessed need for housing, takes into account unmet need for housing from other districts. It then considers how this level of housing can be met and how much of the housing should be affordable housing. The chapter also considers accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Policy HDS1: Housing targets 2011-2031

- 6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires each Local Plan to identify the objectively assessed need for housing in its area. As set out in the Housing Background Paper, the Council believes this to be 12,100 dwellings for North Hertfordshire's own needs. This is based on the 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the household projections from the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 6.4 The Council proposes to update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment prior to the 'proposed submission' draft of the Local Plan to ensure that the supporting evidence is as up to date as possible and reflects the latest guidance.
- 6.5 On top of this figure the Council has to consider the wider needs of housing market areas which affect North Hertfordshire. In particular, the Luton housing market area covers parts of North Hertfordshire, and the need for development in this area is significant. The Housing Background Paper establishes that an allowance of up to 2,100 homes to meet the specific need arising from the Luton housing market area should be added to the 12,100 identified above.
- 6.6 This 2,100 home allowance is as much as the Council believes can reasonably be accommodated within North Hertfordshire east of Luton. Development beyond this scale east of Luton would have unacceptable impacts on the historic Putteridge Bury Park, or landscape impacts on the attractive Lilley Bottom Valley, or would be too close to the airport. The Council does not consider it reasonable to provide for Luton's unmet need for housing beyond the Luton housing market area. Development outside the Luton housing market area would not directly address the needs arising from Luton.

- 6.7 Stevenage's emerging figures suggest that for the time being it can accommodate its objectively assessed need for housing within the borough boundaries. However, that assumes that in effect all sensible housing sites within the borough are built in the current plan period.
- 6.8 Stevenage is therefore very close to the point where it will have an unmet need for housing that it will look to its neighbours to accommodate. Whilst that point may not yet have been reached at the time of writing it would be sensible for this Local Plan to consider what longer term options might be if and when Stevenage does need to expand. Local Plans are supposed to be flexible and able to deal with changing circumstances.
- 6.9 Three areas on the edge of Stevenage have been looked at as having the capacity for significant urban extensions: West, North and North-East of the town.
- 6.10 North of Stevenage is comparatively well-related to both Stevenage and a number of North Hertfordshire communities and could therefore cater for some of North Hertfordshire's needs or Stevenage's. Stevenage's emerging plans include development immediately south of this site within the borough and it would make sense for the whole area to be planned together, especially given the relatively arbitrary administrative border in this area.
- 6.11 To the north-east of Stevenage there have been proposals for a range of scales of development. For this plan period the largest scales of development do not appear practical as they would need major new access roads across sensitive sites in land-use and landscape terms, and may need to involve land in East Hertfordshire. The site is also a long way from the centre of Stevenage. Some of the key landowners here are also opposed to development. There is therefore considered to be scope for a modest amount of development adjoining Great Ashby which could be used to improve the level of facilities at Great Ashby. This would therefore be meeting North Hertfordshire's need for development rather than Stevenage's.
- 6.12 The third urban extension to Stevenage that has been considered is to the west. This site has a long history. Whilst it is the closest site to the town centre of Stevenage, it is also severed from the rest of the town by the A1(M) motorway and the Gunnels Wood industrial area. Significant development here would need a new tunnel under the A1(M) to be built. The development would have no direct access to the rest of North Hertfordshire and therefore would be a poor location for meeting any of North Hertfordshire's need for housing.
- 6.13 The plan therefore proposes that if Stevenage identifies an unmet need for housing later in the plan period, the land west of Stevenage could meet that need. This site has an estimated capacity of 3,100 dwellings in North Hertfordshire (in addition to up to 1,900 dwellings west of the A1(M) in Stevenage borough, making 5,000 in total). A development larger than this would have too great an impact on the attractive Langley valley. If Stevenage's unmet need is greater than can be accommodated here, land to the north-east may also need to be considered, but alternatives in East Hertfordshire would need to be assessed for appropriateness as part of any consideration of further development to the north-east beyond that included in this plan.

Conclusion on housing target

- 6.14 The housing target for this plan is **14,200** dwellings, representing 12,100 as North Hertfordshire's own objectively assessed need for development and up to 2,100 dwellings towards the unmet need for housing from Luton.

Figure 2: Sources of supply of housing

| Source | Dwellings |
|--|---------------|
| A: Completions 2011-2014 | 934 |
| B: Planning permissions at 1 Apr 2014 considered likely to be implemented | 578 |
| C: Small sites allowance | 480 |
| D: Identified sites (listed in Chapter 12) to meet North Hertfordshire's needs | 10,133 |
| E: Land at Cockernhoe to meet Luton's unmet need for housing | 2,100 |
| TOTAL | 14,225 |

- 6.15 Details of the sites selected to meet housing needs are to be found in Chapter 12. Discussion on why particular sites have been included or excluded is contained in the Sustainability Appraisal and Site Selection Matrix. In broad terms the Council has sought to meet North Hertfordshire's own needs for development through releases of land on the edges of the four towns of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston, at North and North-East Stevenage and scattered around the North Hertfordshire villages. The development to meet Luton's needs is to be located on the edge of Luton near Cockernhoe.
- 6.16 The accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities are set out separately in Policy HDS6.

Housing and Development Strategy Policy HDS1: Provision and distribution of new housing

Over the period 2011-2031, sufficient land will be released for development to enable the delivery of at least 14,200 dwellings.

Of these, 12,100 dwellings are to meet North Hertfordshire's own objectively assessed need for development and are to be located on sites listed in Chapter 12.

The remaining 2,100 dwellings are an allowance to contribute to the unmet need for housing arising from Luton, to be located at Cockernhoe, as set out in Chapter 12.

In the event of an unmet need from Stevenage arising during the plan period land west of the A1(M) may be used for up to 3,100 dwellings in North Hertfordshire to meet Stevenage's unmet need. (These are not counted as part of the 14,200 target above).

Policy HDS2: Settlement hierarchy

- 6.17 North Hertfordshire includes a range of settlements, including isolated rural hamlets, numerous villages, the four towns of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden

City, Baldock and Royston, and large parts of the Great Ashby estate on the edge of Stevenage.

- 6.18 The Council wishes to focus the majority of new development on the towns in order to make maximum use of existing facilities, social networks and infrastructure, and maximise opportunities to deliver new infrastructure. However, it is important to allow growth of the villages in order to allow those communities to continue to function.
- 6.19 The NPPF allows that sometimes development in one village may support services in other nearby villages, effectively acknowledging that some communities may lack a full range of facilities themselves but should not be barred from further development. In many of the district's rural areas the average number of people per household is falling. Some of the villages have seen very little growth in recent years and therefore their populations have actually fallen. There is a social cost to not building new homes there if the population shrinks and existing social networks and facilities are therefore put at risk.
- 6.20 Conversely there is an environmental cost to building in villages if the new residents are largely or entirely dependent upon the private car for accessing the full range of services needed for day to day life.
- 6.21 Taking these factors into account, the Council has prepared a list of settlements, ranked into four categories as to how acceptable development may be. This list includes at least one settlement in every parish, giving each parish the freedom to encourage growth within its own borders through neighbourhood plans or similar if it wishes.
- 6.22 The towns (including urban extensions to existing towns) will be the focus for the majority of the growth in the district.
- 6.23 The Category A villages, defined as those with schools, will have development boundaries defined within which development will be allowed and sites allocated towards meeting the district's overall housing totals.
- 6.24 The Category B villages, based on those with a lower level of facilities such as village halls and public houses, will be allowed to accommodate infill development that does not expand the built core of the village into the surrounding countryside. This plan does not define the 'built core' of these villages. The Council believes it should be possible to assess on a case by case basis whether a site is in the built core. However, that may be something that affected communities may wish to explore through neighbourhood plans, or supplementary planning guidance could address if it proves necessary.
- 6.25 The Category C villages are those which give their names to a parish that does not contain any category A or B villages. As these villages have very low levels of facilities the Council will only support affordable housing to meet proven needs from that parish, although some market housing to enable the necessary level of affordable housing may be acceptable in line with Policy HDS3: Affordable housing.

Housing and Development Strategy Policy HDS2: Settlement hierarchy

The majority of the district's development will be located within the settlement boundaries of the following towns:

- Baldock;
- Hitchin;
- Letchworth Garden City;
- Royston;
- Great Ashby;
- Other urban extensions to Stevenage as identified in Chapter 12; and
- Urban extensions to Luton as identified in Chapter 12.

General development will also be allowed within the defined settlement boundaries of the Category A villages of:

- Ashwell;
- Barkway;
- Barley;
- Breachwood Green;
- Cockernhoe;
- Codicote;
- Graveley;
- Hexton;
- Ickleford;
- Kimpton;
- Knebworth;
- Little Wymondley;
- Oaklands;
- Offley;
- Pirton;
- Preston;
- Reed;
- Sandon;
- St Ippolyts;
- Therfield;
- Weston; and
- Whitwell.

Infilling development which does not extend the built core of the village will be allowed in the Category B villages of:

- Blackmore End;
- Clothall;
- Great Wymondley;
- Hinxworth;
- Holwell;
- Kelshall;
- Lilley;
- Newnham;
- Old Knebworth;
- Peters Green;
- Radwell;
- Rushden;
- Wallington; and
- Willian.

Only affordable housing and associated development in line with Policy HDS3 on exception sites will be allowed in the Category C villages of:

- Bygrave;
- Caldecote;
- Langleigh; and
- Nuthampstead.

Policy HDS3: Affordable housing

- 6.26 North Hertfordshire is going to be affected by considerable housing growth over the plan period. However, if all the new houses were to be sold privately, the district's own housing needs would fail to be met. Those on lower incomes would not be able to afford to live locally, while the new houses would be occupied by those on higher incomes who worked further afield. This would increase the amount of in and out commuting, with more congestion and pollution caused by increased transport.
- 6.27 These problems are well recognised across the country as a whole and the Government encourages local planning authorities to set out policies on affordable housing, based on assessments of local housing needs.
- 6.28 Affordable housing is provided for those who cannot access open market housing. It includes social rented and affordable rented housing and intermediate housing, such as shared ownership schemes. It is secured with planning conditions and legal agreements such that the benefit of the housing continues in the long term.
- 6.29 Whilst it is important to increase the supply of affordable housing, too high a target may reduce the profit made by landowners or developers on some sites to the point where no development occurs. This would therefore have the undesired effect of actually reducing the overall supply of housing. The Whole Plan Viability Study suggests that on sites of over 25 dwellings it is reasonable to expect 40% of the dwellings to be affordable homes. The two parts of the district where the study suggests this may not be deliverable are east of Luton and north of Stevenage. As these are both strategic sites, it is considered the best way of striking the right balance between necessary infrastructure and affordable housing is through the master planning work envisaged in policy ID2: Masterplans.
- 6.30 For sites of less than 25 dwellings the Whole Plan Viability Study suggests it is not possible to expect 40% affordable housing without making sites unviable. The 2011 census⁶ records 53,426 households in North Hertfordshire. Of these 66% are privately owned, 14% are privately rented and 20% are affordable homes. Given the pressing need for affordable housing identified in the SHMA it seems reasonable that new development should provide at least the same proportion of affordable housing as the current dwelling stock of the district. The viability work suggests that 30% affordable homes should work on sites of ten or more dwellings, and that 35% affordable homes should work on sites of fifteen or more dwellings.
- 6.31 In all cases, evidence of adverse viability (normally due to abnormal site costs) will be considered. If an applicant wishes to reduce the proportion of affordable housing based on adverse viability arguments, the applicant will have to pay for independent verification of their evidence. Evidence that an applicant has paid too much for a site after the publication of this policy will not normally be sufficient to justify a lower level of affordable housing. Developers are expected to factor in the costs of affordable housing into their offers to landowners, and the viability study demonstrates that these rates of affordable housing should still be sufficient to enable a willing landowner to sell their sites for development.

⁶ Table KS402UK: Tenure, local authorities in the United Kingdom

- 6.32 For sites between 10 and 14 dwellings it is acknowledged that for the small numbers of affordable homes generated it may be difficult to put suitable management arrangements in place. In those instances the Council will be prepared to accept a payment in lieu of on-site affordable housing, to be used towards delivering affordable housing elsewhere in the district.
- 6.33 The policy does not give a specific breakdown on the tenures of affordable housing that should be provided. At the time of drafting the current normal approach is 65% rented tenures and 35% other tenures for affordable housing, but this may change as the plan progresses in light of the most up to date housing needs surveys and other work, as discussed in the policy.
- 6.34 The situation regarding the provision of affordable housing on the edge of rural settlements as an exception to normal policies of rural restraint is considered in Policy CGB3: Exception sites in the rural area.

Housing and Development Strategy Policy HDS3: Affordable housing

The Council will secure a range of homes in terms of tenure, size and design. Overall, the aim is to make 35% of the new dwellings in the district affordable housing, which will be secured using the following sliding scale:

| <i>Size of site (gross dwellings)</i> | <i>Minimum percentage of dwellings which must be affordable</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 10 – 14 dwellings | 30% |
| 15 – 24 dwellings | 35% |
| 25 or more dwellings | 40% |

Where development of a site is phased or divided into separate parts, or could reasonably be considered part of a larger development which would exceed the thresholds, it will be considered as a whole for the purposes of affordable housing provision.

The size, type and tenure of affordable housing will be determined by:

1. the housing needs of the area (as established through the results of the latest Housing Needs Survey, Strategic Housing Market Assessment or other information);
2. relevant local authority housing register data; and
3. the policies and objectives of the latest relevant Housing Strategies.

To secure the benefits of affordable housing for first and subsequent occupiers of affordable dwellings, any such development must be subject to an appropriate condition or legal agreement providing for the retention of dwellings under such arrangements through the Council, registered provider or similar body agreed with the Council.

Policy HDS4: Density

- 6.35 In this policy the Council seeks to strike a balance between the need to make efficient use of land and ensuring that an appropriate range of housing is built, not just flats. This is done by encouraging higher densities where appropriate but with the caveat that lower densities should be favoured on the edges of settlements and where this better respects the established local character.

- 6.36 Increasing the density of development is beneficial in terms of minimising the amount of greenfield development needed. However, very high density development can have problems of overcrowding.

Housing and Development Strategy Policy HDS4: Density

New housing development should optimise the use of land so as to create socially sustainable communities and respect any established character of the area. New development on the periphery of a settlement should generally be at a lower density to mark the transition to the rural area beyond. In town centres and close to the railway stations higher densities may be appropriate in principle but will require particular care in the design with respect to avoiding the sense of overcrowding or congestion.

Policy HDS5: Relatives' and dependants' accommodation

- 6.37 There are many instances where it is desirable for additional residential accommodation to be provided alongside an existing dwelling. For example, a family with elderly or infirm relatives may wish to provide an annex for them. This is to be encouraged, because it can strengthen family ties and, where the dependants were previously occupying a family-sized house, can increase the amount of available housing for others.
- 6.38 In the towns and identified villages, where a dwelling can be subdivided or an additional dwelling can be satisfactorily accommodated on the plot then the principle of accommodation for dependants is acceptable. In such instances, the other policies of the plan will be used to determine such application. In the rural areas, or where subdivision or the creation of an additional dwelling would not otherwise be acceptable, this policy will be applied.

Housing and Development Strategy Policy HDS5: Relatives' and dependants' accommodation

Relatives' and dependants' accommodation should be formed by the adaptation or extension of the main dwelling. Free standing annexes will only be allowed if it can be shown that adaptation or extension of the main house is not possible.

For annexes the following criteria will be applied:

1. a genuine need must be shown;
2. the occupation of the accommodation will be restricted by a condition on the planning permission to being ancillary to the main dwelling;
3. the annex is subordinate to the main dwelling and designed in such a way that if its use as accommodation for dependants ceases it can be easily incorporated into the main house; and
4. in the rural area, any extensions must not exceed the size of extension that would be acceptable under the other policies of this plan.

Policy HDS6: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 6.39 The Local Plan should make appropriate provision to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in North Hertfordshire. There is recognition that the three groups are different and have very different needs, but for the purposes of this policy the key considerations are very similar.
- 6.40 At 2014, the district currently has one private Traveller site at Pulmore Water in the parish of Codicote, consisting of twelve permanent and six temporary pitches. There is no public site in the district. Historically, the district has not been an area where significant numbers of Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople have resided in or resorted to, which is supported by figures for unauthorised encampments and developments.
- 6.41 In June 2006 a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was published which looked at the levels of need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the five local authorities of Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield.
- 6.42 Following the Government's publication in 2012 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites a new GTAA (2014) has been prepared for North Hertfordshire to assess the specific needs at a district level. The GTAA sets out a requirement for 6 additional pitches up to 2028. Currently there is a temporary planning permission for 6 pitches on the Pulmore Water site. If this is made permanent it meets the district's future requirements. This goes beyond the requirements set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites in terms of identifying 5 year land supply. It does, however, provide certainty going forward and prevents the need for future reviews of this policy.
- 6.43 As with affordable housing, current government guidance allows Gypsy and Traveller sites to be located in the open countryside, as an exception to normal policies of control. This is in recognition of the particular difficulties that Gypsies and Travellers have obtaining and affording land within settlements.

Housing and Development Strategy Policy HDS6: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Council will bring forward and safeguard proposals for additional Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's pitches to meet local need, informed by the Council's GTAA.

The Council will allocate the area covered by the 6 temporary permission pitches at Pulmore Water to meet the district's needs up to 2028 as shown on the Proposals Map.

The criteria which will be used to identify suitable locations and to inform decisions on planning applications for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and associated facilities are:

1. the intended occupants meet the definition of Gypsies and Travellers, or Travelling Showpeople, as set out in government guidance or case law;
2. the residents of the site can access local services such as shops,

schools, public transport and medical facilities which are within a reasonable distance from the site and have capacity to meet the needs of the site's residents;

3. the site does not conflict with any other development plan policy or national policy including flood risk, agricultural land classification, contamination and hazardous development, and has no significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, or on features of significant biodiversity importance;
4. the site has no significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents or adjoining land users and can be successfully screened and contained within a specified boundary;
5. the site has adequate and safe access from a suitable road, and adequate parking, storage, turning and servicing on site;
6. the site is capable of being serviced with water, electricity, sewerage and rubbish disposal; and
7. the site will provide a safe, inclusive and secure environment for the residents in an appropriate location to meet their needs.

Where all the above criteria are met, proposals for sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople may be appropriate in the countryside as rural exception sites (in line with policy CGB3: Exception sites in the rural area) but Green Belt policies would still apply.

7. Design

- 7.1 Design is central to good planning. The achievement of high quality, sustainable design is required by government guidance. The NPPF seeks planning policies that promote high quality, inclusive design in layouts and buildings in terms of function and impact. Design which does not make the most of opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area should be refused. The policy is part of the planning system's role in minimising impacts on the environment.
- 7.2 North Hertfordshire has a high quality natural and built environment. Promoting sustainable growth is one of the priorities for the district in 2014/15. Achieving this objective depends on securing development that is of a high quality and inclusive design which reinforces local distinctiveness through fully addressing the creation of a sense of place and a safe and healthy environment.

Policy D1: Design and Sustainability

- 7.3 The purpose of the policy is to achieve high quality design in all development to support the delivery of social, economic and environmental benefits. It does this by seeking to ensure that all new development has considered the potential for minimising its impact on the environment both during construction and through the life of the development. The policy aims to reduce the impact that new development makes on the environment.
- 7.4 This policy will be used in the negotiation of planning applications and in giving applicants pre-application guidance on what may be acceptable. Design and Access Statements (DAS) are required for most planning applications. DAS require applicants to explain and justify the key elements of the proposal and show that the physical, economic, policy and social context of the site and its locality have been taken into account.
- 7.5 North Hertfordshire is fortunate in having three historic market towns, the world's first Garden City and many villages all with unique characters set in a high quality rural environment. As development pressures are likely to increase in the district it is important to respect, retain and where possible enhance the existing character of both the urban and rural areas to maintain the quality of the district's environment. The policy will require development schemes to positively contribute to the public realm, local street scene and wider landscape through high quality design. The Council will expect developers to have regard to emerging advice and good practice.
- 7.6 The aim of the policy is to reduce carbon emissions, either through increasing the amount of energy from renewable sources, or through making new development as energy efficient as possible.
- 7.7 Government guidance encourages the reuse and recycling of materials. The efficient use of new materials from local or sustainable sources, together with the reuse and recycling of materials will help to reduce the energy used and the waste created in the development. It will also help the development to achieve local character and distinctiveness. The policy encourages sustainable design, and the use of materials and technologies that will

ensure that the energy used in the construction and throughout the life of the development will be minimised.

- 7.8 The design of new buildings can contribute to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. Both residential and non-residential buildings can be assessed for their environmental performance against the Code for Sustainable Homes and the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) standards. Development should be in line with current regulations and guidelines and any future changes in Legislation or to the Building Regulations that will affect the sustainability of a building.
- 7.9 The British Standard BS5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – recommendations sets out guidance on tree retention, effect of trees on design considerations and means of protecting trees during construction. It looks not only at trees and other vegetation within the site but also on adjoining land which may be affected by the development.
- 7.10 The policy should ensure that the design of new developments will allow a building to be flexible and adaptable throughout its life. Developers will be encouraged to have regard to the design criteria set out in “Lifetime Homes”.
- 7.11 The policy seeks to ensure that the design and location of new development makes it accessible to all potential users. There is a need to ensure that where appropriate, new development includes facilities or open space that is conveniently located and easy to gain access to by all potential users.
- 7.12 One of the concerns for local communities is crime or the fear of crime. The Community Safety Plan sets out a number of actions that can be taken to help reduce crime, many of which cannot be addressed through the Local Plan. However, developers can be encouraged to use the principles set out in “Secured by Design” to help create safer communities and this policy seeks to encourage these.
- 7.13 Design of car parking in new developments impacts on the visual quality of the street scene and the way the development functions. Appropriate design can ensure that cars are not a dominant feature and that pedestrians and cyclists are able to move safely and easily.
- 7.14 More detailed guidance is set out in the Design SPD which covers key principles for all development within the district and specific principles for each of the four towns, the villages and the rural area. The Design SPD brings together other relevant guidance prepared for North Hertfordshire on Conservation Areas, Town Centre Strategies, Urban Design Assessments, Landscape Character Assessments, Green Space and Green Infrastructure.
- 7.15 ‘Building Futures’ is an interactive tool for new development in Hertfordshire. Building Futures is mentioned in the Design SPD and developers are strongly encouraged to look at this suite of documents, which provide practical and technical guidance on reducing the environmental impact of development, and will be helpful in enabling developments to satisfy this policy.

Design Policy D1: Design and Sustainability

The Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development.

The design and location of development proposals should where appropriate:

1. respond positively to the site's local context;
2. create or enhance public realm;
3. optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems;
4. consider the retention of existing vegetation;
5. be usable, in terms of accessibility, legibility and connectivity;
6. design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour;
7. minimise the visual impact of street furniture and car parking.

This list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

Specific guidance is set out in the Design SPD.

Policy D2: House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings

- 7.16 This policy is required in order to maintain a high quality environment in residential areas whilst allowing flexibility with regard to house extensions. The policy requires that consideration is given to the effect that a proposal may have on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and the character and appearance of the locality in which they are proposed as these are matters that can often be overlooked with the desire for increased living space.
- 7.17 This policy also serves to protect the character and appearance of those remaining modest rural workers dwellings and to ensure that proposals for replacement or extension of dwellings in the countryside would not have a materially greater impact.

Design Policy D2: House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings

For house extensions, the Council will normally only permit development proposals if:

1. the extension is sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, window details and materials; and
2. pitched roofs are used where appropriate, particularly if the extension is more than the height of a single storey.

In isolated rural locations, the extension should not result in a size, scale or design of development which is disproportionate to the scale of the original building or would give the effect of a new dwelling.

Rear extensions should not dominate adjoining property and should be well related to the levels of adjoining properties, the direction the house faces and the distance between the extension and the windows in the next door properties.

Side extensions, at first floor level or above, adjoining a residential plot to

the side will normally be refused if less than 1 metre from the boundary.

For the replacement of dwellings in rural areas, the Council will normally refuse proposals where a materially greater impact would result.

Policy D3: Protecting living conditions

- 7.18 All development has the potential to have an adverse impact on its neighbours, in a wide variety of ways. The housing supply in the district includes a significant amount of housing development on previously developed land within urban areas. Such sites are often close to existing residents and other premises, and particular care is needed to ensure that the adverse impacts of the development on these people are minimised. In the rural area, farm diversification schemes can help support the district's rural economy. However, some diversification schemes could seriously affect the living conditions of the surrounding area, especially if they generate significant traffic. At a smaller scale, domestic extensions can often be highly contentious between neighbours.
- 7.19 It is not practical to try and provide absolute protection for existing residents' and occupiers' current living conditions. Instead, there is a need to try and ensure that any impacts a development has are understood and appropriate mitigation built into the scheme.
- 7.20 There are two ways mitigation may occur. Either the development can incorporate measures to reduce the effect it has, or it can fund works off site to reduce the impact on those affected by it. This latter course of action may be appropriate for development such as the expansion of airfields, where there will inevitably be an increase in noise, but it may be possible to provide sound protection to those buildings affected by that noise.
- 7.21 The policy also covers the converse situation, where there is an existing use which has an adverse impact on a proposed development site. That proposed development will need to show that satisfactory living conditions will be achieved. This will need to take into account the nature of the development – for example, homes proposed in a noisy area will need more protection than a factory would in the same area.

Design Policy D3: Protecting living conditions

The Council will permit development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions. Such harm may arise from, (but not limited to):

1. traffic generation and parking;
2. loss of daylight and sunlight;
3. noise;
4. overlooking;
5. pollution (including light pollution); and
6. dominance.

Where the living conditions of proposed developments would be affected by an existing use, the Council will consider whether there are mitigation measures that can be taken to mitigate the harm to an acceptable level. If the Council is not satisfied that mitigation proposals would address the identified harm, development proposals will not be permitted.

Policy D4: Air quality

- 7.22 This policy supports Policy D3: Protecting living conditions but also in encouraging renewable energy development. The district will be accommodating a significant amount of development during the plan period which will undoubtedly generate additional road traffic and put added pressure on existing road networks. Therefore, because the major source of local air pollution in the district originates from road traffic emissions it is important for this plan to deal with the implications for air quality of the anticipated development.
- 7.23 Two of the main roads that cross the district do so on a north – south axis: the A1(M) and A10. Another main road is the A505 that traverses the district on a southwest – northeast axis. It is the A505 that is currently directly associated with air quality concerns because it passes through the four main population centres of the district namely Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston. Of particular concern is the area in the south of Hitchin, notably Stevenage Road near the Three Moorhens roundabout, which has been designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) through which the A602 passes in order to link the A1(M) with the A505.
- 7.24 The NPPF states that air pollution is a material planning consideration and more specifically that planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards national objectives for air pollutants and the presence of AQMAs. Furthermore, it states that the effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health should be taken into account. Therefore, because each local authority will have its own unique causes and contributing factors to elevated levels of air pollution it is vital that local development documents include policies to appropriately influence the district's specific development demands.
- 7.25 The policy addresses the protection of the health of the residents of proposed developments, as well as the protection of the residents of the existing properties particularly, although not exclusively, those that live in close proximity to the district's roads. In addition to the AQMA that has been designated on a stretch of the A602 in Hitchin, because of elevated nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) there are two other areas of the district where levels of NO₂ are close to exceeding a national air quality objective. These areas are around the A505 in the Payne's Park area of Hitchin and around the A505 in the Hitchin Street / Whitehorse Street area of Baldock.
- 7.26 The policy will allow the Council to achieve a consistent and transparent approach to the development of land where air quality concerns are relevant. It will also help to influence the nature of such developments so as to minimise or remove the potential for adverse impacts on air quality. Or where appropriate identify and justify the need for and nature of measures to help to mitigate any otherwise unavoidable adverse air quality impacts from permitted developments.
- 7.27 The following are types of developments for which the Council would expect consideration to be given to the submission of an air quality impact assessment:

Within, or adjacent to an AQMA, applications for:

- housing;
- biomass or other forms of combustion boiler;
- industrial developments;
- car parks; and
- any other development likely to significantly increase vehicle movements

Anywhere else in the district, applications that are considered to be 'major' in scale for example:

- significantly increase car parking facilities;
- significantly increase vehicle movements, particularly heavy duty vehicles;
- introduce biomass or other combustion boilers and industrial processes of a particular scale;
or that:
- introduce humans to an area where air pollution is an issue, but where humans were previously not present

7.28 A more detailed description of developments considered to be 'major' and the expectations for air quality mitigation actions to be implemented as a result of the outcome of the air quality impact assessment will be included in the Council's air quality and emissions planning guidance document (currently being prepared by the Council's Environmental Protection team).

7.29 For other types of developments an air quality impact assessment will not be required but there will be an expectation for the developer to negotiate and agree air quality mitigation actions that are proportionate to the scale of the proposed development.

7.30 Methods available to mitigate the impact of developments on air quality may fall into a number of categories:

- appropriate parking standards
- accommodating infrastructure to support the use of low emission vehicles
- appropriate location and design of buildings
- incentives to support initiatives for public transport, car sharing and using alternative modes of travel
- contributions to improve road and traffic management, infrastructure to support alternative modes of travel and air quality monitoring.

7.31 This is not an exhaustive list and more detail will be included in the forthcoming air quality and emissions planning guidance document.

Design Policy D4: Air quality

Where relevant, development proposals must give consideration to the potential or actual impact on local air quality, both during the demolition/construction phase and as a result of its final occupation and use.

Appropriate levels of mitigation will be required to negate emissions to the atmosphere and their potential effects upon health and the local environment.

Where required, appropriate air pollution impact assessments should be carried out to determine the impact on local air quality of the development,

otherwise the development may be refused.

The outcome of the air pollution impact assessment will be used to determine the nature and scale of the steps that should be taken to remove or reduce the scale of those concerns. Ideally this will occur at the design, planning and/or development stage, but may in certain circumstances rely on post development mitigation measures. It is conceivable that in certain circumstances the outcome of an air quality impact assessment may demonstrate that a development is unsustainable from a local air quality perspective and may be refused.

8. Healthy Communities

- 8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that the planning system plays a role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Community and recreation facilities together with green spaces can play an important role in the life of local people enabling people not only to participate in physical activities but also in cultural pastimes, all of which can help to enhance physical, spiritual and mental well being. Community, leisure, recreation and cultural facilities can include village halls, community centres, sports halls, theatres, museums, libraries, places of worship, doctors and dental surgeries and schools.

Policy HC1: Healthy communities

- 8.2 The Local Plan can help towards meeting the objective of making communities healthier through the provision of cultural, leisure and community facilities in new developments. It is important that these facilities are situated within local communities so that they are accessible, help to reduce the need to travel and provide opportunities for people to participate in activities within their own community. The Planning Obligations SPD sets out detailed guidelines for the provision of new community facilities which developers should take into account in the design of any new development.
- 8.3 However these local facilities, whether publicly or privately owned, can be subject to development pressures for alternative uses. It is therefore important that, where appropriate, such facilities are retained within the local community.
- 8.4 The Community Halls Strategy alongside the review of the Indoor Sports Facility Study will help to determine the level of community and sports facilities that will be required in the district as a result of the planned housing growth and inform any revision of the Planning Obligations SPD that may be conducted.

Policy HC1: Community, leisure, recreation and cultural facilities

In development schemes, the Council will expect developers to make provision for new community, cultural, leisure and recreation facilities on or off-site at a scale which is proportionate to the scale of the development. Where on site provision is not appropriate, the Council will seek contributions towards community facilities in accordance with the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

Development proposals which will result in the loss of community, cultural, leisure or recreation facilities will be resisted unless:

1. the existing facility can be satisfactorily relocated within the development; or
2. the facility is replaced in an appropriate alternative location which is served by sustainable modes of transport; or
3. the developer satisfactorily demonstrates that there is no longer a demand for the use of the site or buildings for community, leisure or recreation uses or an appropriate and viable alternative community use; and
4. there are no unacceptable impacts on the biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape or ability to enjoy the natural environment.

The Council will encourage new leisure, cultural, community or recreational facilities to be located in accessible locations.

Policy HC2: Green space

- 8.5 The National Planning Policy Framework addresses the importance that access to open space has for the health and wellbeing of a community. Local authorities are advised to set local standards for the provision of open space, sports, and recreational facilities based on a quantitative and qualitative assessment of existing provision.
- 8.6 The towns and villages of North Hertfordshire are attractive places in which to live and work. Green spaces form an essential part of the quality and character of the settlements, providing accessible formal recreation opportunities, informal green space, wildlife habitats and links to the countryside. During the plan period up to 2031 the district will need to accommodate housing growth and it is important that the quality, pattern and character of the environment is maintained and enhanced to ensure that the settlements remain attractive places to live.
- 8.7 In 2009 the Council commissioned the Green Space Study to understand the existing amount of open space within the district and assist in developing standards for new development. The standards recommended within it have been taken forward in relation to the strategic scale urban extensions and larger sites, as it is considered that these are sufficiently large to accommodate and maintain the district's provision of open space.
- 8.8 In relation to the smaller sites, the standards recommended in the Green Space Study are difficult to achieve in practice due to likely impacts on deliverability and viability of development. Further to this, some of the types of green space can only realistically be delivered on a larger scale due to the amount of space that would be required and the fact that they may need to be grouped together to be manageable in future years, for example outdoor sports pitches and allotments. The policy identifies thresholds in these cases. The Green Space Background Paper (November 2014), explains the reasoning behind the conclusions the Council has reached in relation to standards in more detail.
- 8.9 In the case of some sites, there may also be a requirement for additional open space in the form of buffers to sources of pollution such as roads or railway lines or for landscape, visual or ecological purposes. In these cases it will be expected that the standards will be delivered alongside any buffer areas which are necessary on amenity grounds. In addition, buffers around outdoor sports provision and equipped play and youth areas may be required. These buffers can form part of the other green space typologies.
- 8.10 The Council is currently undertaking further work, in the form of an Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Study, to establish specific outdoor sports and green space projects needed within the district based on the growth identified within the local plan. This will assist in the master-planning for the strategic sites, as discussed in Policy ID2: Masterplans, and address the cumulative impact of development and so some modifications have been made in order to group different types of green space together where

appropriate and to reduce the overall requirement. The new study will meet the latest Sport England guidance in relation to this, but until the study is completed, the Council will use the standards within this policy as recommended in the Green Space Study and associated background paper. As this guidance is not yet available the Council is proceeding with the best information available.

Policy HC2: Green space

Public and private green spaces will be retained by:

1. refusing development proposals which would have a detrimental effect on the character, extent and structure of the green space pattern; and
2. requiring development proposals, through their character, form, layout, design and green space provision to retain and/or improve the pattern; and
3. encouraging links between spaces within towns and between those spaces and the surrounding countryside.

In all new residential developments an appropriate amount of public green space must be provided. The green space should be useable, accessible, appropriately equipped and designed and a management programme agreed for its future maintenance.

In all new residential developments the following minimum standards for the provision of green space will be applied:

Larger developments (over 540 dwellings):

| Type | Standard hectares per 1,000 people |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Green Space | 2.24 |
| Equipped Play and Youth | 0.20 |
| Allotments | 0.23 |
| Outdoor Sports | 1.42 |

The Council will work with developers to determine the appropriate layout, types and long term management of provision through the master-planning process. This will take into account the projects identified in the Council's latest Green Space Strategy and other Council studies to be undertaken in accordance with Sport England Guidance.

Applicants using the following policy are also advised to have regard to policy NE2 Green Infrastructure.

Smaller developments (Under 540 dwellings):

| Type | Threshold at which provision sought | Standard hectares per 1,000 people |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Green Space | All scales of development | 1.13 |
| Equipped Play and Youth | Local Area for Play (LAP) – 21 dwellings | 0.20 |
| | Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) – 83 dwellings | |
| | Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play | |

| | | |
|------------|------------------------|------|
| | (NEAP) – 208 dwellings | |
| Allotments | 200 or more dwellings | 0.23 |

9. Natural Environment

- 9.1 The environment of North Hertfordshire is of a high quality, both in terms of the natural and man-made environment. The district has a wide range of important habitats, including ancient woodlands in the south, chalk grasslands in the east and wet woodlands along the River Hiz and its tributaries. The landscape to the west of Hitchin towards Hexton and Lilley follows the escarpment of the Chiltern Hills and part of the district here falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The district also has a rich built heritage with many ancient monuments (many being associated with the prehistoric Icknield Way), 44 conservation areas and over 2500 listed buildings.
- 9.2 These factors make a strong positive contribution to the quality of life in the district, but are among the most vulnerable features of the district when major development is proposed. The district will have to accommodate significant growth during the plan period whilst ensuring environment is properly protected. This is an important element of sustainable development.

Policy NE1: Landscape and Environmental Protection

- 9.3 North Hertfordshire has a rich, varied and attractive natural and historic environment which is under increasing pressure from development, recreational uses and changing agricultural practices, particularly in the areas which are adjacent to the towns and villages. The natural environment forms the setting to the towns and villages in which people live, work and spend their leisure time. It should be protected and enhanced in the future to maintain the existing high quality of life that people in the district enjoy.
- 9.4 The natural landscape of North Hertfordshire is largely unspoilt and very attractive. Part of the western area of the district lies within the Chilterns AONB and there are locally important landscapes which contribute to a feeling of remoteness in other parts of the district, for example Lilley Bottom and the East Anglian Heights. There are also a number of sites across the district which are valuable in terms of their wildlife interest. Many of these sites are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves or local wildlife sites.
- 9.5 Government advice set out in the NPPF seeks to conserve the natural environment which contributes to the local distinctiveness of the area. Plans and policies should ensure that new development preserves or enhances historic buildings and landscapes, conservation areas and important archaeological features and their settings.
- 9.6 The policy aims to protect the quality of the natural environment as development pressures increase in the district by influencing where development takes place and creating a sustainable pattern of development.
- 9.7 Part of the district between Hitchin, Lilley and Hexton (which follows the escarpment of the Chiltern Hills) has been recognised as being of national importance and forms part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The statutory purpose of an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape of the area. In addition AONBs have an important role in providing informal recreational opportunities.

- 9.8 The North Herts Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity & Capacity) assesses the character of the landscape across the district by looking at factors such as the geology, landform, soil types and historical activities for each area. This study provided a description of the characteristics of each landscape character area. It has subsequently been developed to identify the inherent sensitivities of each character area in landscape and visual terms, together with its capacity to accommodate a range of different types of development. Development should respect the sensitivities of each landscape character area and accord with the guidelines identified for each landscape character area in relation to built development and landscape management.
- 9.9 The emphasis of the policy is to ensure that the design of a development proposal is sensitive to the local context to ensure that the scheme makes a positive contribution to the landscape.

Natural Environment Policy NE1: Landscape and Environmental Protection

The quality and character of the natural environment will be protected and enhanced. Development proposals should complement the character of the surrounding landscape and respect locally sensitive features as identified in the North Herts Landscape Study and the Chilterns AONB Management Plan. Proposals should provide high standards of built, landscape and environmental design in support of the development and landscape management guidelines provided for each landscape character area.

Development proposals that would be detrimental to the natural environment will be refused where suitable mitigation measures cannot satisfactorily address the adverse impact.

Policy NE2: Green Infrastructure

- 9.10 Green infrastructure is the physical environment within and between towns and villages. It is a network of multi-functional open spaces, including protected sites, nature reserves, formal parks, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, waterways, street trees and open countryside. It comprises all environmental resources, and thus a green infrastructure approach also contributes towards sustainable resource management.
- 9.11 The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to plan for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- 9.12 The multi-functional character of green infrastructure (GI) means that it can also consider cultural as well as landscape and ecological assets/habitats both public and private. Benefits to be gained from GI include an improved healthy environment, improved biodiversity value, flood attenuation, enhanced networks for walking, cycling and other non-motorised travel and contributing to carbon neutral development.
- 9.13 The retention of substantial connected networks of green space in urban, urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas to serve growing communities and in key centres for development and change is also important.

- 9.14 North Hertfordshire has significant green infrastructure assets. These include ancient woodlands (e.g. at Newton Wood), biodiversity rich landscapes (e.g. Therfield Heath), chalk streams, rivers, and valleys (e.g. Lilley Bottom and the Mimram valley). They also include the historic designed landscapes of Letchworth Garden City and the literary associations of Forster Country, north of Stevenage.
- 9.15 The policy will protect those sites which contribute to the diversity of green infrastructure throughout the district from inappropriate development whilst acknowledging that in some cases the appropriate mitigation measures would enable development to take place.
- 9.16 The policy will also ensure that where new green infrastructure is created appropriate management and maintenance regimes are in place to provide the framework for its long-term use.
- 9.17 The North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan identifies the location and size of existing assets, as well as opportunities to create new GI and areas of GI deficiency.
- 9.18 The policy seeks to protect the existing green infrastructure assets and make provision for new green infrastructure either within new development sites or through contributions towards the provision or enhancement of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure projects are identified and prioritised within the Green Infrastructure Plan.

Policy NE2: Green infrastructure

The Council will protect and enhance green infrastructure assets and new opportunities for creating green infrastructure will be sought.

Where appropriate new development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional green infrastructure and the protection and enhancement of existing green infrastructure.

Developers should use the guiding principles set out in the Green Infrastructure Plan to influence all development proposals from an early stage in the design process.

Any new green infrastructure proposed must be accompanied by a plan for the long term sustainable maintenance and management of these assets, as well as phasing plans to demonstrate how they are to be delivered.

Policy NE3: Biodiversity

- 9.19 North Hertfordshire boasts a large number of important wildlife sites including SSSIs, LNRs, Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust sites, Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and other sites designated for their County or local importance. The NPPF requires that impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity should be minimised and net gains in biodiversity should be provided where possible.

- 9.20 It is important to protect those sites and natural features which contribute to the networks of green infrastructure and biodiversity of North Hertfordshire and the quality of environment for residents and visitors.
- 9.21 The policy will protect those sites which contribute to the biodiversity of the district from inappropriate development whilst acknowledging that in some cases the appropriate mitigation measures would enable development to take place. Where needed, mitigation measures will be used to help off set the damage to the natural environment by providing suitable levels of on or off site compensation (whichever is the most appropriate).
- 9.22 The policy should also ensure that features of biodiversity value are not lost as a result of a development proposal and that where possible opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around development will be sought.

Policy NE3: Biodiversity

The Council will support new developments that make a positive contribution to the biodiversity of the district and opportunities to restore degraded or isolated habitats will be sought wherever possible.

Development proposals which cause unacceptable harm to Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Regionally Important Geological Sites, Local Nature Reserves or managed Local Wildlife Sites will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that adverse effects could be satisfactorily minimised through mitigation measures.

Development proposals which affect other sites or features of local biodiversity will not be permitted where there is an adverse impact on the ecological, geological or biodiversity interests of the site unless it can be demonstrated that adverse effects could be satisfactorily minimised through mitigation measures.

Development proposals should also demonstrate that if there are existing wildlife habitats such as trees, hedgerows and woodlands they will be retained, safeguarded and managed during and after development.

Policy NE4: Renewable energy development

- 9.23 The *Renewable Energy Strategy* (Department of Energy and Climate Change, 2009) sets out how the UK will ensure that 15% of all energy will come from renewable sources by 2020. Renewable sources of energy include wind, wave, tidal, hydro or solar power and biomass fuels. The National Planning Policy Framework says that Local Plans should maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily.
- 9.24 The Hertfordshire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Technical Study (July 2010) identifies energy opportunity areas in the district. This may assist developers to choose the appropriate renewable technology, depending on the location of the development. The use of sustainable energy sources in new developments has the potential to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to climate change.
- 9.25 The Council is required to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy. Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will be favourably considered subject to consideration of the impacts. A balance

needs to be struck between the beneficial outcomes of renewable energy, and any adverse impacts produced by the development itself.

Natural Environment Policy NE4 : Renewable energy development

Proposals for renewable energy development which would contribute towards the achievement of targets set out in the UK Renewable Energy Strategy will be supported subject to an assessment of the impacts upon:

1. the landscape character and visual amenity;
2. environmental and historic assets;
3. the transport network;
4. air quality;
5. aviation interests;
6. local businesses; and
7. the amenity of residents and sensitive uses.

In assessing renewable energy proposals against the above criteria the Council will give significant weight to their local and wider benefits, particularly the potential to reduce greenhouse gas and other harmful emissions, and the social benefits of community owned schemes where this is relevant.

In all cases, end of life/redundant plant, buildings, apparatus, and infrastructure must be removed and the site restored to its former state or a condition agreed with the Council.

Policy NE5: Delivering sustainable water supply.

- 9.26 Water is a precious natural resource. In North Hertfordshire there is a high level of demand for water whilst at the same time there is a relatively low annual rain fall. Any development will result in an increased demand for water.
- 9.27 North Hertfordshire falls within the potable water supplier's 'Northern resource zone' where average consumption in 2008-2009 was 154 litres per person per day. The district lies within one of the most water-stressed areas of the country and abstraction for human consumption can impact on the water environment, for example contributing to low river levels, which can have a profound impact on rare and sensitive chalk streams. It is therefore vital that water resources are protected and that developments make provision to conserve water and use it as efficiently as possible.
- 9.28 Evidence from the Rye Meads Water Cycle Study (section 8.1. Potable Water) and the Environment Agency recommends that water consumption for new development is set at 105 litres per person per day. This typically only involves low/ dual flush toilets, low flow/ aerated taps and showerheads and efficient appliances (dishwasher and washing machines).
- 9.29 There are many ways in which development can contribute further to sustainable water management, for example the collection of 'grey' water or including water efficiency measures in buildings. The management of surface water run off utilising sustainable drainage techniques which infiltrate can aid groundwater recharge. Reducing demand for potable water will have the additional benefit of reducing the consequent loading on the sewerage network.

- 9.30 BREEAM sets the standard for best practice in sustainable building design, construction and operation for non-residential development and has become one of the most comprehensive and widely recognised measures of a building's environmental performance. It encourages designers, clients and others to think about low carbon and low impact design, minimising the energy demands created by a building before considering energy efficiency and low carbon technologies.

Natural Environments Policy NE5: Delivering sustainable water supply.


All proposals will be expected to achieve a high standard of water use efficiency. To assist in the reduction of water consumption, development proposals including new build and conversion must demonstrate estimated residential water consumption should not exceed 105 litres per person per day until national statutory guidance supersedes this policy. Non-residential development should aim to achieve BREEAM 'excellent' rating.

Policy NE6: Reducing flood risk

- 9.31 The risk of flooding in North Hertfordshire can arise from a number of sources including river flooding, surface water runoff, sewer or groundwater flooding. Within North Hertfordshire there are a number of rivers and streams. Localised flooding has also occurred away from those water courses.
- 9.32 The NPPF sets out the definitions for the zones of flood risk (rivers and sea flooding), ranging from zone 1 with a low probability of flooding to zone 3b which is the functional floodplain. It also sets out the sequential test and exception test which should be used to assess the suitability of a site for development.
- 9.33 A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been carried out for the district, which will help to provide the basis for applying the sequential and exception tests for development sites. It is acknowledged that it may be necessary for water infrastructure to be provided. This is considered to be water-compatible development and therefore can be appropriate in areas of flood risk. In areas of medium flood risk development should take into account flood resilience measures.
- 9.34 Flood zone maps are produced by the Environment Agency. These maps define flood zones 1, 2 and 3, according to the NPPF. North Hertfordshire's SFRA defines flood zone 3b. Proposals for development in an area at risk of flooding may be refused planning permission where it increases flood risk or conflicts with the sequential approach set in the NPPF. Where development is proposed in an area at risk from flooding, the applicant will be required to provide a flood risk assessment (FRA) as part of the planning application submission. An FRA is applicable to development over 1 hectare in flood zone 1 and all types of development in flood zones 2 and 3.
- 9.35 An increase in the number of hard, impermeable surfaces can prevent rainwater soaking naturally into the ground and generate additional rainwater runoff. However, incorporating sustainable drainage systems into a development scheme can help to reduce the impact of rainwater runoff and therefore surface water flooding.

- 9.36 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for new developments. SuDS need to be incorporated into the design of schemes from the outset. This is because many SuDS features will influence the layout of a development and may be interlinked with open space, highways, ecological and/or landscape features.
- 9.37 The Council will consult and work with the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) and the Environment Agency as required on development proposals that are at risk from flooding or may contribute to additional surface run off. Parts of Baldock, Letchworth Garden City and Hitchin are at risk from surface water flooding. At risk areas are identified in the SFRA and mitigation measures need to be considered when designing development in order to reduce the risk of flooding from surface water. Evidence will need to be provided that development has followed the surface water management hierarchy as detailed below.

Figure 3: Sustainable Drainage Hierarchy

| Most Sustainable | SUDS technique | Flood Reduction | Pollution Reduction | Landscape & Wildlife Benefit |
|--|---|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
|  | Living roofs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Basins and ponds - Constructed wetlands - Balancing ponds - Detention basins - Retention ponds | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Filter strips and swales | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Infiltration devices - soakaways - infiltration trenches and basins | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Permeable surfaces and filter drains - gravelled areas - solid paving blocks - porous paviers | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Least Sustainable | Tanked systems - over-sized pipes/tanks - storms cells | ✓ | |

Natural Environment Policy NE6: Reducing flood risk

The Council will take a risk based approach to development and flood risk, directing development to areas at lowest risk in accordance with the NPPF. The sequential and exception test, as set out in the NPPF, will be applied for developments in North Hertfordshire.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment defines flood zones in the district and this will be used to inform the application of these tests as well as Environment Agency flood maps. Proposals within flood zone 1, over 1 hectare and all types of development within flood zone 2 & 3 will need to submit a Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the criteria in the NPPF.

Where development is located within the flood plain (after satisfying the Sequential Test and Exception Test) a reduction in flood risk must be managed through flood resistant design and construction. Development must be located,

designed and laid out to ensure the risk of flooding is minimised whilst not increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Where planning permission is granted, developers will be required to show that any flood protection and mitigation measures which may be necessary do not have an unacceptable impact on nature conservation, landscape and recreation. The most sustainable drainage solutions will be sought for each development to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, enhance biodiversity, water quality and provide amenity benefits. Sites should aim to mimic the drainage of an undeveloped greenfield site. Drainage solutions must follow the SuDS hierarchy.

Overland flow routes and flood storage areas will be protected from all development other than that which is “water compatible”.

Developers should consult with the SAB at the earliest possible opportunity, to ensure SuDS are incorporated at the design stage.

Policy NE7: Water quality and environment

- 9.38 Groundwater is an important resource for both water supply and biodiversity as it discharges into surface waters and wetlands, and maintains river and stream flows during dry spells. Most potable water (water which is safe to drink) in North Hertfordshire is abstracted from the ground. As a consequence it can be vulnerable to pollutants. It is therefore important to protect these water resources from any potential pollutants and recapture as much water run off as possible. Development proposals therefore must demonstrate that available improvements in the efficiency of water use, surface drainage systems and pollution prevention measures have been optimised, and that they have strived to mitigate future problems. Policy NE9; Contaminated Land specifically sets the requirements for contaminated land.
- 9.39 The policy encourages development proposals to incorporate sustainable water management measures into the design. The policy will ensure that where development takes place that appropriate measures are taken to protect the development against flooding and ensure that the design of the development conserves precious water resources, improves water quality and enhances the natural environment.
- 9.40 The NPPF emphasises the importance of natural networks of linked habitat corridors to allow the movement of species between suitable habitats and promote biodiversity. River corridors are particularly effective in this way.
- 9.41 Rivers and watercourses enhance the quality of the environment. Their protection and enhancement will improve the enjoyment of these assets, enhancing biodiversity and make them more resilient to current and future pressures. This can be achieved through the use of buffers alongside watercourses and through restoration projects as part of development schemes.

Natural Environment Policy NE7: Water quality and environment

All new development proposals will seek to make space for water and will maintain a minimum 9 metre⁷ wide undeveloped buffer zone from all designated main rivers and 5m for ordinary watercourses to enhance and protect local biodiversity and wildlife corridors and ensure the preservation of acceptable flood flow routes is maintained.

Where proposals are considered to affect nearby watercourses or sites that are situated close to a river, the Council will seek river restoration as part of the proposal. In some instances financial contributions may be appropriate towards the restoration of rivers.

Policy NE8: Water Framework Directive and wastewater infrastructure

- 9.42 North Hertfordshire is located at the watershed between the Great Ouse and Thames river catchments. Headwaters of river catchments are small which means as a consequence there is very little dilution available for large sewage discharges.
- 9.43 As a result there is little environmental capacity that can be taken up without causing a breach of statutory environmental targets including the Water Framework Directive (WFD)⁸.
- 9.44 The WFD is a piece of EU legislation that came into force in December 2000 and was enacted into UK law in December 2003. The legislation requires member states to make plans to protect and improve the water environment. It applies to all surface freshwater bodies and seeks to improve their condition to a “good” status by 2015 and prevent deterioration in the water environment.
- 9.45 It is being implemented in the UK largely through River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) which detail the pressures facing the water environment and what actions need to be taken in order for the WFD to be met in each area. For North Hertfordshire this includes both the Thames and Great Ouse RBMPs. Working with the Environment Agency and key stakeholders will be important to deliver future outcomes of these plans and improve the district’s water environment.

Water Cycle Studies

- 9.46 Water Cycle Studies have been produced for both the Rye Meads catchment area⁹ and Royston¹⁰, where identified foul treatment infrastructure issues have arisen as a result of potential future development.
- 9.47 The Stevenage Water Cycle Strategy (WCS) requires that for new development to proceed in the area, it will need to be demonstrated that it

⁷ Water Resources Act 1991

⁸ For information on the Water Framework Directive, see: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33362.aspx>

⁹ Stevenage Water Cycle Study; Available from: <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/44525/44531/>

¹⁰ Royston Water Cycle Study; Available from: http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/environment_and_planning/planning/planning_policy_and_projects-2/evidence_base.htm

can be delivered within the water resource and water quality constraints. Developers will need to ensure that additional potable water supply requirements can be met and that waste water will not exceed available treatment capacity. Any necessary upgrades to infrastructure will have to be implemented ahead of the development. Rainwater harvesting and grey water reuse need to be strategically planned across larger sites and a strategy of retrofitting water efficiency features could also take place in the area. Reducing potable demand for water will reduce the consequent loading on the sewerage network.

- 9.48 In Royston, the Environment Agency and the wastewater undertaker have agreed that in principle a technically feasible engineering solution can be delivered to accommodate all of the growth proposed. Should a new permit be required in order to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, this would involve a tightening of standards and would necessitate a costly upgrade of Royston Sewage Treatment Works.

Drainage strategies

- 9.49 Drainage strategies should be used to demonstrate that a proposed development has considered the available surface and foul water drainage options during a scheme's preparation stage.

Natural Environments Policy NE8 : Water Framework Directive and wastewater infrastructure

New development in North Hertfordshire should not result in the deterioration of any watercourse in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

New development around Stevenage within the Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works Catchment will need to demonstrate that additional potable water supply and wastewater treatment capacity can be achieved and implemented ahead of development without significant environmental impact, including adverse effects on designated sites.

On large sites Drainage Strategies will be required in advance of development to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place before development commences.

Where appropriate, development should help achieve the flood management goals from the Anglian and Thames River Basin Management Plans.

Policy NE9: Contaminated land

- 9.50 The district will be accommodating a significant amount of development during the plan period. This policy supports Policy NE1: Environmental and Landscape Protection in protecting and enhancing the environment in the context of accommodating significant development. As a significant proportion of the district's housing growth will take place on previously developed land, it is important for this plan to deal with the implications of contamination.
- 9.51 There are numerous sites in the district which are potentially affected by contamination as a consequence of their historic land uses.

- 9.52 The policy addresses the protection of the health of end users of proposed developments, as well as the protection of the surrounding environment, including groundwater. This is of particular relevance in North Hertfordshire because much of the district's water supply comes from an unconfined aquifer.
- 9.53 The policy will allow the Council to achieve a consistent and transparent approach to the redevelopment of land where contamination of the ground may be a constraint. It will also help to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. The policy also allows us to approve higher value land uses on sites where serious contamination may make other types of development unviable. In the policy below, the term 'receptors' includes human beings, the built environment and the natural environment, including controlled waters as defined in Section 4 of the *Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance* (DEFRA, 2012).
- 9.54 Where the cost of remediation makes redevelopment unviable, and the contamination from that site poses a significant risk to human health or biodiversity, the Council may consider higher value developments in order to fund the necessary remedial works. Such development will be restricted to the minimum necessary to fund the remediation, and should be compatible in amenity terms with the neighbouring land uses.

Natural Environment Policy NE9: Contaminated land

Development proposals must give consideration to the potential or actual impact of land contamination, whether naturally occurring or man-made, on surrounding receptors.

Where required, proposals should be in place to investigate and where appropriate remediate the risks, otherwise the development proposal may be refused.

All land which is considered to be contaminated will require a Contaminated Land Study or a Contaminated Land Risk Assessment to be submitted as part of the planning application. The assessment will need to demonstrate how the site will be safely managed before, during and after development and highlight any remedial action where required. Development must ensure that water quality is not compromised and improvements to water quality will be secured where appropriate, in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

Receptors may include human beings, the built environment and the natural environment, including controlled waters¹¹.

¹¹ Currently defined in Section 4 of the DEFRA Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance, April 2012.

10. Historic Environment

- 10.1 North Hertfordshire has a rich and varied historic environment including buildings, landscapes, sites, townscapes and archaeological remains.
- 10.2 Heritage assets in North Hertfordshire include:
- Over 2,500 Listed Buildings
 - 44 Conservation Areas
 - 13 Registered Parks and Gardens
 - 61 Ancient Monuments
 - Over 1,000 sites of Archaeological Interest
- 10.3 The Council recognises the importance of heritage assets and has been developing and adopting Registers of Buildings of Local Importance on a parish by parish basis in conjunction with Conservation Area reviews
- 10.4 This section of the Local Plan is the Heritage Strategy, setting out the main features of the historic environment in North Hertfordshire. The determination of applications affecting heritage assets, will take place in accordance with the policies of this plan, the NPPF and relevant legislation.

Policy HE1: Heritage Strategy

Listed Buildings

- 10.5 Designated by central government, there are 29 Grade I; 133 Grade II* & 2336 Grade II listed buildings in North Hertfordshire. With the district's fine urban and rural history, the statutory list includes buildings and structures of a wide range of sizes, ages, types and uses and of varying architectural styles, methods of construction and materials, both local and imported. However, there is one material, long straw for thatching, that is historically particular to the district. While changes to buildings have resulted in some replacement with alternative materials, there is merit in seeking retention of and re-instatement of long straw where possible.

Listed Buildings at Risk

- 10.6 In 2003, following a full survey, the Council adopted a Register and Strategy for Listed Buildings at Risk. The register is amended on an on-going basis, as appropriate. As set out in paragraph 140 of the NPPF and taking account of English Heritage guidance, the Council will support justified proposals for enabling development. The Council will consider extending the At Risk Register and Strategy to include other heritage assets. Generally the Council will work constructively with landowners to seek to prevent heritage assets from becoming 'at risk' in the first place, trying to find appropriate uses where possible.

Conservation Areas

- 10.7 Local planning authorities have a duty to determine which parts of their area merit conservation area status. The NPPF identifies the need for ensuring a conservation area justifies its status. The forty-four Conservation Areas in North Hertfordshire include a range of settlements of varying characters.

- 10.8 Where appropriate, the Council will programme reviews of Conservation Areas with priority for locations with potential development pressures and where there have been significant changes since the conservation area was first designated. The reviews will include the production of character statements and will provide opportunities to consider amending boundaries.
- 10.9 Where appropriate the Council will seek to develop guidance for the design of shopfronts and advertisements in conservation areas. Frontages to shops play an important role in defining the character and appearance of conservation areas and it is important that a high quality environment is maintained which addresses both economic and heritage considerations.

Historic Parks & Gardens

- 10.10 Of the thirteen English Heritage Registered Parks and Gardens in the district, one is Grade I; two are Grade II* and ten are Grade II. Two of the Grade II sites form part of the planned layout of Letchworth Garden City. The others are parks and gardens attached to country houses. These sites contain listed buildings and so also form part of their setting. The registered sites are of varying ages and character dating from the 18th century through to the early 20th century. Advice from English Heritage identifies that the register probably contains only two-thirds of the sites of national significance. Working with the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and based on its advice, the Council will, where possible identify other sites of interest. These will be added to the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and will be considered by the Council as non-designated heritage assets, as defined in the NPPF, and given appropriate consideration in the determination of planning applications. In addition, because there are no special controls for works within historic parks and gardens, the Council will consider serving Tree Preservation Orders outside conservation areas, where the character of a site may be threatened by the loss of important trees.

Scheduled Monuments and Archaeology

- 10.11 North Hertfordshire has an especially rich archaeological heritage. This includes evidence of human activity from early prehistoric times but with the district probably being best known for its late Iron Age and Roman remains.
- 10.12 In addition, there are Iron Age hill forts, a number of important ancient roads and routes including the Icknield Way and Roman Ermine Street and small mediaeval castles and moated manor sites. As well as the sixty-one scheduled ancient monuments there are a number of sites within the district that have been identified as being of comparable national importance to the sixty-one scheduled ancient monuments. In accordance with the NPPF, these will be considered in the same way as scheduled sites in the determination of development proposals. Many other sites of interest are known and new sites are becoming known on a regular basis. Because of this, a finite list of sites and their areas cannot be identified. Sites of interest are included in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record, which will be updated on an annual basis.

Heritage Assets of Local Interest

- 10.13 In its definition of heritage assets, the NPPF includes, together with designated assets, those that are identified by the local planning authority

(including those on local lists). Where appropriate, the Council intends to continue its programme of producing local lists for each town and parish. Because of the developing programme for producing local lists and the on-going potential for discovering assets of interest, the Council will determine development proposals affecting all identified non-designated heritage assets in accordance with the NPPF.

10.14 The following general criteria will guide the recognition of locally important assets, both for adopting local lists and when determining planning applications:

- Good quality work of a well-known local architect, designer, or craftsman.
- Buildings of particular local architectural interest, which are important locally for their special architectural design, decoration, craftsmanship or construction including technical innovation.
- Particular important local building types, whether representative examples or rare survivals.
- Assets of particular local historic interest that clearly illustrate important aspects of local social, agricultural, industrial, cultural or military history or the historic development of the parish.
- Assets that act as an important architectural feature or other historic landmark within a street scene or other historically significant setting.
- Assets that are well documented as having a close historical association with important and significant local historical events or people.
- Archaeological assets that are recognisable physical features in the landscape and can be identified as a significant part of the history of human settlement.
- Designed parks and gardens and other man-made landscape features that are important as part of the development of the local historic environment.

Historic Environment Policy HE1: Heritage Strategy

During the course of the plan period the Council will, on an iterative basis, deliver its heritage strategy which will include, but is not limited to:

1. Conservation Area Reviews;
2. updated records of Buildings of Local Interest, Local Parks and Garden of Interest, Scheduled Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Interest;
3. guidance on shopfront design in conservation areas; and
4. guidance on advertisements in conservation areas.

Where there is a proposal to demolish:

- i) A Building of Local Interest that is both located within a Conservation Area and entered on a Register of Buildings of Local Interest adopted by the Council; or
- ii) A 'positive' building that has been identified on a Conservation Area map adopted by the Council; or
- iii) A building/structure that is considered to be worthy of Building of Local Interest or 'positive' building status but is not currently adopted as such by the Council and is also located within a Conservation Area,

Then, subject to a justification for the demolition of a building/structure under

i), ii) or iii) above being provided and considered acceptable to the Council, planning permission shall only be granted for demolition subject to the requirement of a continuous contract for demolition and redevelopment of the site unless there are justifiable grounds for not redeveloping the site.

11. Infrastructure & Delivery

- 11.1 One of the key tests that the Local Plan must meet is to ensure that it is effective. This means that it should be capable of being delivered within the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities. This section demonstrates how this will be achieved through implementation and monitoring.

Implementation

- 11.2 Alongside the Council there are many organisations that will contribute towards the delivery of the Local Plan. For example, the County Council has a significant role to play in relation to education and highways alongside other functions; North Hertfordshire Homes and other providers in relation to the delivery of affordable housing; the health authorities in ensuring there are the right medical facilities at the right time; the water companies and the Environment Agency in relation to water supply and treatment. The development industry will play a significant role in bringing development forward, together with the provision of or contribution towards infrastructure alongside other forms of funding. Communities can also choose to implement Neighbourhood Plans to help shape and deliver development and infrastructure in their areas. The Council will continue to work in partnership with these bodies, including neighbouring authorities and will put further mechanisms in place to ensure delivery within the plan period.
- 11.3 Some of the key methods that will be used to ensure delivery are summarised below:

Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Key Infrastructure:

- 11.4 Ensuring that existing and new communities are sustainable involves a co-ordinated and flexible approach to the provision of infrastructure. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared as a background document to support the Local Plan and assist as a delivery mechanism. It takes into account the growth targets and sets out the infrastructure that is likely to be needed to support growth within the district to 2031. The Council has worked with a variety of infrastructure providers, including those outlined above, to understand their future requirements, including the costs for these and possible sources of funding. The IDP will continue to be updated on an iterative basis as the production of the Local Plan continues.
- 11.5 Predicting infrastructure needs so far into the future is not straightforward. The detail of most development schemes is not known and the nature of public services can change along with other unpredictable changes in services. Therefore, the IDP represents current strategic thinking. It provides the Council with a good starting point and a guide for planning future infrastructure. The IDP is a working document and will be updated as service requirements change and more detail is known regarding growth. The Council will actively work with its partners to keep these requirements up-to-date and use the IDP as a tool to work together to achieve its strategic priorities, assist in delivering infrastructure in a timely manner and as a means of seeking funding. The IDP is a flexible tool for informing the delivery of infrastructure.

- 11.6 It is clear from the current IDP that there are some significant issues in relation to transport, the provision of school places and sewerage infrastructure, as set out below:
- **Strategic Transport** – The scale of growth within the district will result in a significant number of new trips on an already stressed transport network. Congestion issues are particularly focused within Hitchin and junctions relating to the A1(M). Not only as a result of growth, but in relation to existing issues. There is a clear need to focus on promoting sustainable travel modes to limit the impacts of growth whilst acknowledging there is a significant need for physical mitigation measures to the network.
 - **School Places** – With the exception of Royston, most areas are at capacity or reaching capacity. This will need to be addressed either through the expansion of existing schools or the provision of new schools.
 - **Sewerage Infrastructure** – There are known capacity issues at Royston Sewage Treatment Works and Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works. Technical solutions are possible and further detailed discussions are taking place with the water companies and the Environment Agency to inform appropriate mitigation measures.
- 11.7 Whilst these issues are not absolute constraints to the Local Plan, they are crucial in relation to the phasing of sites. Continued and proactive engagement with relevant parties, such as the developers, Highways Agency and Highways Authority, the Local Education Authority, the Environment Agency and Water companies is fundamental in achieving appropriate solutions.
- 11.8 The provision of other forms of infrastructure, such as community facilities and green infrastructure should not be underestimated. They are highly important in achieving the objectives and vision of this Local Plan and achieving sustainable communities. These are identified in detail in the IDP.

Developer Contributions and Other Funding Sources:

- 11.9 Alongside the public sector the development industry will also be expected to contribute to the delivery of the Local Plan. A mechanism for achieving this would be through developer contributions. These could either be in the form of provision of facilities or services, monetary contributions and/or measures to enhance assets or mitigate any adverse impacts of a scheme. Policy ID1: Infrastructure Requirements and Developer Contributions provides more detail.
- 11.10 On-site facilities and mitigation measures directly relating to a development are likely to be in the form of planning obligations (known as section 106). Guidance is set out in the Council's Developer Contributions SPD (to be amended). Planning Obligations relating to on-site provision are more likely to be used for the larger strategic sites and sites where affordable housing would be required.

- 11.11 Planning obligations can, to a limited degree, also be pooled together from a number of different sites to support infrastructure¹². In addition, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended), enables local authorities to choose to set a charge on new development which can be spent on infrastructure needed to support growth. If the CIL route is chosen the Council will go through a formal consultation process and examination to formally adopt a CIL Charging Schedule, this will include a published list of projects that are likely to be funded through CIL receipts (known as the Section 123 list). The approach taken by the Council in relation to planning obligations and CIL will be set out in a Developer Contributions SPD to replace the existing Planning Obligations SPD.
- 11.12 Limited funding is available from other sources for providing new infrastructure. Where funding becomes available it is often spent on meeting deficiencies in existing infrastructure. In many cases funding received from other sources will be needed to make up shortfalls elsewhere and used in combination with funds raised through the CIL and/or planning obligations. The Council will actively work in partnership with other agencies to enable much needed funding for infrastructure. There will be times when not all infrastructure can be delivered. In these cases, the Council will need to prioritise and determine which requirements are most critical to each development and meeting the overall vision and objectives of this plan.

Development Management through the Planning Application Process

- 11.13 This is a key mechanism for ensuring development is delivered appropriately. The Council has a primary role in determining planning applications and ensuring that they are delivered in accordance with this Local Plan, national policy and legislation. There will be an emphasis on pre-application discussions and a proactive approach will be taken to schemes within the Local Plan. This should not only promote delivery, but should also ensure that developers are fully aware of how their planning applications will be assessed. Appropriate conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to ensure delivery of infrastructure and appropriate mitigation measures are put in place for schemes.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), other plans and documents:

- 11.14 There are some issues covered by policies in this Local Plan that also require further guidance to assist in delivery. These include the Developer Contributions SPD, Vehicle Parking, and Design SPD. There are also Town Centre Strategies for each of the four towns, and Development Briefs for specific areas. Communities can choose to prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their area to assist implementation.
- 11.15 Strategic sites will have masterplans to assist in the delivery of these schemes, as discussed in Policy ID2: Masterplans. These will be prepared in consultation with the relevant agencies, the developers and the community and will be adopted as SPDs.

¹² Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy 2010 (as amended) restricts this to a maximum of five developments to contribute to a particular item of infrastructure by April 2015.

Council Owned Land and Property

- 11.16 The Council can use its own assets to assist in delivery and promote growth. Protection and improvement of environmental assets on Council owned land will also be important.

Compulsory Purchase Powers

- 11.17 As a last resort Compulsory Purchase Powers could be used to assemble land and purchase properties to enable the implementation of the Local Plan. However, the Council's preferred approach would be through negotiation. The Council is committed to working alongside landowners and developers in co-operation to assist delivery.

Policy ID1: Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions

- 11.18 The nature of growth in the district is such that in some areas there are large sites which will include both housing and other facilities. Policy ID1: Infrastructure Requirements and Developer Contributions, seeks to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and appropriate mitigation is provided for these large schemes. In other areas, such as Hitchin, much of the growth arises from large numbers of small developments. A small development on its own may not be enough in itself to have a major impact within an area. However, collectively a number of developments can create additional demands and burdens on existing infrastructure. The Council will explore new mechanisms for ensuring that smaller developments are also able to contribute to new infrastructure provision. Infrastructure requirements for the district are set out in more detail in the IDP. The production of the IDP is an iterative process and it will be updated following each consultations stage, and thereafter as appropriate.
- 11.19 Development pressures also have the potential to have a significant impact on the natural, historic or built environment. This could be through removing trees leading to a change in the biodiversity and landscape character of a site, to altering the setting of a listed building. One of the aims of the Local Plan is to seek to conserve and enhance such features. However, if there are reasons to allow proposals that outweigh any significant harmful effects, then these will need to be minimised and mitigated against. This policy seeks to ensure this.
- 11.20 The provision of infrastructure will need to be linked directly to the phasing of development to ensure that it is delivered in line with the timing of future growth. The Council will put in place formal arrangements for ensuring key infrastructure is delivered by the relevant bodies and that all funding sources, in addition to developer contributions are explored. Initial support (pump priming) may be necessary to reflect the time lag between provision and other funding streams. Where new facilities are provided then start-up, maintenance and operating costs will be expected.
- 11.21 Securing affordable housing will be dealt with by means of planning obligations. This method will continue as it is not currently the Government's intention to provide affordable housing through the CIL.

- 11.22 In cases where viability is an issue, developers will be expected to pay for an independent assessment and analysis of their viability evidence. The methodology for any such assessment should be agreed in advance between the applicant and the Council. The Council may also request a copy of the developer's board meeting report relating to the viability of a scheme to establish whether an independent assessment is required.

Infrastructure & Delivery Policy ID1: Infrastructure Requirements and Developer Contributions

The Council will require development proposals to make provision for infrastructure that is necessary in order to accommodate additional demands resulting from the development.

The Council will require developers to provide and/or finance or contribute towards the cost of provision which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, for:

1. On-site and/or off-site improvements and infrastructure necessary as a result of the development in order to:
 - a. avoid placing additional burden on the existing community;
 - b. mitigate adverse impacts; and/or
 - c. enhance critical assets or make good their loss or damage.
2. Maintenance and/or operating costs of new provision.

New infrastructure to support new development must be operational no later than the completion of development or phase in which it is needed, unless otherwise agreed.

Proposals will be assessed on a site-by-site basis having regard to specific circumstances and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Guidance in relation to planning obligations and any Community Infrastructure Levy which may be introduced will be set out in the Council's Community Infrastructure Charging Schedule and/or Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan refers to key infrastructure projects relating to growth that this policy seeks to help to deliver.

The Council will work with landowners, developers and other agencies in facilitating the delivery of sites identified in the Local Plan and seek to overcome known blockages.

Where viability issues impact the delivery of key infrastructure and/or mitigation measures, the Council will determine which requirements are most critical to securing development and meeting the overall vision and objectives of this plan. The Council will take this into account as a material consideration and assess any implications on a case-by-case basis. Where an applicant seeks to reduce the contributions sought the onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate that the Council's policies have reduced the viability of the scheme to the extent that it is unlikely to be delivered.

Risks and contingencies

- 11.23 There could be circumstances where development or infrastructure do not come forward as intended in this Local Plan. This could be for a number of reasons and sometimes beyond the control of the Council, such as market conditions, resources available and the needs of external parties. The following monitoring section identifies areas which will be monitored to assist

in understanding whether policies are working and whether the Local Plan is being delivered effectively. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will also provide a valuable mechanism for monitoring performance. The Council will then be able to identify areas of risk at an early point and develop contingency measures to deal with any issues that may arise.

- 11.24 The AMR will identify whether there needs to be a review of the Local Plan or specific policies within it. A review is likely to be needed if there is significant failure to meet particular targets.
- 11.25 A known risk is failure of sites to come forward for housing or employment and essential infrastructure not being delivered on time. In turn this results in the projected housing delivery falling behind that which has been anticipated. If monitoring identifies this as a problem the Council will:
- Work with its partners/developers to understand the blockages and identify ways in which these could be overcome. This will include how best sites can come forward whilst seeking to achieve items of infrastructure/mitigation measures that are critical to securing sustainable development and the objectives of the Local Plan;
 - Assist in land assembly and actively promote development identified in the Local Plan by working in partnership with landowners and developers;
 - Closely monitor the phasing of development and bring allocated sites forward if other sites are not being delivered;
 - Reprioritise infrastructure requirements in the IDP if there is a known blockage;
 - Review the SHLAA and Employment Land Review to see if there can be any new sites to achieve the targets;
 - Review the housing and/or employment policies within the Local Plan; and
 - Continue to bid for and use suitable funding sources that support growth.

Viability

- 11.26 The Council has undertaken a viability assessment of this Local Plan. Many critical policies in this plan should be flexible enough as to not put at serious risk the overall development within the district. Where developments are not viable they will be assessed on a site-by-site basis as part of the development management process and in accordance with Policy ID1: Infrastructure Requirements and Developer Contributions.

Policy ID2: Masterplans

- 11.27 Some of the sites proposed will be substantial new communities. Each will need careful planning to ensure that the development is properly integrated into the surrounding area, has the appropriate level of facilities on site and mitigates its impact on the local area. The best way to do this is through preparing a masterplan, working with landowners and promoters of sites, and other affected local authorities, including Hertfordshire County Council as the authority with responsibility for highways, education and waste. Where sites are close to or straddle the district boundary joint plans with the neighbouring authority will be appropriate, notably north and west of Stevenage and east of Luton.

Infrastructure & Delivery Policy ID2: Masterplans

The Council will prepare masterplans for the following sites:

- Blackhorse Farm, north of Baldock (Site BA1);
- North of Letchworth (Site LG1);
- East of Luton (Sites EL1, EL2 and EL3); and
- North of Stevenage (NS1).

Should development prove necessary in the plan period to the west of Stevenage a masterplan will also be prepared for that site.

Masterplans will be supplementary planning documents, to be prepared in partnership between the Council and landowners, developers, other local authorities and service providers, and involving the community.

Masterplans will consider matters such as:

- The level of infrastructure and facilities necessary to support the development, including affordable housing;
- Opportunities to provide employment generating development on the site;
- The amount and function of open space and green infrastructure;
- Protection of biodiversity, landscape and the historic environment;
- How the development relates to existing communities;
- How the new community will be encouraged to develop its own sense of identity;
- The opportunities to incorporate large scale low carbon energy schemes; and
- The opportunities for some plots on the site to be made available for self-build housing.

12. Communities

12.1 This chapter sets out the policies as they affect each community in North Hertfordshire, and identifies the particular parcels of land which are to be allocated for development. All development sites and safeguarded land listed in this chapter are shown on the Proposals Map. The communities are largely based on the established network of town and parish boundaries. Part I – proposes the land required to meet North Hertfordshire’s own needs; Part II – proposes the land required to meet wider needs from the Luton housing market area; Part III – covers the reserved sites to meet possible further needs arising during or after the plan period.

12.2 The communities therefore are arranged as follows:

Part I

- Ashwell;
- Baldock;
- Barkway;
- Barley;
- Bygrave;
- Caldecote;
- Clothall;
- Codicote;
- Graveley;
- Great Ashby and north-east of Stevenage;
- Hexton;
- Hinxworth;
- Hitchin;
- Holwell;
- Ickleford;
- Kelshall;
- Kimpton;
- King’s Walden;
- Knebworth;
- Langley;
- Letchworth Garden City;
- Lilley;
- Newnham;
- Nuthampstead;
- Offley;
- Pirton;
- Preston;
- Radwell;
- Reed;
- Royston;
- Rushden;
- Sandon;
- St Ippolyts;
- St Paul’s Walden;
- Stevenage North;
- Therfield;
- Wallington;
- Weston; and
- Wymondley.

Part II

- Cockernhoe and east of Luton

Part III

- West of the A1(M) at Stevenage

Chapter 12 Part I: Development for North Hertfordshire's own needs

Ashwell

Introduction

- 12.3 Ashwell is the northernmost parish in the district (and county). The village of Ashwell has a relatively good range of facilities. At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 1,870, and there were 841 dwellings in the parish. Apart from the village the parish also includes a wide tract of countryside and some scattered farms.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.4 Ashwell is identified as a Category A village. A development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to allow for Ashwell's development needs during this plan period.

Heritage

- 12.5 Ashwell has one conservation area, covering much of the central part of the village, and numerous listed buildings. The parish church of St Mary is Grade I listed. To the north of the village the grounds of Ashwell Bury are designated as a historic park and garden.

Housing

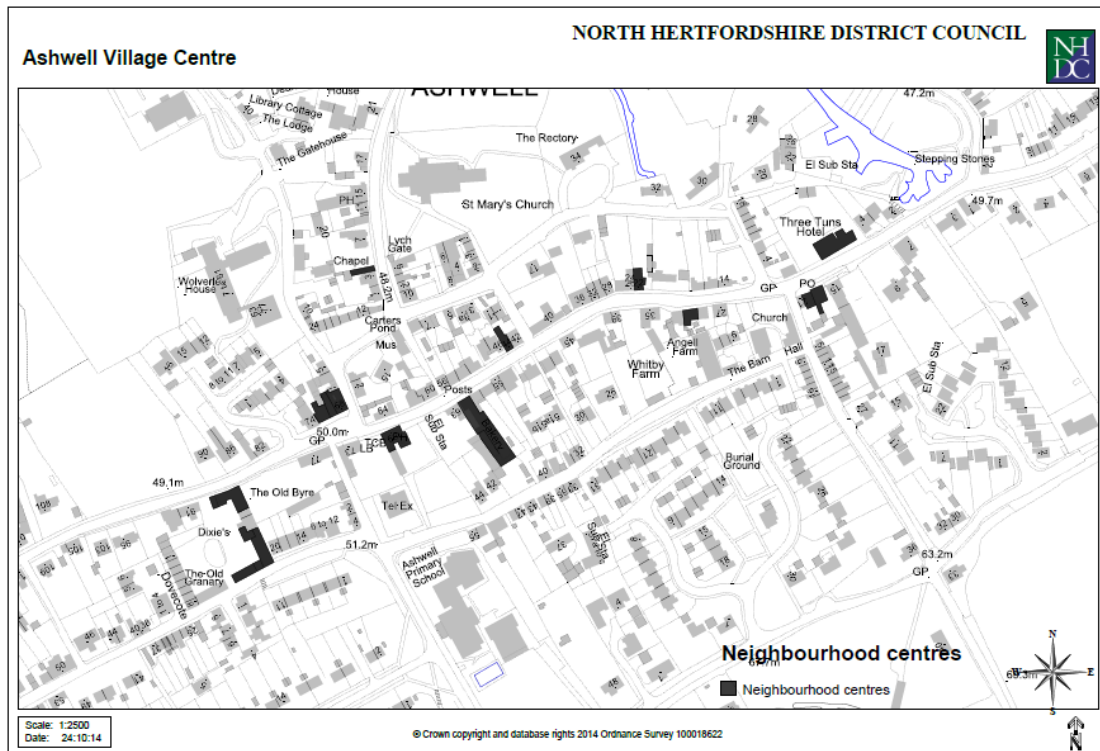
- 12.6 One housing site is identified in Ashwell, with an estimated capacity of 33 dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 69 additional dwellings over the plan period.

Figure 4: Allocated housing sites in Ashwell

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| AS1 | Land west of Claybush Road | 33 |
| Total allocated sites | | 33 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 8 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 28 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 69 |

Economy

- 12.7 The facilities of Ashwell are designated as a village centre under policy ETC6, with some protection provided by policy ETC10. The extent of the neighbourhood centre is shown on the map below.



Baldock

Introduction

- 12.8 Baldock is a market town near the source of the River Ivel. It lies on the site of a Roman town which stood at the junction of the Ickniel Way and the Roman roads to Godmanchester, Braughing, and St Albans. The site of the Roman town appears to have been abandoned after the Roman withdrawal; the modern town was founded by the Knights Templar in the twelfth century on an area of land which formerly belonged to Weston. A parish was created for the new town which covered a relatively small area. The town's original parish boundaries were Ickniel Way to the north, Station Road / Clothall Road to the east, South Road / Crabtree Lane to the south and Weston Way / Norton Road to the west. Baldock has since grown beyond those medieval boundaries to take in areas which formerly belonged to Norton, Bygrave, Clothall, Weston and Willian.
- 12.9 Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock lie very close to each other and have strong relationships linking them in terms of housing markets and job movements. That said, each town retains a distinct identity of its own. The needs for development arising from the three towns are comparatively high, but the gaps separating the towns are small and of great importance if the town's urban areas and identities are to be kept distinct. Managing growth in this relatively developed part of the district whilst allowing each town to retain its identity is one of the challenges to be addressed.
- 12.10 At the 2011 census the population of Baldock (defined as the unparished area) was 10,280, and there were 4,491 dwellings in the town.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.11 Baldock is classed as a town in Policy HDS2: Settlement Hierarchy. A boundary for the town is shown on the Proposals Map. Beyond this boundary is classed as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.12 Baldock has one conservation area, covering the town centre and older parts of the town. Most of the town's listed buildings are on one of the four streets radiating from the Town Hall crossroads: Hitchin Street, Church Street, Whitehorse Street and High Street. The parish church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building.
- 12.13 Baldock also has an important history as a Roman settlement, which was centred on Walls Field to the east of the town centre, which is a scheduled ancient monument. A large area around this is also of archaeological significance.

Housing

- 12.14 Nine sites are allocated in and around Baldock for an estimated 3,414 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the town is estimated to see 3,591 additional dwellings over the plan period.

12.15 The major site at Blackhorse Farm, north of Baldock, enables growth to be accommodated to meet the needs of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock in such a way that does not erode the narrow gaps between the three towns themselves. Blackhorse Farm is also large enough to accommodate schools and other facilities, and to pay for an additional bridge over the railway so that not all traffic has to use to the Station Road bridge and the White Horse crossroads. A masterplan for the site will be prepared to guide this important development.

12.16 This masterplan will include:

- The provision of a new road and pedestrian bridge across the railway to link to the Royston Road;
- Adequate new schools to serve the development, including an additional secondary school;
- A new neighbourhood centre with local facilities;
- Appropriate levels of open space and green infrastructure;
- New employment areas between the railway and Royston Road;
- Consideration of new parking areas for Baldock station being included on the site;
- Investigating the use of open space and layout to mitigate impacts on existing homes in the area; and
- Measures both to develop the new community's identity and to encourage integration between the new community and the existing town.

Figure 5: Allocated housing sites in Baldock

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| BA1 | Blackhorse Farm (land north of Baldock) (mostly in Bygrave parish) A masterplan will be prepared for this site under policy ID2. | 2,800 |
| BA2 | Land west of Clothall Road (in Clothall parish) | 260 |
| BA3 | Land south of Clothall Common (in Clothall parish) | 214 |
| BA4 | Land east of Clothall Common (part in Clothall parish) | 85 |
| BA5 | Land off Yeomanry Drive | 15 |
| BA6 | Land at Icknield Way | 14 |
| BA7 | Land rear of Clare Crescent | 9 |
| BA8 | Works, Station Road | 11 |
| BA9 | Adjoining Raban Court | 6 |
| Total allocated sites | | 3,414 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 76 |
| 1Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 49 |
| Small sites allowance | | 52 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 3,591 |

Economy

12.17 Baldock's town centre provides for day to day shopping, with a range of shops mostly along High Street and Whitehorse Street and a large supermarket on the edge of the town centre. A traditional street market is

held in the High Street on Wednesdays, whilst specialist farmers and craft markets are occasionally held. Baldock has been bypassed twice: first by the north-south A1 in the 1963 and then by the east-west A505 in 2006. Following the second bypass's opening a programme of enhancement works were carried out to the town centre improving the quality of the streetscene.

- 12.18 The shops along High Street and Whitehorse Street are designated as a secondary shopping frontage under policy ETC9, as shown on the Proposals Map.
- 12.19 The town's current employment areas are relatively modest (listed in figure 6). In part this is due to the town's close proximity to the major employment area east of Letchworth Garden City. This plan proposes extending the current small employment area on Royston Road into a larger business park to take advantage of the good location close to the junction with the bypass and within reasonably close proximity of the railway station and town centre.
- 12.20 In order to help deliver the 3,600 additional local jobs estimated to be needed in the district over the plan period, policy ETC1 identifies that 8 hectares of employment land should be allocated at Baldock. The area of land between the railway and Royston Road is larger than this, being nearer 20 hectares. However, it is not considered prudent to allocate the remainder of the land there for any other purposes. Given the site's suitability for employment development it is considered better to hold in reserve those parts of the site not required in this plan period. This will allow for future growth when employment needs justify it and allow for opportunities for growth of this employment area beyond this plan period. The areas of land not required in this plan period are therefore identified as safeguarded land and is shown on the Proposals Map.

Figure 6: Allocated employment sites in Baldock

| Ref | Site | Hectares |
|--|-----------------------------|----------|
| BA10 | Royston Road | 8.0 |
| <i>Designated employment areas</i> | | |
| BE1 | Bondor Business Centre | 2.5 |
| BE2 | Royston Road | 3.3 |
| <i>Parts of employment areas designated for business use only</i> | | |
| BB1 | Bondor Business Centre East | 1.0 |

Barkway

Introduction

- 12.21 Barkway is located in the rural area to the east of the district. At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 775 people, living in 329 dwellings. The village has a limited range of facilities including a primary school, garage, pub and golf course.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.22 Barkway is identified as a category A village in the settlement hierarchy and is the largest in population terms of three villages located in the area to the east of the A10 and to the south of Royston. Despite this, facilities are limited and so residents would be likely to travel to either Royston to the north or Buntingford to the south for many day to day items.

Heritage

- 12.23 Many properties in the village date back to the 17th and 18th century although there are also a number from the 16th century and even some from the 15th century. The older part of the village has a linear form with many of the oldest properties fronting the High Street. Many are rendered, with some displaying distinctive pargetting (ornamental plasterwork), whilst several properties have thatched roofs. Barkway has had a village church for over 1000 years, although the current flint and stone church dates back to the 13th century. The designated conservation area covers much of the historic linear section of the village. The parish church of St Mary Magdalene is a Grade I listed building. To the north-east of the village the Cockenach estate is designated as a historic park and garden.

Housing

- 12.24 Two sites are allocated in Barkway for an estimated 31 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 49 additional dwellings over the plan period.

Figure 7: Allocated housing sites in Barkway

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| BK1 | Land west of Cambridge Road | 13 |
| BK2 | Land off Windmill Close | 18 |
| Total allocated sites | | 31 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 13 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 5 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 49 |

Economy

- 12.25 The visible economic activity of the village is limited to a petrol filling station/garage, soft furnishings business and car repairs business. Barkway Park Golf Club is also located near to the edge of the village.

Barley

Introduction

- 12.26 Barley is located in the rural area on the eastern edge of the district. At the 2011 census the parish had a population of approximately 662 people and 287 dwellings. It has a reasonable range of services for a village its size. These services include a primary school, doctor's surgery, post office and general store, petrol filling station/garage and two public houses.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.27 Barley is identified as a category A village in the settlement hierarchy. Whilst Barley is smaller than the neighbouring village of Barkway, it does have a wider range of facilities and so does attract visits from both Barkway and other nearby settlements. However, for many requirements residents would still need to visit the nearby town of Royston.

Heritage

- 12.28 Barley has grown slowly but more or less continuously over recent centuries and so contains a wide variety of buildings. This includes buildings from the start of the 17th century as well as St Margaret of Antioch Church which originally dates from the 12th century. The Barley conservation area covers much of the village.

Housing

- 12.29 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Barley. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 3 additional dwellings over the plan period.

Economy

- 12.30 The economy of Barley is mixed and reflects the relatively diverse range of facilities and businesses that exist in the village. In addition to those mentioned above this also includes a coach hire company, doctor's surgery and livery operation.

Bygrave

Introduction

- 12.31 Bygrave is a small village to the north-east of Baldock. The older part of the village is clustered around the parish church just off the road from Baldock to Ashwell. More recent development has been built along the main road towards Baldock, notably at Lower Bygrave in the mid-twentieth century. The parish extends up to the edges of Baldock, and used to include part of the town; Baldock Station and the surrounding area were historically in Bygrave parish, gradually being transferred to Baldock between 1881 and 1928.
- 12.32 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Bygrave was 304 and there were 108 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.33 Bygrave village is identified as a Category C village, within which limited additional development is envisaged, primarily as exception sites to meet needs for rural affordable housing. Most of the parish, including the village itself, is washed over with Green Belt.

Housing

- 12.34 Site BA1, Land North of Baldock, is mostly in the parish of Bygrave and is discussed on the Baldock page. No other housing sites are allocated in Bygrave.

Economy

- 12.35 Site BA10, Royston Road, Baldock, is mostly in the parish of Bygrave and is discussed on the Baldock page. No other employment sites are allocated in Bygrave.

Caldecote

Introduction

- 12.36 Caldecote is North Hertfordshire's smallest parish. Whilst it remains administratively a separate parish, it now shares a joint parish council with neighbouring Newnham. The village today is much smaller than it was in medieval times; the church (now closed) was rebuilt in the 14th century, just before the village was effectively abandoned (around the time of the Black Death), leaving just a manor house and a couple of farm cottages.
- 12.37 Away from the shrunken village, the parish does include a couple of buildings on the A1, including a petrol filling station with shop. Apart from this the parish has little in way of facilities.
- 12.38 Population statistics are not available for Caldecote separately due to its small size. The combined population of the three parishes of Caldecote, Newnham and Radwell at the 2011 census was 209 and there were 97 dwellings across the three parishes.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.39 Caldecote is identified as a Category C village, within which limited additional development is envisaged, primarily as exception sites to meet needs for rural affordable housing. Otherwise the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt, within which there is general restraint on development.

Housing

- 12.40 No sites are allocated for housing in Caldecote.

Clothall

Introduction

- 12.41 Clothall is a long thin parish stretching from the southern edges of Baldock down to the district's southern border with East Hertfordshire near Luffenhall. The parish contains the small village of Clothall and the hamlet of Luffenhall. It also gives its name to the Clothall Common area of Baldock, which used to be part of Clothall parish before being transferred to Baldock.
- 12.42 The village contains a village hall and church but has few other facilities.
- 12.43 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Clothall was 150 and there were 67 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.44 Clothall village is identified as a Category B village, within which infilling development that does not extend the built up area into the surrounding countryside will be allowed. Most of the parish, including the village itself, is washed over with Green Belt, whilst the southern and eastern parts of the parish are classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Housing

- 12.45 Some of the sites on the south-eastern edges of Baldock are in the parish of Clothall. For further discussion of these, see the Baldock page. No other housing sites are allocated in Clothall.

Codicote

Introduction

- 12.46 The parish of Codicote covers an area much wider than just the village as it includes some developed parts of Oaklands (Pottersheath) and areas north of Welwyn (Danesbury). It also includes hamlets such as Nup End to the north as well as a number of scattered farms.
- 12.47 The village of Codicote has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shops, several public houses, village hall, car repairs garage and a church.
- 12.48 At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 3,344 and there were 1,496 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.49 Codicote is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to encompass the existing developed extent but also allow for Codicote's future development needs.
- 12.50 The part of Oaklands in Codicote parish is also identified as a Category A village under policy HDS2: Settlement Hierarchy. The rest of the parish is classed as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.51 The village has one conservation area covering the linear part of the settlement which grew up along the High Street (B656). The wider parish also includes parts of the Ayot St Lawrence and Old Knebworth conservation areas, and also parts of the Ayot House and Knebworth Park designated historic parks and gardens.

Housing

- 12.52 Three sites are allocated in and around Codicote for an estimated 179 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 220 additional dwellings over the plan period.

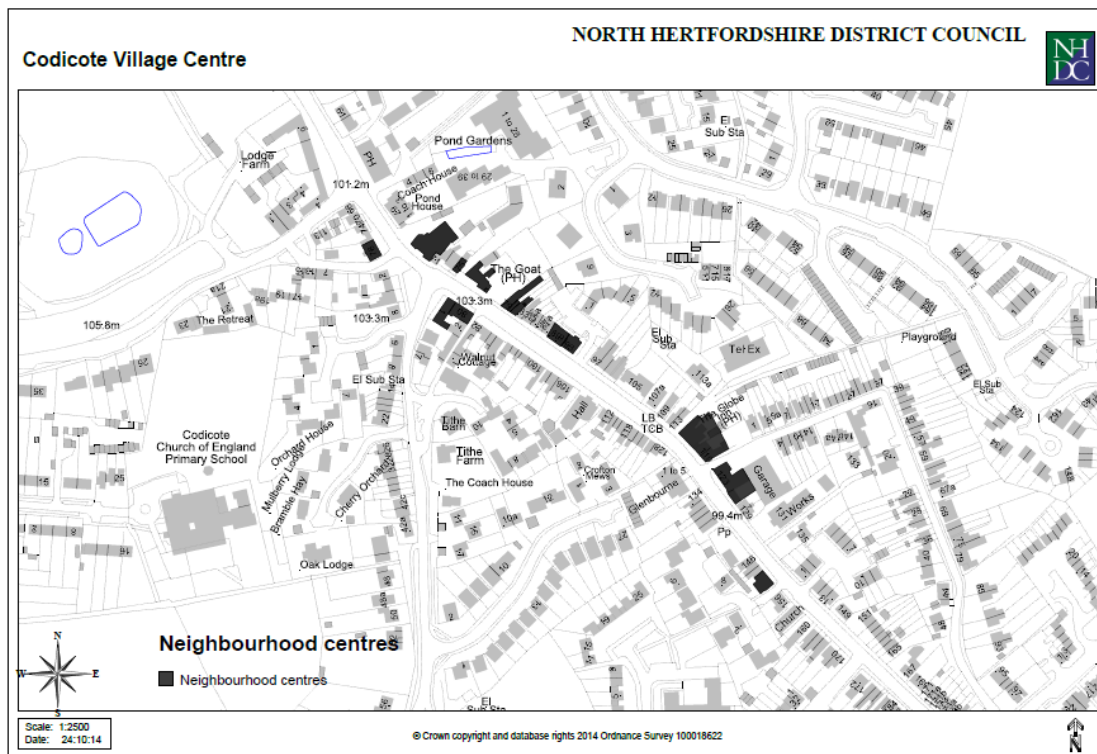
| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| CD1 | Land south of Cowards Lane | 73 |
| CD2 | Codicote Garden Centre, High Street | 58 |
| CD3 | Land north of The Close | 48 |
| Total allocated sites | | 179 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 1 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 40 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 220 |

- 12.53 A site adjoining the existing Gypsy and Traveller site at Pulmore Water has been identified for six additional pitches.

| Ref | Site | Pitch estimate |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| CD4 | Land at Pulmore Water, St Albans Road | 6 |

Economy

12.54 The facilities of Codicote are designated as a village centre under policy ETC6: Town and Local Centres, with protection provided by policy ETC10: Local Centres. The extent of the village centre is shown on the map below.



Graveley

Introduction

- 12.55 The parish of Graveley includes the village and the surrounding areas to the north and east. This incorporates Jacks Hill, Manor Farm and Chesfield. The area to the south abuts Stevenage Borough Council administrative boundary.
- 12.56 The village includes a school, two public houses, a village hall and a church.
- 12.57 At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 487 and there were 198 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.58 Graveley is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to encompass the existing developed extent but also allow for Graveley's future development needs.
- 12.59 Most of the parish is covered by the Green Belt, but the southern part of the parish contains the North of Stevenage site (discussed on the Stevenage North page) and the eastern part of the parish contains a site adjoining Great Ashby (discussed on the Great Ashby page).

Heritage

- 12.60 The village contains one conservation area, which includes the majority of the listed buildings. The parish church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building. There are also a number of heritage assets in the hamlet of Chesfield, including listed buildings and the ruined church of St Etheldreda.

Housing

- 12.61 One site is allocated in Graveley for an estimated 8 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the village is estimated to see 11 additional dwellings over the plan period. This excludes growth of Stevenage, discussed separately on the Stevenage North and Great Ashby pages.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| GR1 | Land at Milksey Lane | 8 |
| Total allocated sites | | 8 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 2 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 5 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 15 |

Great Ashby & North East of Stevenage

Introduction

- 12.62 Great Ashby is a relatively new parish, representing the residential area adjoining Stevenage. Formerly part of Graveley parish (and a small strip of Weston parish), the new parish covers the residential estate adjoining the north east Stevenage.
- 12.63 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Great Ashby was 5,706 and there were 2,172 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.64 Great Ashby adjoins Stevenage and so for the purposes of settlement hierarchy is considered part of the town.

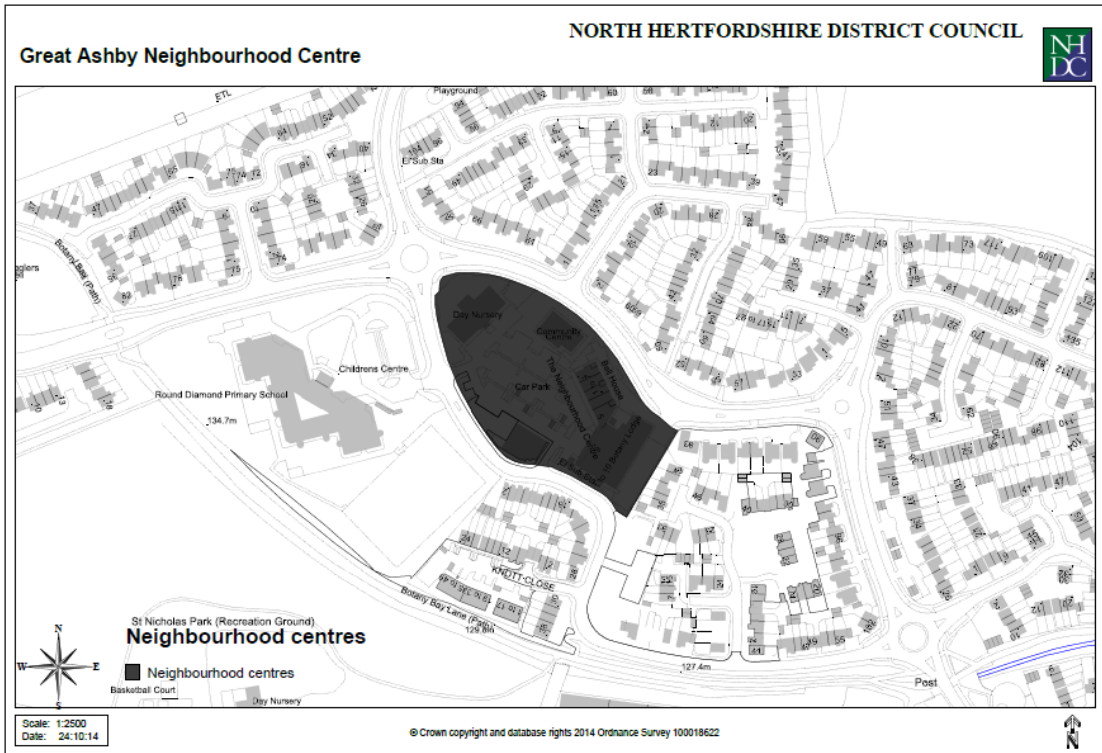
Housing

- 12.65 Two sites are allocated in and around Great Ashby for an estimated 857 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the area is estimated to see 857 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| GA1 | Land at Roundwood (in Graveley parish) | 357 |
| GA2 | Land off Mendip Way (in Weston parish) <i>This site to include provision for an additional primary school.</i> | 500 |
| Total allocated sites | | 857 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 0 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 0 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 857 |

Economy

- 12.66 The facilities of Great Ashby are designated as a neighbourhood centre under policy ETC6: Town and Local Centres, with protection provided by policy ETC10: Local Centres. The extent of the neighbourhood centre is shown on the map below.



Hexton

Introduction

- 12.67 The parish of Hexton contains the village and surrounding countryside. It adjoins Central Bedfordshire to the north, east and west. Most of the parish is covered by the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 12.68 The village includes a school, shop, public house, village hall and church.
- 12.69 At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 123 and there were 52 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.70 Hexton is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to encompass the existing developed extent.

Heritage

- 12.71 The parish contains the Hexton Conservation Area which includes a number of listed buildings. Ravensburgh Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The grounds of Hexton Manor are designated as a historic park and garden.

Housing

- 12.72 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Hexton.

Hinxworth

Introduction

- 12.73 The parish of Hinxworth contains the village and surrounding farmland. It adjoins Central Bedfordshire to the west and north. There is a village hall, public house and church, but little else by way of facilities.
- 12.74 At the 2011 census the population of the parish was 313 and there were 127 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.75 Hinxworth is identified as a Category B village, within which infilling development which does not expand the built up area into the surrounding countryside will be allowed. The rest of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.76 The parish contains the Hinxworth Conservation Area which includes a number of listed buildings.

Housing

- 12.77 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Hinxworth. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 2 additional dwellings over the plan period.

Hitchin

Introduction

- 12.78 Hitchin is one of North Hertfordshire's main towns. Historically it forms the main market town serving the area, and administratively it was the base for the Hitchin Rural District Council, which until 1974 covered most of the territory which now comprises North Hertfordshire.
- 12.79 Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock lie very close to each other and have strong relationships linking them in terms of housing markets and job movements. That said, each town retains a distinct identity of its own. The needs for development arising from the three towns are comparatively high, but the gaps separating the towns are small and of great importance if the town's urban areas and identities are to be kept distinct. Managing growth in this relatively developed part of the district whilst allowing each town to retain its identity is one of the challenges to be addressed.
- 12.80 At the 2011 census the population of Hitchin (defined as the unparished area of the town) was 32,731 and there were 14,702 dwellings in the unparished area. A further 870 people and 329 dwellings are found in the part of St Ippolyts parish which falls within Hitchin Priory ward, giving a combined population of 33,601 for the urban area of Hitchin, making it the most populous individual urban area in the district, narrowly overtaking Letchworth Garden City, which had been larger in the 2001 census.
- 12.81 The town has grown over the years and has absorbed the former village of Walsworth within its urban area, as well as smaller hamlets such as Bearton Green, giving different parts of the modern town different characters. In the east of the town Walsworth Common / Purwell Meadows forms a major open space along the River Purwell.
- 12.82 The town has some small areas of relative deprivation, notably on the Westmill estate in the north-west of the town. The Council is working with partners to try and regenerate the neighbourhood centre there and improve community facilities.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.83 Hitchin is classed as a town under policy HDS2. A settlement boundary is defined for the town (shown on the Proposals Map), within which new development is encouraged. Beyond the settlement boundary is Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.84 Hitchin developed around its long thin medieval market place, which ran parallel to the River Hiz and stretched from Bancroft in the north to Bridge Street and Tilehouse Street in the south, adjoining Hitchin Priory. The parish church of St Mary's is between the historic market place and the river. Both Hitchin Priory and the parish church of St Mary's are Grade I listed buildings.
- 12.85 Infilling within the historic market place created the streets of Sun Street and Bucklersbury to the south and High Street and Churchyard to the north, leaving the smaller area now known as Market Place which forms the visual and commercial heart of the town. This area is covered by the Hitchin conservation area, which also includes some of the early suburban areas,

notably between Walsworth Road and Wymondley Road which developed between the old town and the railway.

- 12.86 Separate conservation areas cover the area around Hitchin Station and nearby Ransom's Recreation Ground, Hitchin Hill Path, Butts Close, and the hamlet of Charlton to the south-west of the town.

Housing

- 12.87 Nine sites are allocated in and around Hitchin for an estimated 770 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011, permissions at 2014, and an allowance for small sites, the town is estimated to see 1,342 additional dwellings over the plan period.

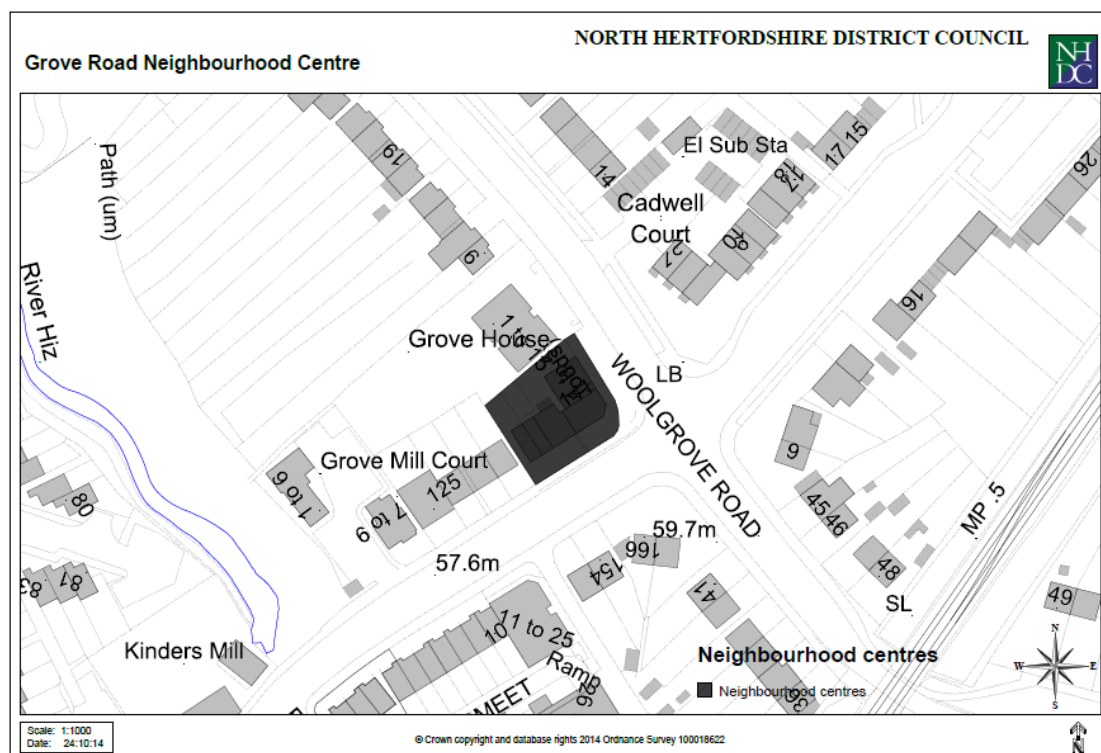
| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| HT1 | Land at Highover Farm | 484 |
| HT2 | Land north of Pound Farm (St Ippolyts parish) | 67 |
| HT3 | Land south of Oughtonhead Way | 37 |
| HT4 | Land off Lucas Lane | 26 |
| HT5 | Land at junction of Grays Lane and Lucas Lane | 12 |
| HT6 | Land at junction of Grays Lane and Crow Furlong | 41 |
| HT7 | John Barker Place | 33 |
| HT8 | Cooks Way | 29 |
| HT9 | Centre for the Arts, Willian Road | 41 |
| Total allocated sites | | 770 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 240 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 160 |
| Small sites allowance | | 172 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 1,342 |

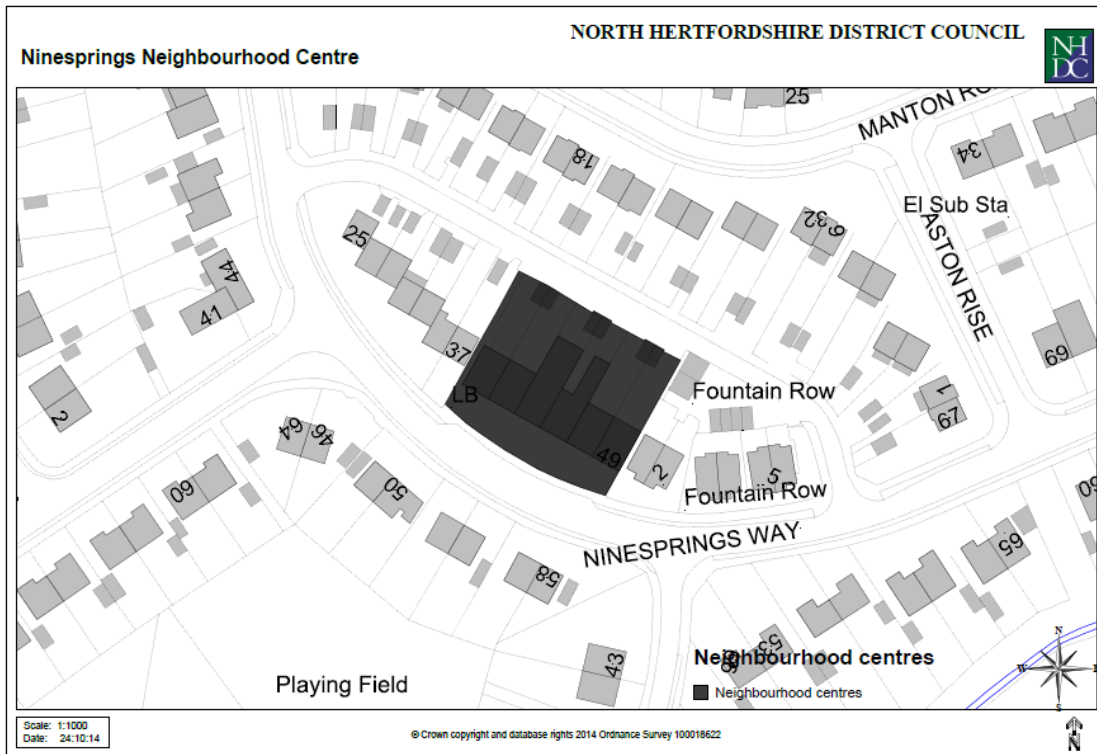
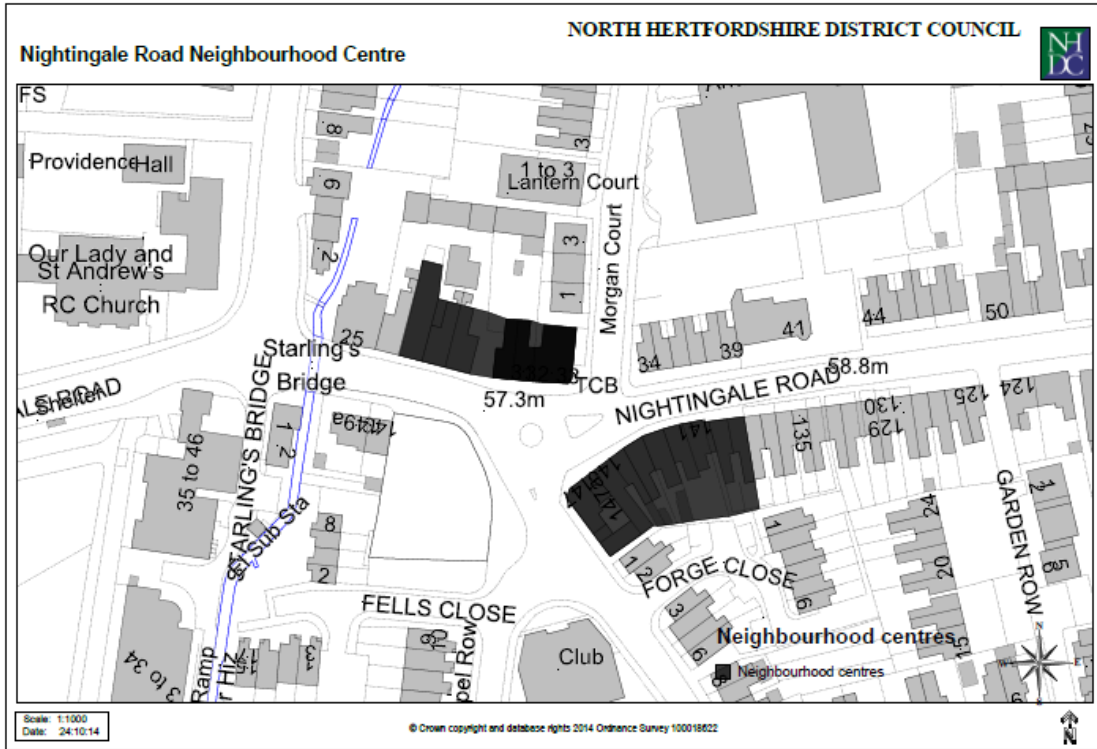
Economy

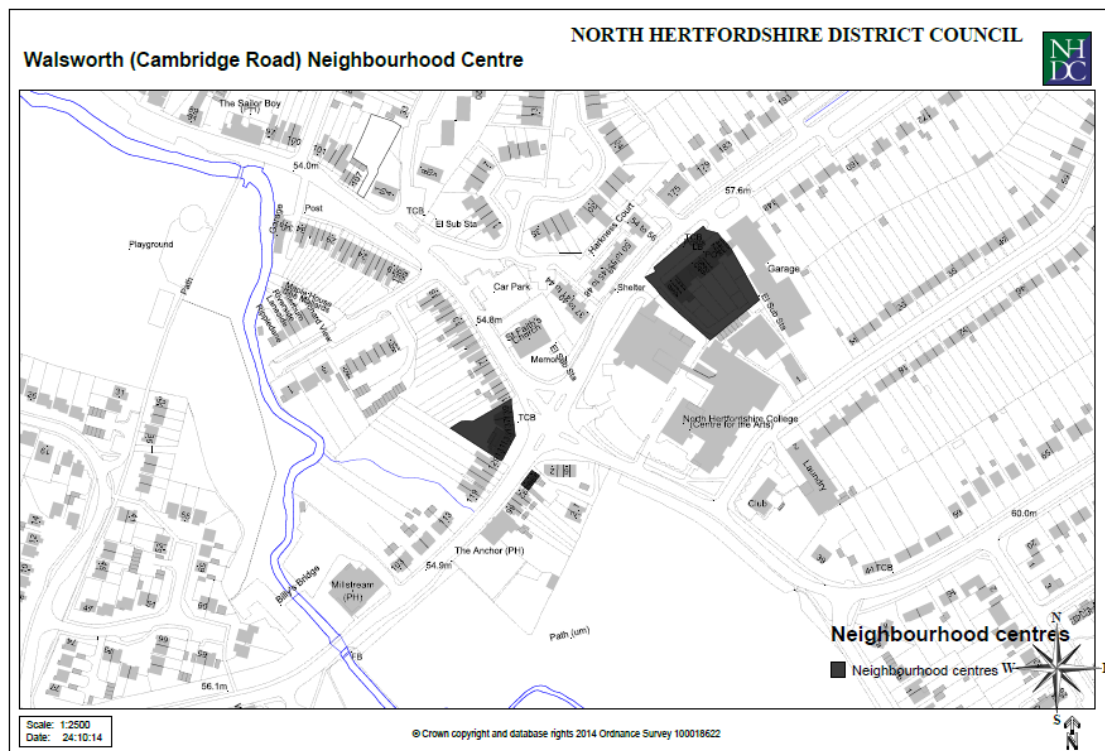
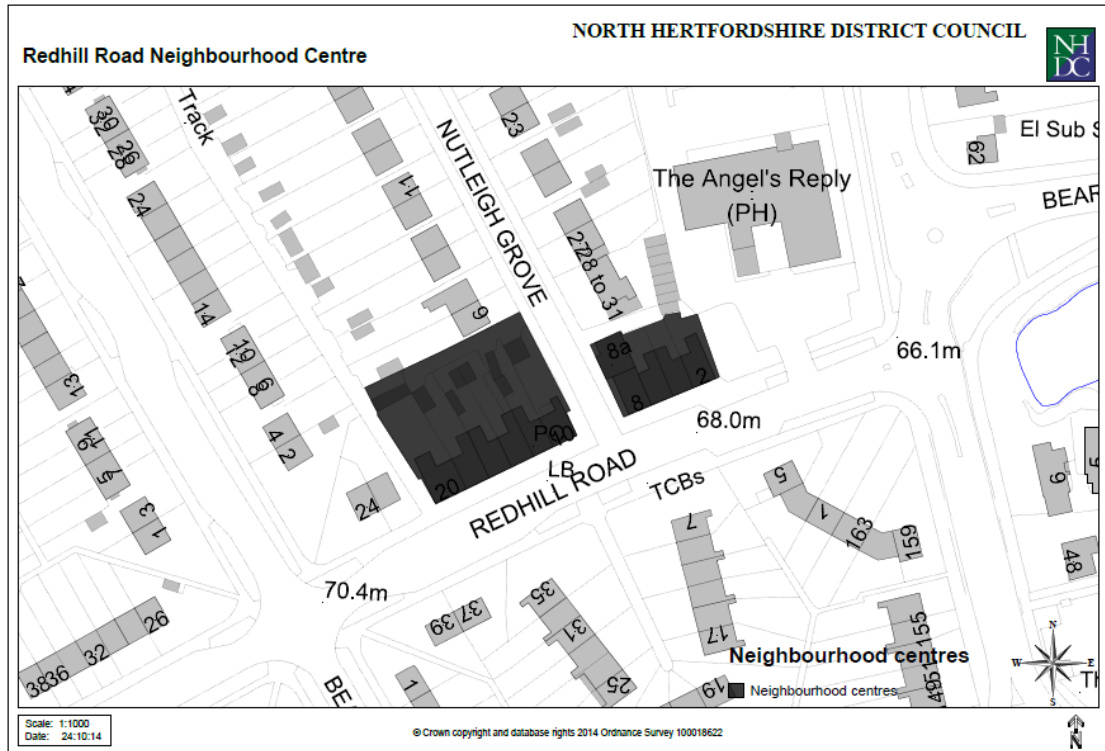
- 12.88 Hitchin contains a number of existing employment areas spread across the town. Although no new sites for employment uses are proposed in the Local Plan, protection of the existing employment areas will be important to ensure the future of the economy and support wider economic growth.

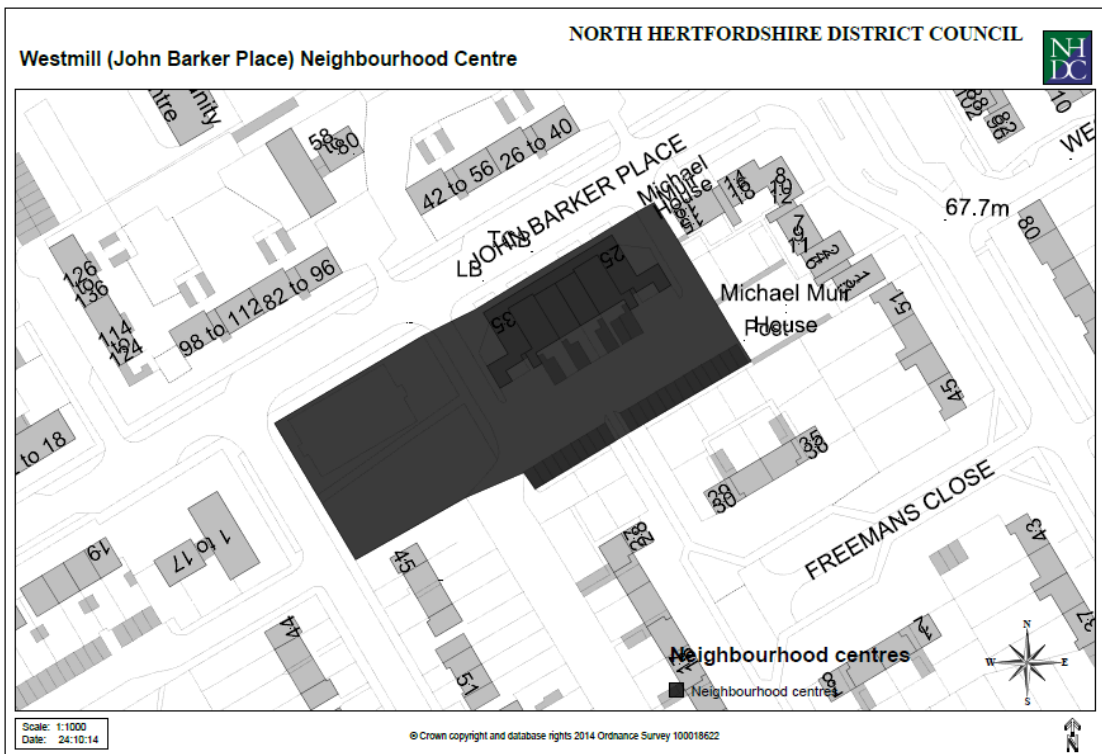
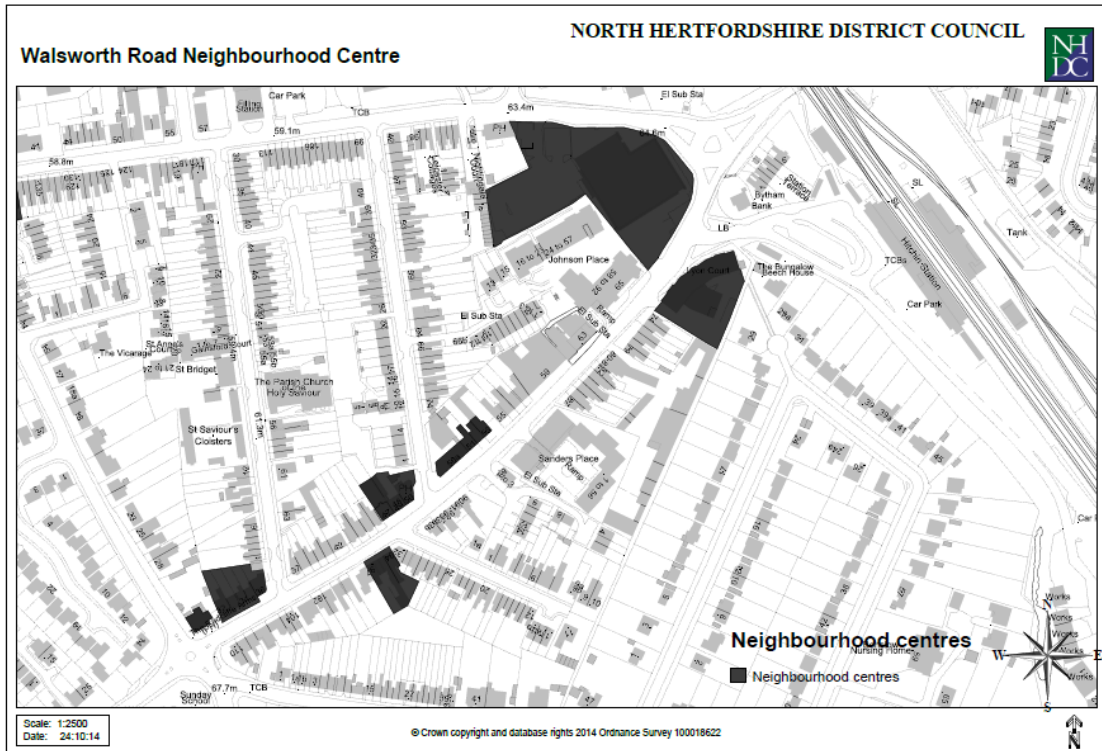
| Ref | Site | Hectares |
|---|------------------------------|----------|
| Designated employment areas | | |
| HE1 | Wilbury Way | 38.9 |
| HE2 | Burymead Road | 7.1 |
| HE3 | Station approach | 1.4 |
| HE4 | Land adjacent to Priory Park | 0.9 |
| Parts of employment areas designated for business use only | | |
| HB1 | Wilbury Way | 3.6 |
| HB2 | Cadwell Lane | 0.8 |
| HB3 | Burymead Road | 7.1 |
| HB4 | Land adjacent to Priory Park | 0.9 |

- 12.89 Hitchin town centre is the district's largest town centre. It has a good range of shops, with the primary shopping area being largely around Market Place and along High Street and Bancroft, with secondary shopping areas along Hermitage Road, Bucklersbury and Sun Street.
- 12.90 As discussed in policy ETC7: Additional Retail Floorspace, there is no immediate identified need (up to 2021) for additional retail floorspace. Therefore, no additional retail sites are formally allocated in the town. Instead, the Council will apply the sequential test of Policy ETC8: New retail, leisure and other town centre development, when considering applications for any retail, leisure and other town centre uses. In the longer term, retail needs for the period after 2021 will be considered by a review of the town centre strategies for each town.
- 12.91 Policy ETC6 identifies seven neighbourhood centres in Hitchin, which will be encouraged to thrive and protected under policy ETC10. They are:
- Grove Road;
 - Nightingale Road;
 - Ninesprings;
 - Redhill Road;
 - Walsworth Road
 - Walsworth (Cambridge Road); and
 - Westmill (John Barker Place).
- 12.92 The extent of these centres is shown on the maps below.









Holwell

Introduction

- 12.93 Holwell is a small parish on the border with Bedfordshire. Until 1897 it was part of Bedfordshire. The parish contains the village of Holwell and the surrounding rural area. There is a village hall and church, but little else by way of facilities.
- 12.94 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Holwell was 361 and there were 164 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.95 Holwell is defined as a category B village within which infilling development that does not extend the built up area into the surrounding countryside will be allowed. The whole parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Housing

- 12.96 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Holwell. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 5 additional dwellings over the plan period.

Ickleford

Introduction

- 12.97 Ickleford parish lies to the north of Hitchin, on the district and county boundary. Apart from the village the parish includes some scattered farms and tracts of countryside. The village of Ickleford has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shops, public houses, village hall and church.
- 12.98 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Ickleford was 1,833 and there were 844 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.99 Ickleford is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. Most of the rest of the parish is classed as Green Belt, save a small area in the far north of the parish on the Bedfordshire border which is rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.100 Ickleford has one conservation area which covers the central area of the village, covering the two greens (Upper Green and Lower Green) between which the village grew. The parish church of St Katherine's is a Grade I listed building.

Housing

- 12.101 Two sites are allocated in Ickleford for an estimated 57 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 60 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| IC1 | Duncots Close | 9 |
| IC2 | Burford Grange, Bedford Road | 48 |
| Total allocated sites | | 57 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 0 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 3 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 60 |

Kelshall

Introduction

- 12.102 Kelshall is a small village in hilly country to the south-west of Royston. It is one of a group of villages established by the Saxons along the line of the chalk ridge from Baldock to Royston.
- 12.103 Kelshall has a village hall and church but few other facilities.
- 12.104 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Kelshall was 163 and there were 65 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.105 Kelshall has limited facilities and is identified as a category B village within which infilling development which does not extend the built up area of the village into the surrounding countryside will be allowed.

Housing

- 12.106 No sites are allocated in Kelshall for residential development. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 2 additional dwellings over the plan period.

Kimpton

Introduction

- 12.107 Kimpton parish is on the south-western edge of the district. The village of Kimpton has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shop, public houses, village hall and church. Apart from the village itself, the parish also includes the smaller settlements of Peters Green and Blackmore End as well as some scattered farms and a wide tract of countryside.
- 12.108 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Kimpton was 2,167 and there were 884 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.109 Kimpton is identified as a Category A village under policy HDS2, with its settlement boundary being shown on the Proposals Map. Peters Green and Blackmore End are both classed as Category B settlements and so will be allowed infilling development that does not extend the built up area into the surrounding countryside.

Heritage

- 12.110 Kimpton has two conservation areas. Kimpton Village covers the eastern part of the village around the church and green, and Kimpton Bottom lies at the western end of the village. The parish church of St Peter and St Paul is a Grade I listed building.

Housing

- 12.111 Three sites are allocated in Kimpton for an estimated 96 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 94 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| KM1 | Land off Hall Lane | 53 |
| KM2 | Land off Lloyd Way | 30 |
| KM3 | Land north of High Street | 13 |
| Total allocated sites | | 96 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 6 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | -8 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 94 |

Economy

- 12.112 Kimpton has a small employment area along Claggy Road. This is not sufficiently large to designate as an employment area, but does perform an important role in providing local employment and facilities. The Council will therefore seek to protect the employment function of this area under policy ETC4: Employment development outside employment areas.

King's Walden

Introduction

- 12.113 King's Walden parish lies on the western edge of the district, close to Luton Airport. The largest village in the parish is Breachwood Green. It also includes the smaller village of King's Walden (including Ley Green). The parish also includes several scattered smaller hamlets and farms and the surrounding countryside. Breachwood Green has a school, public house, village hall and church. King's Walden has a shop, public house and church.
- 12.114 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of King's Walden was 1,015 and there were 410 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.115 Breachwood Green is classed as a Category A village in Policy HDS2, with a settlement boundary defined within which new development will be supported. The rest of the parish is designated as Green Belt, including King's Walden village, which is classed as a Category B village, where infilling development will be allowed.

Heritage

- 12.116 There are no conservation areas in the parish. The parish church of St Mary's is a Grade I listed building.

Housing

- 12.117 One site is allocated in King's Walden parish, at Breachwood Green, for an estimated 16 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 16 additional dwellings through the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| KW1 | Land west of The Heath, Breachwood Green | 16 |
| Total allocated sites | | 16 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 2 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | -1 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 17 |

Knebworth

Introduction

- 12.118 Knebworth parish lies on the southern edge of district between Stevenage and Welwyn. The village of Knebworth has a good range of facilities including a railway station, school, doctors and dentists, library, a range of shops, village hall and churches. The railway and A1(M) both cross the parish. East of the A1(M) is Knebworth village, which grew up around Knebworth Station. West of the A1(M) is Old Knebworth, adjoining the Knebworth House estate. Apart from the two villages the parish also includes the Knebworth House parkland and surrounding countryside.
- 12.119 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Knebworth was 4,496 and there were 2,002 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.120 Knebworth is identified as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map. The rest of the parish is designated Green Belt, with Old Knebworth as a Category B village where infilling will be allowed.

Heritage

- 12.121 Knebworth village has moved twice. The original village was in what is now Knebworth Park, clustered around the parish church of St Mary and St Thomas. The church, which is a Grade I listed building, now stands alone in the park, after one of the owners of Knebworth House moved the village to enlarge the park. The village's new location was what is now called Old Knebworth. The settlement now called Knebworth grew up around the railway station a little way to the east of Old Knebworth.
- 12.122 Knebworth has three conservation areas. The Old Knebworth conservation area covers that village, whilst the Deards End Lane and Stockens Green conservation areas cover suburban parts of the main village with particular distinctive characteristics. Knebworth Park is designated as a historic park and garden. The smaller Homewood estate, built as the dower house to Knebworth House, is also a designated historic park and garden.

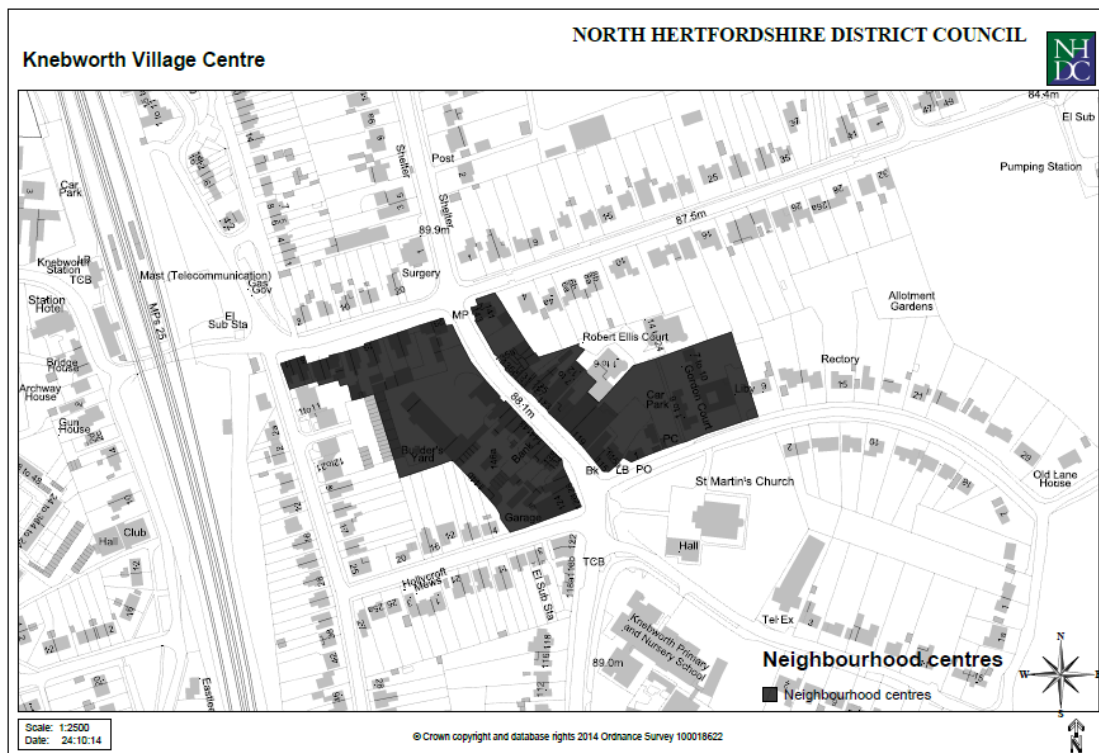
Housing

- 12.123 Two sites are allocated in Knebworth for an estimated 411 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 433 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| KB1 | Land at Deards End | 227 |
| KB2 | Land off Gypsy Lane <i>This site to include a new primary school.</i> | 184 |
| Total allocated sites | | 411 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 0 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 22 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 433 |

Economy

12.124 The facilities of Knebworth are designated as a village centre under policy ETC6: Town and Local Centres, with protection provided by policy ETC10: Local Centres. The extent of the village centre is shown on the map below.



Langley

Introduction

- 12.125 Langley is one of the district's smaller parishes. Historically it was part of the parish of Hitchin, becoming a separate civil parish in 1894. The parish of Langley has no meaningful facilities. Apart from the small village of Langley the parish also includes a wide tract of countryside and some scattered farms.
- 12.126 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Langley was 175 and there were 71 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.127 Langley is identified in as a Category C village, within which limited additional development is envisaged, primarily as exception sites to meet needs for rural affordable housing. Otherwise the parish is classed as Green Belt, within which there is general restraint on development, apart from a small area which falls within the west of Stevenage area of safeguarded land, discussed on the Stevenage West page.

Housing

- 12.128 No sites are allocated in Langley for residential development, although part of the reserve West of Stevenage site comes within the parish.

Letchworth Garden City

Introduction

- 12.129 Letchworth is the world's first garden city based on Ebenezer Howard's original concept of a self contained settlement combining both town and country living. Much of the town is the product of a Master Plan, with areas of low, medium and higher density housing, industry, open space and the town centre in broadly separate land uses with attractively planned landscapes. Large open spaces are integrated into the town's layout, notably at Norton Common and Howard Park and Gardens.
- 12.130 The original masterplan for the garden city was focussed on the area between the three parallel roads of Wilbury Road / Norton Road in the north, Icknield Way across the middle of the area, and Hitchin Road / Baldock Road (the A505) to the south. After the Second World War development spread beyond the original masterplan, with the Grange estate to the north and the Jackmans, Lordship and Manor Park estates to the south.
- 12.131 The town's administrative boundaries also include the three villages of Willian, Norton and the old village of Letchworth, which were the three pre-garden city parishes covering the area. Today Willian remains a distinct village, being slightly separated from the urban area of Letchworth by one or two thin fields. Norton abuts the urban area with no clear point where Norton ends and the garden city begins. The old village of Letchworth, which stretched from St Mary's Church and Letchworth Hall up the length of Letchworth Lane to the corner shop on Baldock Road, is effectively absorbed within the urban area of the garden city.
- 12.132 At the 2011 census the population of Letchworth Garden City (including Willian and Norton) was 33,249 and there were 14,271 dwellings in the town¹³.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.133 Letchworth Garden City is the district's second largest urban area, with only slightly fewer people than neighbouring Hitchin. Letchworth has largely grown to fill most of the space between Hitchin and Baldock, leaving little room for further growth that does not erode the separation between those towns. North and south of the town are the villages of Stotfold (in Bedfordshire) and Willian. A settlement boundary is defined for the town (shown on the Proposals Map) within which new development is encouraged. Beyond the settlement boundary is Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.134 As the world's first garden city, the importance of the original design and layout of the Garden City is recognised in the two Conservation Area designations, Letchworth and Croft Lane. There are many listed buildings in the town. There are also conservation areas for the old villages of Willian and Norton.

¹³ At the time of the 2011 census this was the area of the Letchworth Garden City parish, which has subsequently been abolished. The area is the same as the combined five Letchworth wards on NHDC.

- 12.135 The Broadway and Broadway Gardens are designated as a historic park and garden, as is Howard Park and Gardens.

Housing

- 12.136 Eleven sites are allocated in Letchworth for an estimated 1,537 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the town is estimated to see 2,030 additional dwellings across the plan period.
- 12.137 For the major site north of Letchworth a masterplan will be prepared, which will consider:
- Access into the town and onto the wider road network (including road, public transport, pedestrian and cycle links);
 - Adequate new schools and other facilities to serve the development;
 - Appropriate levels of open space and green infrastructure, including diverting the Greenway to go around the outside of the new development; and
 - Measures both to develop the new community's identity and to encourage integration between the new community and the existing town.

Figure 8: Allocated housing sites in Letchworth

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| LG1 | Land north of Letchworth A masterplan will be prepared for this site in accordance with Policy ID2. | 1,000 |
| LG2 | Former George W. King site, Blackhorse Road | 159 |
| LG3 | Land east of Kristiansand Way and Talbot Way | 112 |
| LG4 | Land north of former Norton School, Norton Road | 56 |
| LG5 | Land at Birds Hill | 50 |
| LG6 | Land off Radburn Way | 27 |
| LG7 | Former Gates Garage, Station Road | 24 |
| LG8 | Pixmore Centre, Pixmore Avenue | 16 |
| LG9 | Former Lannock School | 11 |
| LG10 | Former playing field, Croft Lane | 37 |
| LG11 | Garden Square Shopping Centre | 45 |
| Total allocated sites | | 1,537 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 302 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 19 |
| Small sites allowance | | 172 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 2,030 |

Economy

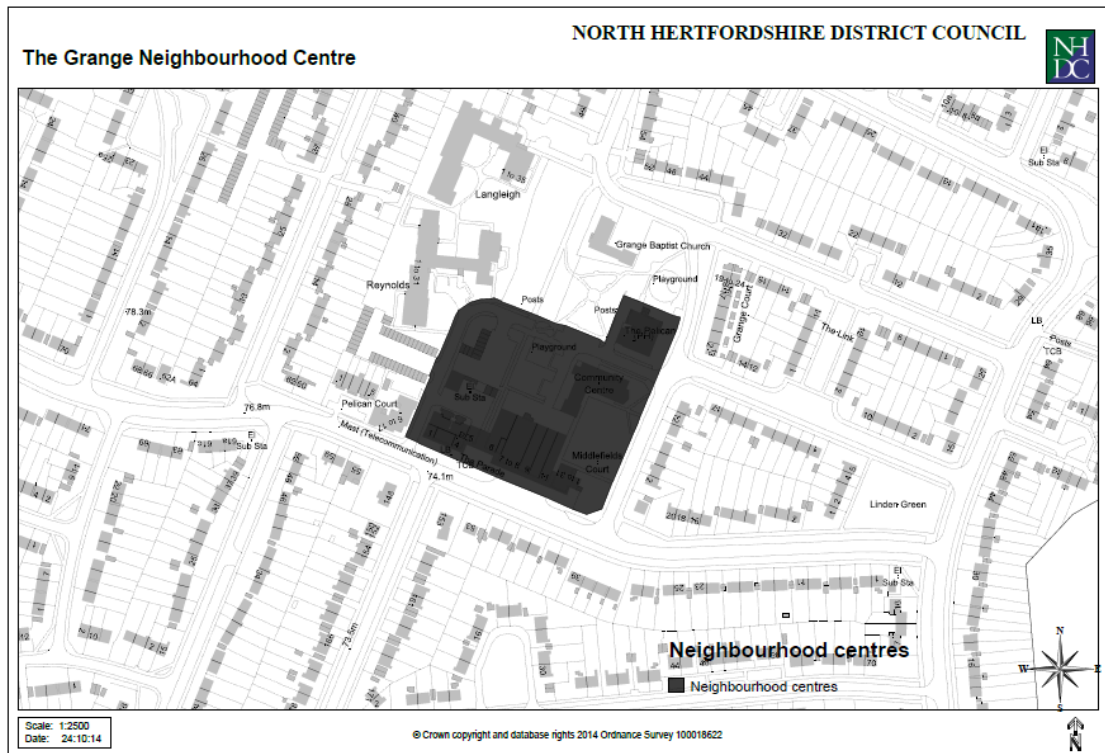
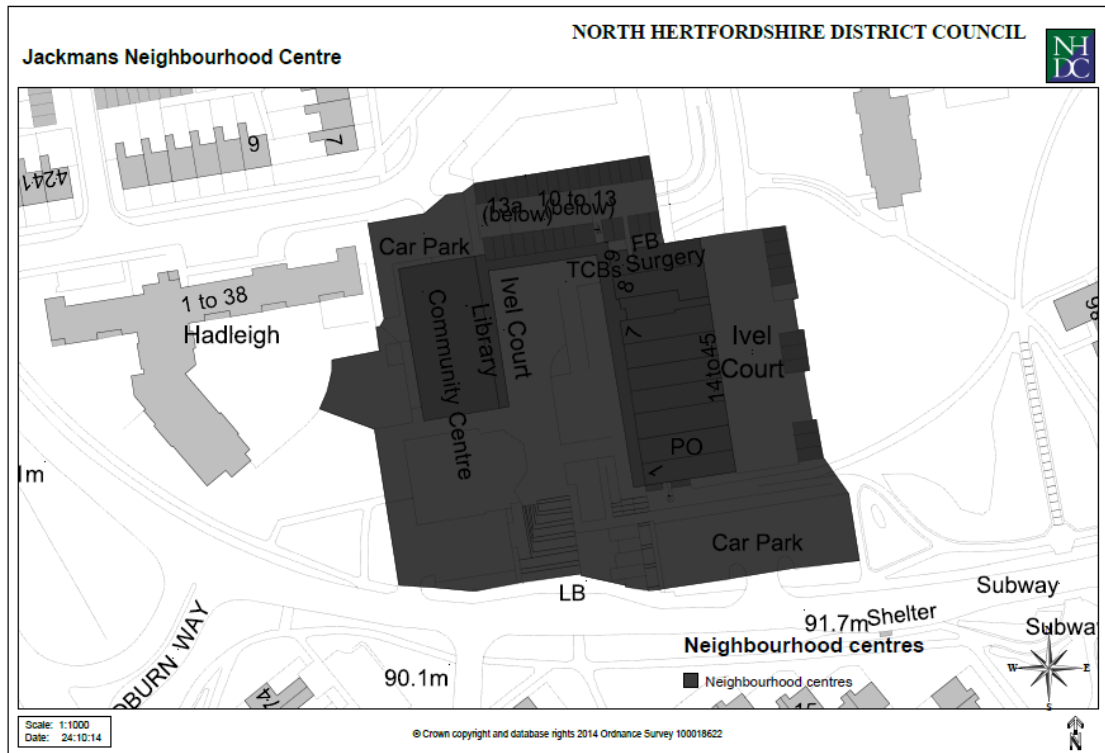
- 12.138 Letchworth Garden City plays a significant role in the district's economy, with a major employment area centred on Works Road and Avenue One. The town centre also provides a range of shops and employment opportunities.
- 12.139 In order to help deliver the 3,600 additional local jobs estimated to be needed in the district over the plan period, policy ETC1 identifies that 1.5

hectares of employment land should be allocated at the former Power Station on Works Road, partly to compensate the loss of employment sites on the western fringes of the main employment area, but also to provide new employment space for business growth.

Figure 9: Allocated employment sites in Letchworth

| Ref | Site | Hectares |
|---|----------------------------------|----------|
| LG12 | Former power station, Works Road | 1.5 |
| Designated employment areas | | |
| LE1 | Works Road | 70.9 |
| LE2 | Blackhorse Road | 11.8 |
| LE3 | Ickniel Way | 11.4 |
| LE4 | Spirella | 2.8 |
| Parts of employment areas designated for business use only | | |
| LB1 | Amor Way | 0.2 |
| LB2 | Blackhorse Road North | 4.8 |
| LB3 | Ickniel Way North | 3.7 |
| LB4 | Ickniel Way South | 3.0 |
| LB5 | Spirella | 2.8 |

- 12.140 As discussed in policy ETC7: Additional Retail Floorspace, there is no immediate identified need (up to 2021) for additional retail floorspace. Therefore, no additional retail sites are formally allocated in the town. Instead, the Council will apply the sequential test of Policy ETC8: New retail, leisure and town centre development, when considering applications for any retail, leisure and other town centre uses. In the longer term, retail needs for the period after 2021 will be considered by a review of the town centre strategies for each town.
- 12.141 In the town centre primary and secondary shopping frontages are defined on the Proposals Map for the main retail area around Eastcheap and Leys Avenue and the surrounding area, including the Garden Square shopping centre.
- 12.142 Policy ETC6: Town and Local Centres identifies two neighbourhood centres in Letchworth, which will be encouraged to thrive and be protected under policy ETC10: Local Centres. They are:
- Jackmans; and
 - Grange.
- 12.143 The extent of these neighbourhood centres is shown on the maps below.



Lilley

Introduction

- 12.144 Lilley is in the northwest of the district. The village of Lilley has a limited range of facilities. Apart from the village the parish also includes the surrounding countryside, most of which is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 12.145 Lilley has a public house, village hall and church.
- 12.146 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Lilley was 386 and there were 161 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.147 Lilley is identified as a category B village, within which infilling development that does not extend the built up area into surrounding countryside will be allowed. The whole parish is also classed as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.148 Lilley has one conservation area covering the central part of the village.

Housing

- 12.149 No sites are allocated in Lilley for residential development.

Newnham

Introduction

- 12.150 Newnham is a small parish to the north of Baldock, containing village of Newnham and the surrounding countryside. Newnham shares a parish council with the neighbouring small parish of Caldecote.
- 12.151 Population statistics are not available for Newnham separately due to its small size. The combined population of the three parishes of Caldecote, Newnham and Radwell at the 2011 census was 209 and there were 97 dwellings across the three parishes.
- 12.152 Newnham has a village hall and church, but little else by way of facilities.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.153 Newnham is identified as a Category B village, where infilling development will be allowed which does not extend the built up area of the village into surrounding countryside. Most of the parish (including the village) is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt, except the southernmost part of the parish which is within the Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.154 A conservation area covers almost the whole village.

Housing

- 12.155 No sites are allocated in Newnham for residential development.

Nuthampstead

Introduction

- 12.156 Nuthampstead is a small parish located in the far east of the district, to the south east of Royston. Historically it was part of the parish of Barkway, becoming a separate civil parish in 1866. The area is characterised by thick woodland and rich farmland and is on the county boundary with Essex. Nuthampstead's dwellings are grouped in the hamlets of Nuthampstead and Morrice Green. Apart from a pub at Nuthampstead there is little by way of facilities.
- 12.157 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Nuthampstead was 142 and there were 52 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.158 Nuthampstead is identified as a Category C village, within which limited additional development is envisaged, primarily as exception sites to meet needs for rural affordable housing. Otherwise the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt, within which there is general restraint on development.

Housing

- 12.159 No sites are allocated in Nuthampstead for residential development.

Economy

- 12.160 In terms of the economy of the local area, there are, unusually for this size of settlement, two industrial areas in the parish providing premises for a range of businesses. These are not sufficiently large to designate as an employment area, but do perform an important role in providing local employment and facilities. The Council will therefore seek to protect the employment function of these areas as far as is possible under policy ETC4: Employment development outside employment areas.

Offley

Introduction

- 12.161 Offley is a large parish in the western part of the district between Luton and Hitchin. The parish is split into two wards: Offley and Cockernhoe. At the 2011 census the population of the whole parish was 1,398 and there were 607 dwellings in the parish. Of these, 493 people and 205 dwellings were in the Cockernhoe ward (discussed on the Cockernhoe page in Part III of this chapter) and the remaining 905 people and 402 dwellings were in the Offley ward (the subject of this page).
- 12.162 The village of Offley (also known as Great Offley) has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shop, public houses, village hall and church. Apart from Offley, the ward includes the surrounding countryside and the hamlet of Little Offley. The northern part of the ward is designated as part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.163 Offley is identified as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map. The remainder of the ward is classed as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.164 Offley has one conservation area covering the core of the village. The parish church of St Mary Magdalene is a Grade I listed building.

Housing

- 12.165 One site is allocated in Offley for an estimated 62 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the area is estimated to see 72 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| OF1 | Former Allotments, Luton Road | 62 |
| Total allocated sites | | 62 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 8 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 2 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 72 |

Pirton

Introduction

- 12.166 Pirton is a medium sized village in the north-west of the district, on the border with Bedfordshire. The parish contains the village and the surrounding countryside, with just a couple of isolated buildings outside the village itself. The village has a reasonable range of facilities, including a school, shop, public houses, village hall and church. The western part of the parish is designated as part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 12.167 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Pirton was 1,274 and there were 521 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.168 Pirton is designated as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map within which development will be allowed. The majority of the remainder of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt, apart from a small section of Green Belt in the south-east of the parish.

Heritage

- 12.169 Pirton has a conservation area covering much of the older part of the village, including the site of the castle, Great Green and Little Green. The parish church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building. To the west of the village in the Chilterns, High Down House is also a Grade I listed building.

Housing

- 12.170 Two sites are allocated in Pirton for an estimated 135 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 142 additional dwellings across the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| PT1 | Land east of Priors Hill | 88 |
| PT2 | Holwell Turn, West Lane | 47 |
| Total allocated sites | | 135 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 4 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 3 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 142 |

Preston

Introduction

- 12.171 Preston is a small village to the south of Hitchin. Historically it was part of the parish of Hitchin, becoming a separate civil parish in 1894. The parish covers the village and surrounding countryside. The village has a school, village hall, public house and a church. It is also home to a private school in the former manor house of Temple Dinsley.
- 12.172 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Preston was 420 and there were 158 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.173 Preston is classed as a Category A village, with a boundary within which development will be allowed. The remainder of the parish is designated as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.174 The grounds of Temple Dinsley form a historic park and garden, whilst much of the village is covered by a conservation area.

Housing

- 12.175 One site is allocated in Preston for an estimated 20 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 36 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| PR1 | Land off Templars Lane | 20 |
| Total allocated sites | | 20 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 10 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 6 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 36 |

Radwell

Introduction

- 12.176 Radwell is a small parish to the north of Baldock on the River Ivel and on the border with Bedfordshire. The village essentially comprises one street, with a village hall and church but little else by way of facilities. The parish also includes the Baldock Service Station at junction 10 of the A1(M).
- 12.177 Population statistics are not available for Radwell separately due to its small size. The combined population of the three parishes of Caldecote, Newnham and Radwell at the 2011 census was 209 and there were 97 dwellings across the three parishes.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.178 Radwell is classed as a Category B village, where infilling development will be allowed that does not extend the built up area of the village into surrounding countryside. The southern part of the parish is classed as Green Belt, whilst the northern part is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Housing

- 12.179 No sites are allocated for residential development in Radwell.

Reed

Introduction

- 12.180 Reed is located to the east of the A10, approximately 3 miles south of Royston. Reed forms part of the group of Saxon villages established on the chalk ridge which dominates the area. The village has a school, village hall and a church.
- 12.181 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Reed was 310 and there were 134 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.182 Reed is identified as a Category A village in the settlement hierarchy. A settlement boundary is shown on the Proposals Map within which development will be allowed. The remainder of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.183 The village is located just east of Ermine Street, the old Great North Road and now the A10. The Saxon parish church of St Mary is a Grade I listed building. Much of the village is covered by the conservation area. The village has a loose-knit layout, with the fields and open spaces in and around the village forming an important part of the village's character.

Housing

- 12.184 Two sites are allocated in Reed for an estimated 31 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 31 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| RD1 | Land at Blacksmiths Lane | 21 |
| RD2 | Farmyard, Brickyard Lane | 10 |
| Total allocated sites | | 31 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 0 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 0 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 31 |

Royston

Introduction

- 12.185 Royston lies in a shallow bowl set in the East Anglian Heights chalk escarpment, overlooking and bounded by the Cambridgeshire Plain to the north. At the time of the 2011 census the town had a population of 15,781 and there were 6,800 dwellings in the town. Development of the town has tended to be informed by the busy roads running through and around the town and the Cambridge to London railway line which bisects the town.
- 12.186 The town historically straddled Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire; the original county boundary was Icknield Way. The town did not exist at the time of the Domesday Book. Instead it appears to have been founded in the medieval period and did not become a separate parish until 1540. Prior to that it straddled the parishes of Barkway, Reed and Therfield (in Hertfordshire) and Melbourn and Bassingbourn (in Cambridgeshire). The boundary was last changed as recently as 1989 after the construction of the A505 bypass.
- 12.187 On the south-western edge of Royston is Therfield Heath, which forms an important open heathland. As well as providing open space for the town it is a rare chalk grassland habitat, and is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Nature Reserve.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.188 Royston is the third largest of the four towns in North Hertfordshire when measured by population. The relative isolation of the town means that it plays an important service role for many of the surrounding villages in both Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. A settlement boundary is defined for the town (shown on the Proposals Map) within which additional development will be allowed.

Heritage

- 12.189 The town grew up around the crossroads of Icknield Way and Ermine Street, although the market place is not at the crossroads itself but to the south-east. One theory as to why the market is not at the crossroads is that Ermine Street originally approached the town from the south-east along Grange Bottom, avoiding the steepest parts of the hill to the south, and that the present line of High Street / London Road is a result of medieval realignments. The town centre is covered by a conservation area.
- 12.190 The parish church of St John's is a Grade I listed building, being originally the church of an Augustinian Priory, becoming the parish church after the dissolution of the monasteries. The Old Palace at 23 Kneesworth Street, 18 Melbourn Street and Royston Cave are also Grade I listed buildings.

Housing

- 12.191 Eight sites are allocated in Royston for an estimated 973 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the town is estimated to see 1,485 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| RY1 | Land west of Ivy Farm, Baldock Road | 311 |
| RY2 | Land north of Newmarket Road | 300 |
| RY3 | Land off Burns Road | 124 |
| RY4 | Land north of Lindsay Close | 100 |
| RY5 | Agricultural supplier, Garden Walk | 37 |
| RY6 | Royston Football Club, Garden Walk | 44 |
| RY7 | Anglian Business Park, Orchard Road | 42 |
| RY8 | Land at Lumen Road | 15 |
| Total allocated sites | | 973 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 237 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 191 |
| Small sites allowance | | 84 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 1,485 |

Economy

- 12.192 The economy of Royston is split between the town centre functions and the large employment area to the north of the town. The town centre features a range of small independent shops and services as well as a small number of national retailers. There is also a wide range of eating and drinking establishments in the town centre.
- 12.193 In the town centre primary and secondary shopping frontages are defined on the Proposals Map for the main retail area around High Street and Market Hill.
- 12.194 As discussed in policy ETC7: Additional Retail Floorspace, there is no immediate identified need (up to 2021) for additional retail floorspace. Therefore, no additional retail sites are formally allocated in the town. Instead, the Council will apply the sequential test of Policy ETC8: New retail, leisure and town centre development, when considering applications for any retail, leisure and other town centre uses. In the longer term, retail needs for the period after 2021 will be considered by a review of the town centre strategies for each town.
- 12.195 In order to help deliver the 3,600 additional local jobs estimated to be needed in the district over the plan period, policy ETC1 identifies that 10.9 hectares of employment land should be allocated at York Way. The existing employment area is currently thriving with a wide range of businesses located there including many operations associated with Johnson Matthey.

Figure 10: Allocated employment land in Royston

| Ref | Site | Hectares |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| RY9 | Land north of York Way | 10.9 |
| Designated employment areas | | |
| RE1 | Orchard Road | 38.9 |

Rushden

Introduction

- 12.196 Rushden is a small village to the south-east of Baldock. It shares a parish council with neighbouring Wallington, although they remain separate parishes. The village has a public house, village hall and church.
- 12.197 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Rushden was 242 and there were 103 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.198 Rusden is classed as a Category B village, where infilling development that does not extend the built core of the village will be allowed. The whole parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.199 There are two conservation areas in Rushden, one covering the core of the village around the church, and the other covering Southern Green to the east. The Julians estate to the north of the village is designated as an historic park and garden.

Housing

- 12.200 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Rushden.

Sandon

Introduction

- 12.201 Sandon is a village to the east of Baldock. The parish covers a large area of countryside as well as the main village, including numerous small hamlets such as Roe Green and Green End. The main village has a school, village hall and church.
- 12.202 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Sandon was 495 and there were 214 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.203 Sandon is classed as a category A village, with a settlement boundary within which further development will be allowed shown on the Proposals Map. The remainder of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.204 There are two conservation areas in Sandon, one for the main village and one for Roe Green. The parish church of All Saints is a Grade I listed building.

Housing

- 12.205 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Sandon. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 8 additional dwellings over the plan period.

St Ippolyts

Introduction

- 12.206 St Ippolyts is a parish to the south of Hitchin. As well as St Ippolyts village it includes Gosmore and the southern part of the urban area of Hitchin. The parish includes a significant rural area, especially to the south of the village.
- 12.207 Whilst St Ippolyts and Gosmore are perceived as separate villages, it is hard to say where one ends and the other begins. The core of St Ippolyts is around the church on the hill to the east and the core of Gosmore is along Gosmore High Street to the west, but the largely developed area between the two has an ambiguous identity with some properties having St Ippolyts postal addresses and others having Gosmore postal addresses. Facilities in this conjoined pair of villages include a school, shop, public houses, village hall and church.
- 12.208 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of St Ippolyts was 2,047 and there were 799 dwellings in the parish. Of these, 870 people and 329 dwellings were found in the part of the parish which falls in Hitchin Priory ward, leaving 1,177 people and 470 dwellings in the more rural part of the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.209 The northern part of the parish forms part of the town of Hitchin. St Ippolyts is classed as a Category A village, with the boundary drawn so as to include Gosmore. In the south of the parish is part of the West of Stevenage site, discussed on the Stevenage West page. The remainder of the parish is classed as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.210 There are two conservation areas, one for the original hilltop settlement part of St Ippolyts and one for Gosmore. The medieval farmhouse at Almshoe Bury and the parish church of St Ippolyts are both Grade I listed buildings.

Housing

- 12.211 Two sites are allocated in St Ippolyts for an estimated 96 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 St Ippolyts is estimated to see 115 additional dwellings over the plan period. This excludes the growth associated with site HT2, Pound Farm, which is in the parish but on the edge of Hitchin and therefore covered on the Hitchin page.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| SI1 | Land south of Waterdell Lane | 72 |
| SI2 | Land south of Stevenage Road | 24 |
| Total allocated sites | | 96 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 2 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 17 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 115 |

St Paul's Walden

Introduction

- 12.212 St Paul's Walden is a rural parish in the west of the district. The main village in the parish is Whitwell, with St Paul's Walden village and the hamlet of Bendish being smaller settlements.
- 12.213 Whitwell has a school, shop, village hall, and public houses. St Paul's Walden has a public house and church.
- 12.214 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of St Paul's Walden was 1,293 and there were 537 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.215 Whitwell is classed as a Category A village, with a boundary shown on the Proposals Map within which further development will be allowed. The remainder of the parish is classed as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.216 There are conservation areas for both Whitwell and Bendish. The parish church of All Saints is a Grade I listed building. The parks of St Paul's Walden Bury and The Hoo are both designated as historic parks and gardens.

Housing

- 12.217 One site is allocated in St Paul's Walden for an estimated 44 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 50 total dwellings.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| SP1 | Land south of High Street, Whitwell | 44 |
| Total allocated sites | | 44 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 3 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 3 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 50 |

Stevenage North

Introduction

12.218 The area north of Stevenage is currently undeveloped farm land in the parish of Graveley.

Role in settlement hierarchy

12.219 The area north of Stevenage is allocated as a housing site. It is defined in policy HDS2: Settlement Hierarchy as becoming part of the urban area of Stevenage. This involves releasing the area from the Green Belt.

Housing

12.220 The site North of Stevenage is allocated for 1,000 dwellings. The site will be delivered jointly through a masterplan to be prepared with Stevenage Borough Council, which controls the adjoining land to the south. The North of Stevenage site cannot be sensibly delivered without the land in Stevenage Borough.

12.221 The masterplan will consider (for both the land in North Hertfordshire and the adjoining land in Stevenage):

- Access into Stevenage and onto the wider road network (including road, public transport, pedestrian and cycle links);
- Adequate new schools and other facilities to serve the development;
- Appropriate levels of open space and green infrastructure, including considering the relationship with the area around Chesfield Park, Rooks Nest and St Nicholas Church; and
- Measures both to develop the new community's identity and to encourage integration between the new community and the existing town.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| NS1 | North of Stevenage (in Graveley parish) <i>A masterplan will be prepared for this site under policy ID2.</i> | 1,000 |
| Total allocated sites | | 1,000 |

Therfield

Introduction

- 12.222 Therfield is a village to the east of the district, south of Royston. It has a school, public house, village hall and churches. The surrounding parish includes a sizable rural area, including Therfield Heath in the north on the edge of Royston.
- 12.223 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Therfield was 556 and there were 217 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.224 Therfield is identified as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary within which additional development will be allowed shown on the Proposals Map. The remainder of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.225 Therfield has a conservation area covering much of the older part of the village, including the remains of the motte and bailey castle.

Housing

- 12.226 Two sites are allocated in Therfield for an estimated 38 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 41 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| TH1 | Land at Police Row | 26 |
| TH2 | Land south of Kelshall Road | 12 |
| Total allocated sites | | 38 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 3 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 0 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 41 |

Wallington

Introduction

12.227 Wallington is a small village to the east of Baldock. It shares a parish council with neighbouring Rushden, but remains a separate parish. The village has a village hall and church, but little else by way of facilities. The parish also includes the surrounding countryside.

12.228 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Wallington was 150 and there were 60 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

12.229 Wallington is classed as a Category B village under policy HDS2, where infilling development that does not extend the built core of the village will be allowed. Most of the parish is classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt, except a small area on the western edge of the parish which is Green Belt.

Heritage

12.230 The Wallington conservation area covers most of the village.

Housing

12.231 There are no sites allocated for residential development in Wallington.

Weston

Introduction

- 12.232 Weston is a medium sized village to the south of Baldock. The parish is large, stretching from the southern edges of Baldock down to the north-eastern edges of Stevenage at Great Ashby. The village sites on a plateau, which drops sharply away on the edge of Baldock as the Weston Hills.
- 12.233 The village has a school, shop, village hall, public house and church, and some small businesses. Beside the main village the parish also includes the hamlet of Halls Green (also with a public house) and several other smaller hamlets and isolated farms and dwellings.
- 12.234 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Weston was 1,054 and there were 441 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.235 Weston is classed as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary defined on the Proposals Map. In the south of the parish site GA1 at Great Ashby is mostly in Weston parish. Most of the rest of the parish is classed as Green Belt, apart from the eastern edges of the parish which are classed as rural area beyond the Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.236 The Weston conservation area covers the older parts of the village. The parish church of Holy Trinity is a Grade I listed building.

Housing

- 12.237 One site is allocated in Weston for an estimated 25 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 28 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| WE1 | Land off Hitchin Road | 25 |
| Total allocated sites | | 25 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 0 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 3 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 28 |

Economy

- 12.238 Weston has a number of small businesses, notably at Weston Barns on Hitchin Road. This is not sufficiently large to designate as an employment area, but does perform an important role in providing local employment and facilities. The Council will therefore seek to protect the employment function of this area under policy ETC4: Employment development outside employment areas.

Wymondley

Introduction

- 12.239 Wymondley is a parish to the east of Hitchin. It was created in 1937 by the merger of the two former parishes of Great Wymondley and Little Wymondley. Despite the names, Little Wymondley has long been the more populous, overtaking Great Wymondley between the 1851 and 1861 censuses. As well as the villages of Great and Little Wymondley the parish includes the hamlets of Titmore Green, Redcoats Green and Todds Green. The parish also includes the surrounding rural area, stretching from the edges of Hitchin in the north to the edges of Stevenage in the south.
- 12.240 Great Wymondley has a public house, village hall and church. Little Wymondley has a school, non-food shop, churches and public houses.
- 12.241 At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Wymondley was 1,153 and there were 480 dwellings in the parish.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.242 Little Wymondley is classed as a Category A village, with a settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map. Great Wymondley is classed as a Category B village, where infilling that does not extend the built core of the village into the surrounding countryside will be allowed. In the south of the parish part of the safeguarded land west of Stevenage is in Wymondley parish. The remainder of the parish is classed as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.243 A conservation area covers most of Great Wymondley village. Wymondley Bury, The Priory and the parish church of St Mary at Great Wymondley are all Grade I listed buildings.

Housing

- 12.244 One site is allocated in Wymondley for an estimated 300 additional dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the parish is estimated to see 313 additional dwellings over the plan period.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| WY1 | Land south of Little Wymondley | 300 |
| Total allocated sites | | 300 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 8 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 5 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 313 |

Economy

- 12.245 Wymondley has a number of small businesses, notably along Stevenage Road in Little Wymondley. This is not sufficiently large to designate as an employment area, but does perform an important role in providing local employment and facilities. The Council will therefore seek to protect the employment function of this area under policy ETC4: Employment development outside employment areas.

Chapter 12 Part II: Development for wider needs of Luton housing market area

Cockernhoe & East of Luton

Introduction

- 12.246 Cockernhoe and the area east of Luton is part of Offley parish. The Cockernhoe ward of Offley parish covers the area between Luton and Lilley Bottom Road and includes Cockernhoe, Mangrove Green and Tea Green. There are also a number of scattered farms and Putteridge Bury.
- 12.247 At the 2011 census the population of the Cockernhoe ward of Offley parish was 493 and there were 205 dwellings in the ward.

Role in settlement hierarchy

- 12.248 Cockernhoe is identified as a Category A village. The development boundary is shown on the Proposals Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed. The boundary has been drawn so as to include both the village and the adjoining expansion of Luton. Outside this boundary the rest of the Cockernhoe ward is classed as Green Belt.

Heritage

- 12.249 This area includes the Putteridge Bury historic park and garden, now used by the University of Bedfordshire.

Housing

- 12.250 Three adjoining sites are identified in this area, totalling 2,100 dwellings. Taking into account completions since 2011 and permissions at 2014 the area is estimated to see 2,103 additional dwellings during the plan period.
- 12.251 These three sites are an allowance to meet the specific needs arising from Luton rather than North Hertfordshire. A masterplan will be prepared for the three sites, working with the landowners and Luton Borough Council, to consider matters such as:
- Minimising visual impacts of development upon the historic parts of Cockernhoe, notably the two greens at Cockernhoe Green and Mangrove Green;
 - Access into Luton (including road, public transport, pedestrian and cycle links);
 - Adequate new schools to serve the development, including additional secondary school capacity;
 - A new neighbourhood centre with local facilities;
 - Appropriate levels of open space and green infrastructure, including strengthening the band of woodland along the ridgeline separating the site from the Lilley Bottom valley slopes;
 - Measures to ensure that the type and tenure of dwellings within the development specifically addresses the needs arising from Luton that cannot be accommodated within its own boundaries; and
 - Measures both to develop the new community's identity and to encourage integration between the new community and the existing town of Luton.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| EL1 | Wandon Park | 1,050 |
| EL2 | Wandon Park extension | 350 |
| EL3 | Land west of Cockernhoe | 700 |
| Total allocated sites | | 2,100 |
| Completions 2011-2014 | | 2 |
| Permissions at 1 Apr 2014 | | 1 |
| TOTAL dwellings 2011-2031 | | 2103 |

Economy

- 12.252 There is a school and a village hall in Cockernhoe and public houses in Tea Green and Mangrove Green. Outside the village, there is significant employment generated by the Putteridge Bury campus of the University of Bedfordshire.
- 12.253 There are likely to be small scale opportunities for additional employment development associated with the east of Luton sites, notably in the neighbourhood centre. Opportunities for other employment development on those sites will be considered through the master planning process.

Chapter 12 Part III: Reserved sites for future needs

West of the A1(M) at Stevenage

Introduction

12.254 The area to the west of Stevenage and the A1(M) is currently undeveloped farm land straddling the parishes of Wymondley, St Ippolyts, and Langley.

Role in settlement hierarchy

12.255 The Local Plan designates the area west of the A1(M) as safeguarded land. It is released from Green Belt in anticipation that longer-term needs will require its development in the foreseeable future. As discussed in the Housing Background Paper the current quantified needs of Stevenage do not require the development of this area, nor is the site the best to meet North Hertfordshire's own needs. However, for the longer term the probability that Stevenage's needs will increase is very high, and this is the next closest site to the town centre. Development should be contained to the plateau area and measures will need to be put into place to encourage integration between this site and the rest of the town the other side of the motorway.

Housing

12.256 The site west of the A1(M) is allocated as safeguarded land. The site can only proceed if the land to the south-east in Stevenage Borough is also developed in which case it is estimated it has a potential future capacity for up to 3,100 dwellings.

12.257 When in future the site is needed a masterplan will be prepared, working with Stevenage Borough Council, which will consider:

- Access into Stevenage and onto the wider road network (including road, public transport, pedestrian and cycle links), including the provision of a new tunnel under the motorway at Meadway to improve access;
- Adequate new schools and other facilities to serve the development;
- Creation of appropriate new local centres and community facilities within the development area;
- The possibility of including some employment land on the site;
- Appropriate levels of open space and green infrastructure; and
- Measures both to develop the new community's identity and to encourage integration between the new community and the existing town.

| Ref | Site | Dwelling estimate |
|-----|---|---|
| WS1 | West of Stevenage (straddles parishes of Knebworth, Langley, St Ippolyts and Wymondley) | In reserve – not counted for this plan period |