



# HARPENDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2018 - 2033

**Final Version for Referendum**

November 2018

Made 20/02/2019

# Foreword

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**This Neighbourhood Plan is prepared by local residents for local residents, so to have your support is critical.**

We exist in challenging times. There is a pressing need for new housing nationally but the infrastructure required to mitigate its impact on existing residents is hard to come by. The Green Belt, which has been protected closely since its creation, is now under intense pressure in the context of the need for new housing. When those homes – or indeed other types of development – are built, they are often seen by local people to be in the wrong place, unaffordable, poorly designed and not supported by appropriate infrastructure.

There are examples recently of where local residents in Harpenden have campaigned against a development only to see it be granted planning permission, sometimes through an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate overturning a refusal by St Albans City and District Council.

There are no signs of this cycle coming to an end soon, with St Albans City and District Council deemed to have not cooperated with other local planning authorities during the preparation of its Local Plan, it has had to start that process again and is now looking at a much higher government advised housing target of around 15,500 new homes in the District to 2036. Until it adopts a new Local Plan that allocates sites to meet that need – currently estimated for 2019 – we are at risk of “speculative” planning applications from developers taking advantage of the lack of a strategy, some of which may seek to deliver a very large number of homes.

This Neighbourhood Plan cannot provide the strategy alone, but the policies contained in the document will be vital to ensure new development in our area is appropriate to the needs of our community. In this Neighbourhood Plan, we are seeking to ensure that important employment land is protected and not lost to housing, the design of new buildings is both sustainable and attractive, shopping areas are vibrant and functional, travel is easier and more environmentally friendly and that housing is targeted as much as possible to urban and brownfield land rather than our precious Green Belt. In time, the Neighbourhood Plan will work with a Local Plan to provide a comprehensive Development Plan for the area.

There has never been a more important time to have a powerful strategy for the development of Harpenden, which this Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to provide.



**Brian Ellis**  
**Chair, Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan**  
**Steering Group**

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## With thanks to

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In addition, we would like to thank local residents and other interested parties, who have shaped the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan by completing 3,625 surveys and have made up around 760 attendees of Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan events.









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## Supporting Documents

- A** Objectives - Policies Matrix
- B** Proposals Map
- C** Engagement Statement
- D** Steering Group Meeting Notes
- E** Baseline Report
- F** Site Assessment Summary Paper
- G** Delivery Statement
- H** Basic Conditions Statement
- I** Local Green Spaces Assessment Paper
- J** Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Response

# 1. Introduction

## Why has this Neighbourhood Plan been created?

- 1.1 This Neighbourhood Plan has been created to ensure residents of Harpenden have some control over what developments take place in our area over the next 15 years. We recognise the importance of Neighbourhood Planning and the need to have an up-to-date planning policy framework. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seek to ensure that new development over the next 15 years is of benefit to Harpenden and its surroundings.
- 1.2 As the Neighbourhood Plan is a formal planning policy document, some of it, especially later on, is written in technical language. We cannot avoid that, and apologise if it makes it harder to read in places. Certain terms used in the text are defined in the Glossary at the back of this report. These are either statutory planning terms, such as 'Use Classes', or important terms defined in this Plan, such as 'significant developments'.

## What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- 1.3 A Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory planning policy document, against which applications for planning permission within its boundaries must be considered. A Neighbourhood Plan sets out a framework for development at a local scale, allowing local people to determine what type of development they would like to see in their neighbourhood and identify locations where growth should be accommodated.
- 1.4 Neighbourhood Plans form part of the Development Plan against which applications for planning permission are judged, sitting alongside Development Plan Documents prepared by St Albans City and District Council. The current Development Plan is composed of the saved policies of the 1994 St Albans District Local Plan Review and Minerals and Waste Local Plans prepared by Hertfordshire County Council.

In order to pass examination, the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the saved strategic policies of the District Local Plan Review. It must also have regard to national planning policy and guidance, uphold the principles of sustainable development and conform to a number of EU Directives. The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan are based on robust evidence.

- 1.5 The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan is prepared in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Area, encompassing Harpenden Town and Rural Parishes, was formally designated by St Albans City and District Council on 17th March 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan has a start date of 2018 and will run for 15 years to 2033.

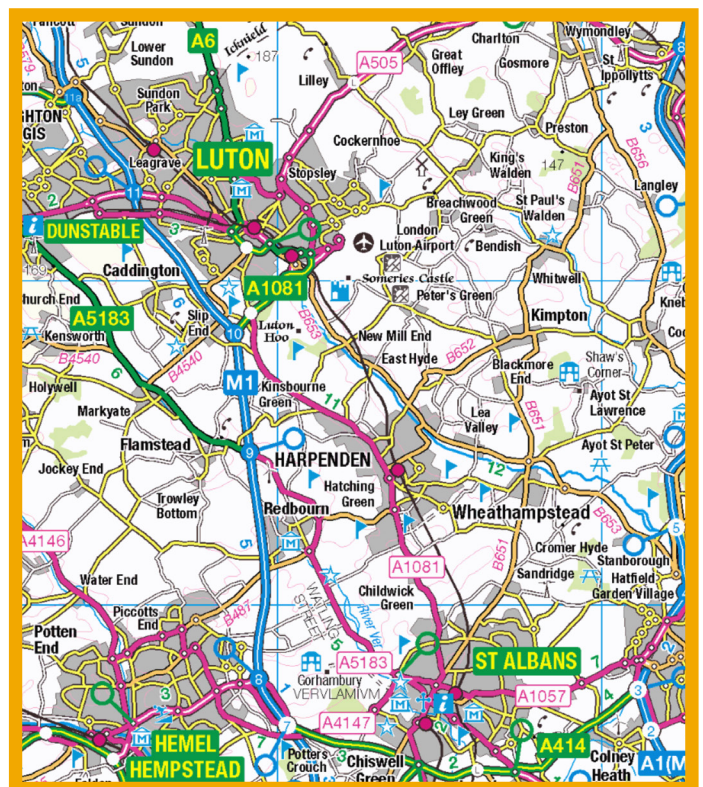


Figure 1.1: Context Plan



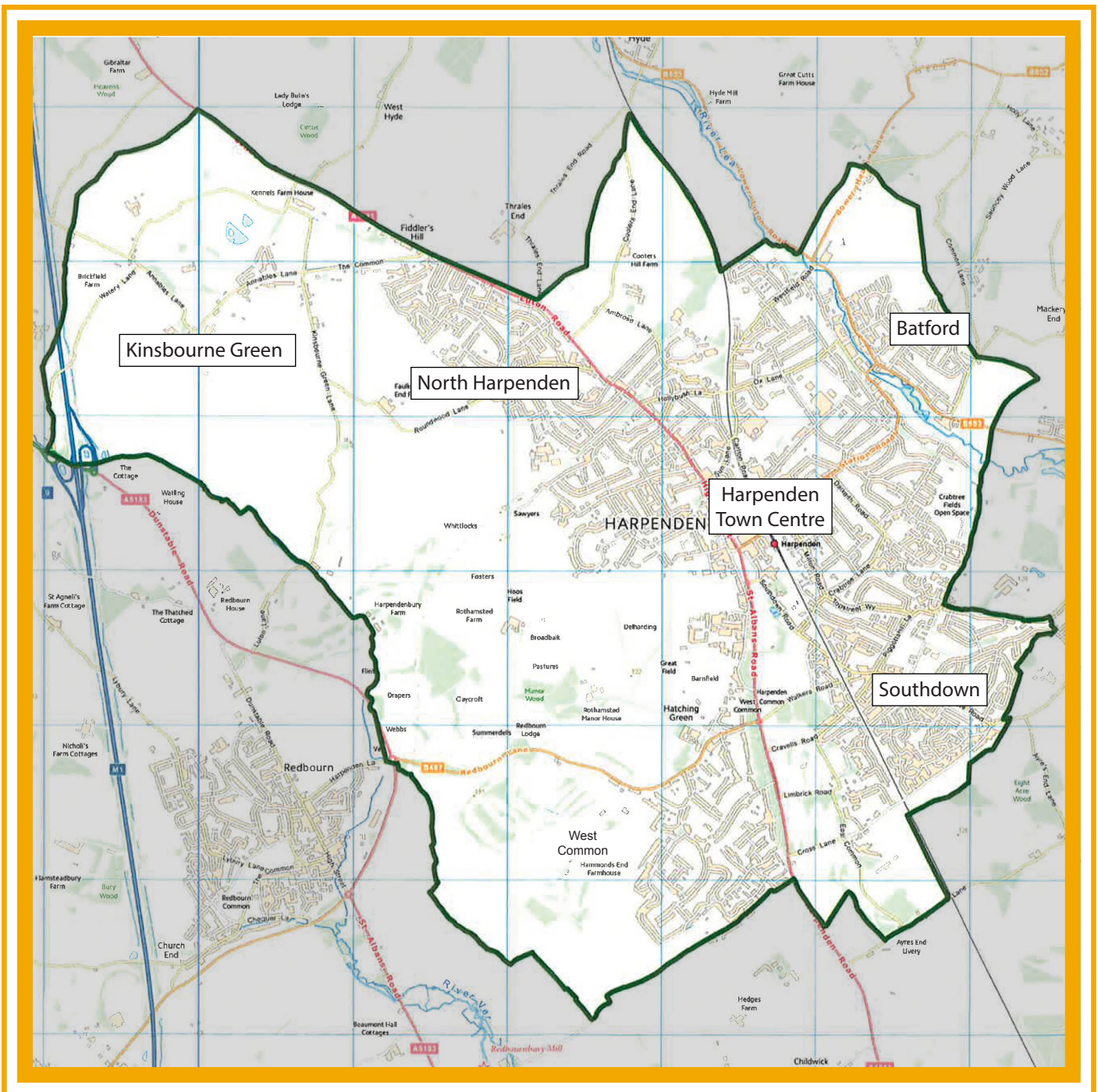


Figure 1.2: Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Area

— Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

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1.6 A Neighbourhood Plan can include policies that guide development on a range of matters and may also identify certain sites for new development. Although a Neighbourhood Plan's strength lies in its planning policies, it can also operate as an informal community strategy, setting out the ambitions of a town over its next 15 years through its Vision and Objectives.

1.7 Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by the Localism Act, which came into force in 2011. Since its introduction over 200 Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted. The Government has regularly strengthened the role of Neighbourhood Plans since 2011 and, as a result, Neighbourhood Plans have become a key component of the planning policy framework.

### **What area does this Neighbourhood Plan cover?**

1.8 This Neighbourhood Plan covers Harpenden Town Parish and Harpenden Rural Parish (see Figure 1.2). It comprises approximately 22 square kilometres (8.5 square miles) and is home to around 30,000 people (at the time of the 2011 Census), almost all of whom reside in Harpenden Town Parish.

### **Who has created the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan?**

1.9 The preparation of the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan is coordinated by Harpenden Town Council and is overseen by a Steering Group made up of representatives from Harpenden Town Council, Harpenden Rural Parish Council and the local community. Five Themed Working Groups composed of community representatives initially developed the Vision, Objectives and Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan has benefited from Harpenden Town Council staff support and professional support from Nexus Planning.

### **How has the community been engaged?**

1.10 In addition to being developed by community representatives, the Neighbourhood Plan has gone through an extensive community engagement process. The Steering Group has conducted three major rounds of engagement:

- 1. Engagement 1: Key Issues (March-April 2017 for four weeks)** – this round of engagement was conducted at the outset of the process and asked local people what they liked and disliked about Harpenden through testing a range of key issues. A paper survey was distributed to each household in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, which was also made available online. Three engagement events were held, where local residents were given an opportunity to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan with the Steering Group and staff. Around 150 people attended these events. In total, 2,162 individual responses were collected to the Survey. The results of the Engagement exercise informed the draft Vision and Objectives, which were then presented at Engagement 2.
- 2. Engagement 2: Vision and Objectives (June – July 2017 for four weeks)** – this round of engagement tested the Vision and Objectives and some initial Policy Ideas for the Neighbourhood Plan, which were prepared by Themed Working Groups. As with Engagement 1, a paper survey was distributed to each household in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, which was also made available online. Four engagement events were held, where local people were given an opportunity to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan with the Steering Group and staff. Around 300 people attended these events. In total, 1,305 individual responses were received. The responses showed general support for the Vision and Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, with

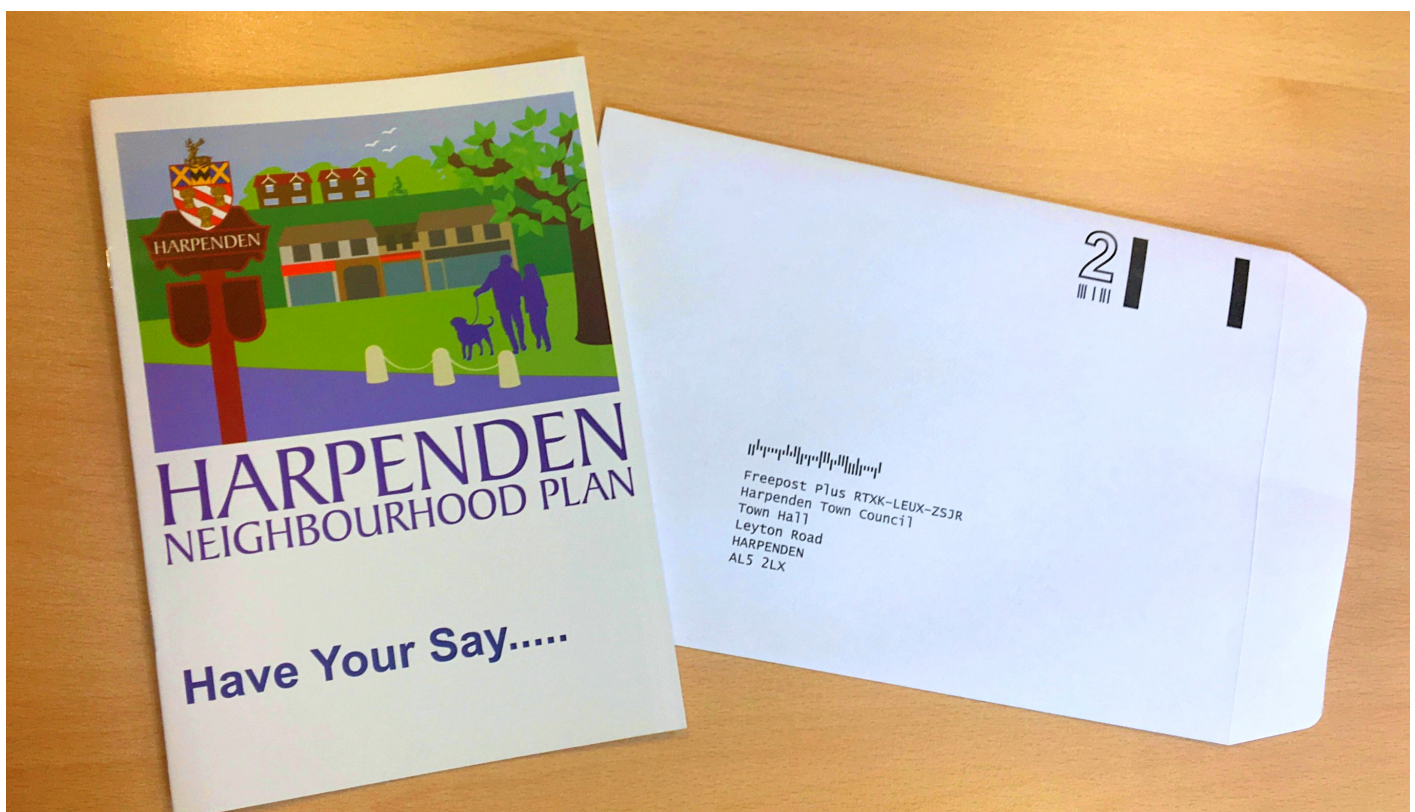




## Community engagement undertaken

In support of the Neighbourhood Plan, the following engagement actions will have been conducted:

- Three comprehensive rounds of engagement, accompanied by three separate surveys, both on paper and online;
- 11 drop-in events, held at venues in Harpenden Town Centre, Southdown, Batford and Kinsbourne Green;
- 2 formal Presentation Evenings of the draft Neighbourhood Plan;
- Newspaper advertisements and features;
- Regular social media engagement on Twitter and Facebook;
- Presentations at local interest groups including the Harpenden Society;
- Targeted leaflet handouts at the Train Station;
- Targeted engagement of young people through schools and youth groups; and
- Regular progress updates on the Harpenden Town Council website.



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each proposal receiving at least 67% support and most receiving over 80% support.

**3. Engagement 3: Regulation 14 Draft Neighbourhood Plan (25 October 2017 - 6 December 2017)** – A full draft of the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan was released along with a number of supporting documents. The six week formal engagement was carried out in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). Residents were asked for their views on the Plan as a whole, with a particular focus on policies. In total six public events were held, which were well attended with around 330 people in total (250 at drop-in events and 80 at presentations). 158 responses to the detailed survey were received plus a number of representations received via email. Most policies received between 70-90% support.

- 1.14 These chapters include Vision, Objectives and Policies for each key theme as well as supporting diagrams. In addition to the diagrams within each chapter, this Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a Proposals Map (Supporting Document B), which includes all land designations relevant to the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, such as designated sites for housing or employment.
- 1.15 Prior to the themed chapters is a section setting out the overall Vision and Spatial Strategy.

- 1.11 The surveys, event display boards and detailed Engagement Reports (published following each round of engagement) are attached at Supporting Document C.
- 1.12 In addition, Steering Group Meeting notes are included at Supporting Document D. These include details of how feedback at engagement has shaped the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **How to read this Neighbourhood Plan**

- 1.13 This Neighbourhood Plan is broken down into a number of chapters related around Key Themes, which are:
- Employment & Retail
  - Environment and Sustainable Design
  - Housing
  - Social Infrastructure and Community Facilities
  - Transport and Movement





Figure 1.2: Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Timeline

# 2. A Portrait of Harpenden

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## Local Context

- 2.1 The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan area is within Hertfordshire and St Albans District. It is a town built around a small historic core, with much of its growth within the 20th Century. Harpenden Rural is primarily farmland, interspersed by the occasional farmhouse, or cluster of homes.
- 2.2 Harpenden is in close proximity to a number of towns, including St Albans, Hitchin, Luton, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Hemel Hempstead. It also retains close links with London.
- 2.3 The town is well-connected, with regular and fast Thameslink trains to a number of central London stations as well as Luton Airport Parkway. It has close road links to the M1 and the A1(M). The A1081 runs through the centre of Harpenden and connects it to St Albans (south) and Luton (north). Luton Airport is around 7 miles from Harpenden and is connected via the Lower Luton Road (B653), which runs through Batford to the east of Harpenden.
- 2.4 There is a mixture of housing styles in Harpenden, although most housing is low-rise, 20th Century and detached or semi-detached.
- 2.5 Despite its growth over the 20th Century and emergence as a medium sized town, Harpenden retains a strong sense of community, which is cherished by residents. This is evident in the town centre's retail offer and in the fact that residents feel safe in its tight knit community. Its rural connections enhance Harpenden's character, with Harpenden Common bisecting the town through to its centre and forming a clear link with the countryside.
- 2.6 Most undeveloped land in the Neighbourhood Plan Area is within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

- 2.7 The town is notable for its wide range of community assets, including a number of high quality sports and leisure facilities and primary and secondary schools, many of which serve a wider catchment than just the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 2.8 The features of Harpenden have led to it becoming a highly desirable place to live, often for people working in London and nearby towns. This is reflected in high property prices. Despite this, it is not solely a commuter town and benefits from some key employment locations, most notably Rothamsted Research as well as Southdown Industrial Estate, Coldharbour Lane, Batford Mill and some small offices in the town centre.

## Historical Development of Harpenden

- 2.9 Harpenden has existed as a settlement in some form for a considerable amount of time, with historic evidence of the area containing a small satellite settlement to Verulamium, a major Roman city at the site of present day St Albans. However, Harpenden remained a village until the late nineteenth century, at which point it rapidly expanded to become a town.
- 2.10 Many of the Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area predate the era of rapid development. Most notable of these is Rothamsted Manor (Grade I Listed), which was mostly constructed in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Other Listed Buildings in the area include a number of historic farmhouses (Cross, Faulkners End, Harpendenbury) and a number of buildings in the centres of Harpenden and Kinsbourne Green as well as occasional buildings elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 2.11 Outside the centres of Harpenden, Kinsbourne Green and the historic farmhouses, most development in the Neighbourhood Plan Area





# HARPENDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN





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is from the 1890s onwards, from which point Harpenden started to establish its role as an affluent satellite town of London. Most housing in the town was built between that period and the 1950s, generally comprising large, ornately detailed housing in a style relevant to the period, including Victorian, Edwardian, 1930s and post-war styles. The Harpenden Conservation Area encompasses a large area including much of the more historic residential areas of Harpenden (mostly pre-war). It is one of the largest Conservation Areas in the country.

### Town Profile

2.12 The preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan was supported at the outset by a Baseline Report (Supporting Document E), prepared by Nexus Planning which analysed demographic data, evidence studies and other sources of information to build a profile of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Some of the noteworthy 'headlines' of the Baseline Report include:

- The Neighbourhood Plan Area population grew rapidly from around 7,000 residents in 1921 to around 27,500 residents in 1981. Since then, population growth has slowed to a figure of just below 30,000 in 2011 (at the time of the most recent Census). The proportion of the population in Harpenden Rural is low, with 405 residents in 2011.
- The Harpenden population is generally well-educated and affluent, with low levels of deprivation across the town.
- In terms of age, the population is relatively balanced, however, the proportion of the population in the 18-29 age group is low compared to national figures. In addition, the proportion of residents over the age of 60 grew significantly from 2001 to 2011.

- The number of residents working in managerial or professional roles is much higher than the national average. A small number of residents work in low-skill roles.
- A significant number of Harpenden residents work in a range of nearby towns or commute to London. Few residents work in Harpenden, with the exception of those working from home (around 7% of the population). Therefore, the majority of people working in Harpenden do not reside in the town.
- The most common method of travel to work in Harpenden is by car, with around 7,300 residents commuting using this method. The second most significant method is train (around 3,700). Other methods such as on foot, cycling and bus are less frequently used.
- Housing stock in the Neighbourhood Plan Area is mostly detached and semi-detached housing, with fewer terraces and flatted developments.
- Harpenden town centre is the primary retail and services centre in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. In addition, a reasonably large local centre exists in Southdown and smaller clusters are located in Batford, North Harpenden and Kinsbourne Green.

### Local Planning Issues

2.13 The following planning-related issues are important to local people in Harpenden, as evidenced by discussions during engagement and local media:

- The emerging St Albans Local Plan (October 2018 publication draft), which includes two 'Broad Locations' for growth, namely 'North East Harpenden' for a minimum of 760 homes and associated infrastructure including a primary school and 'North West Harpenden'

for a minimum of 580 homes and associated infrastructure including a primary school;

- The redevelopment plans for the Harpenden Sports Centre, Swimming Pool and potential relocation of cultural facilities from the Harpenden Public Halls.
- A planned new secondary school in East Harpenden, known as Katherine Warrington School, which received planning permission in early 2018.
- The future of NHS Services at the Harpenden Memorial Hospital (also known as The Red House).



# 3. Planning Policy Context

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## Current Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the current planning policy context at St Albans City and District Council, alongside which it will sit as a Development Plan Document. The current adopted Local Plan governing the area is the saved policies of the 1994 District Local Plan Review. While the 1994 District Local Plan Review contains some policies of relevance to the determination of planning applications, it does not cover all issues relevant to development in the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan area. In addition, the saved policies respond to a 1994 context, which may not be of relevance to the key issues of today.
- 3.2 St Albans City and District Council was recently in the advanced stages of preparing a new Development Plan, which was to comprise a Strategic Local Plan (SLP) and a Detailed Local Plan (DLP). The DLP would follow and complement the strategic policies set in the SLP. The initial approach to preparing the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan was to seek to “fit” within that framework, adding local context to policies within those plans and filling any gaps as necessary. On 28th November 2016, the Inspector appointed to examine the SLP deemed that St Albans City and District Council had not fulfilled its legal Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring planning authorities in the preparation of the SLP. St Albans City and District Council commenced legal proceedings to challenge that decision, but was ultimately unsuccessful, with a High Court Judgement upholding the decision issued on 13th July 2017. At Planning Policy Committee on 12th September 2017 members resolved to prepare a new single Local Plan with a revised “base date” (i.e. start date for monitoring) of 2018, running to 2036. The new Local Plan is to be prepared in line with new national housing need assessment standards and is expected to seek to allocate a substantially higher amount of housing than the SLP, totalling around

14,500 homes at circa 800 per annum compared to 9,000 at 450 per annum in the SLP. The new Local Plan is targeted for adoption in 2019, however, this is a positive estimation and in reality it could take longer due to a range of influencing factors.

## Response of the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.3 In response to the change in policy context, the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan has adapted its approach. It seeks to incorporate issues addressed in the SLP and the DLP where relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan Area, relating content to the local context. This strengthens the policy framework for Harpenden and seeks to ensure that the impact of the decision not to allow the SLP to proceed to Examination is lessened.
- 3.4 There are, however, limitations as to what may be achieved through the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan. These limitations include:
- Release of land from the Green Belt. At the point of submission of the Neighbourhood Plan the National Planning Policy Framework (2012 edition) only allowed this to be carried out by a local planning authority (i.e. St Albans City and District Council) in its Local Plan. Therefore, this Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate any sites in the Green Belt for new strategic housing, employment or other growth.
  - Identification of targets for growth. Targets for growth in the SLP were based upon a suite of evidence base documents prepared for St Albans City and District Council, including housing market assessments and employment land need assessments. As the SLP did not proceed to examination, the evidence used and the resulting targets were not tested for their accuracy. St Albans City and District Council is now considering new targets in its revised Local Plan.



The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan does not have the duty to prepare its own assessments of need for housing, employment land or other types of development and therefore seeks to provide an appropriate amount of growth , while seeking to protect the Green Belt and the character of Harpenden.

all development in the area, including in the Green Belt. This means any new development in the Green Belt approved at a higher level will be subject to the policies we agree as a community, helping to reduce impact. It does not mean that as a community we are supporting growth in the Green Belt.

- 3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan identifies some growth opportunities on urban sites not in the Green Belt. It also establishes policies that will shape



# 4. Overall Vision and the Spatial Strategy

## Overall Vision

***Harpenden has a strong sense of community that is treasured by local residents. The Neighbourhood Plan will provide the foundations for Harpenden to grow sustainably for the benefit of those that live and work here.***

*The town centre and our other important local centres will continue to meet local residents' needs, ensuring that local shopkeepers and other business owners can continue to trade in a prospering environment.*

*Harpenden is home to many important local businesses, as well as being considered a commuter town. The Neighbourhood Plan will promote Harpenden as an attractive place for businesses to locate and for people to work. Improvements to facilities in the town will be promoted, including provisions for small businesses and our growing number of home workers.*

*Harpenden has a vibrant voluntary sector that provides invaluable services across the local community. We have an active community that benefits from a number of popular sporting, recreation and community groups that contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of local people.*

*Where new housing is to be provided within Harpenden, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure the right mix of sizes in the right location, including developments that prioritise housing for residents through their life from first time buyers to older residents seeking to downsize. New developments that conserve and enhance the existing built environment, including listed buildings and the Harpenden Conservation Area, will be supported and will continue the tradition of the high quality architecture seen throughout Harpenden and the Harpenden Rural Parish.*

*We will encourage the development of a sustainable transport network that will support the growth of the town. Investment in local schools, GP surgeries and other social infrastructure will accommodate new development to retain the quality of provision.*

*The natural environment is a key part of Harpenden and important green spaces and biodiversity within the town and across Harpenden Rural Parish will be protected. New development will incorporate highly sustainable design features.*

4.1 The Overall Vision captures the unique character of Harpenden while providing a future-facing and aspirational vision for the development of Harpenden over the next 15 years.

## The Spatial Strategy

4.2 The following policies outline the strategic approach to all development in the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Area. Almost all residents in the Neighbourhood Plan Area reside in Harpenden, which had a population of around 30,000 at the time of the 2011 Census. Land outside Harpenden is designated as part of the Green Belt and therefore has a small population with most land used for agriculture or recreation.

## SS1 – The Spatial Strategy

**1. The Built up Area of Harpenden is the priority for new development in the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Built up Area Boundary of Harpenden is shown in Figure 4.1. In the event that St Albans City and District Council releases land in the Green Belt adjacent to the current Built up Area Boundary of Harpenden for residential development in a future Local Plan, that land is considered by this Policy to be within the Built up Area Boundary of Harpenden. Planning applications for new development proposals outside the Built up Area Boundary must either:**

- **Be an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, or**
- **In the case of what would normally be deemed inappropriate development in the Green Belt, must demonstrate:**
  - **Very special circumstances for development in the Green Belt.**
  - **Why the proposal cannot be located within the Built up Area Boundary of Harpenden.**

**2. Development proposals in Harpenden Town Centre, as shown on Figure 4.2 must have regard to the special characteristics of the town centre, in accordance with the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan.**

4.3 The Built up Area Boundary has been chosen to directly align with the Green Belt boundary around Harpenden. The Neighbourhood Plan supports the utmost protection of the Green Belt from inappropriate development and Policy SS1 seeks to ensure development is prioritised within Harpenden and outside the Green Belt. In addition,

protecting the Green Belt by locating development within urban areas brings a number of advantages, including reducing the need to travel by car. This Policy is realistic to the likelihood of SADC releasing land from the Green Belt adjacent to Harpenden for housing delivery.

- 4.4 The requirements set out in Policy SS1 are consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. The National Planning Policy Framework defines exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt (Paragraph 145) and sets the need for development proposals considered inappropriate in the Green Belt to demonstrate very special circumstances (Paragraph 143). Policy SS1 adds an additional requirement to demonstrate why a proposal for inappropriate development cannot be located within the Built up Area Boundary of Harpenden. In order to meet this criteria, development proposals must demonstrate that there are no suitable alternative sites within the Built up Area Boundary that can be used.
- 4.5 An issue that is frequently raised during community engagement is infrastructure, and in particular many residents want the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure enough infrastructure is provided alongside new development to mitigate impact on existing residents. In response, we have identified five Infrastructure Zones in Harpenden, which community consultation and our evidence base has shown have specific infrastructure requirements should any future development take place. Inclusion of Infrastructure Zones in the Neighbourhood Plan does not provide endorsement for new development proposals outside the Built Up Area Boundary of Harpenden, but it does provide some protection should these be approved.



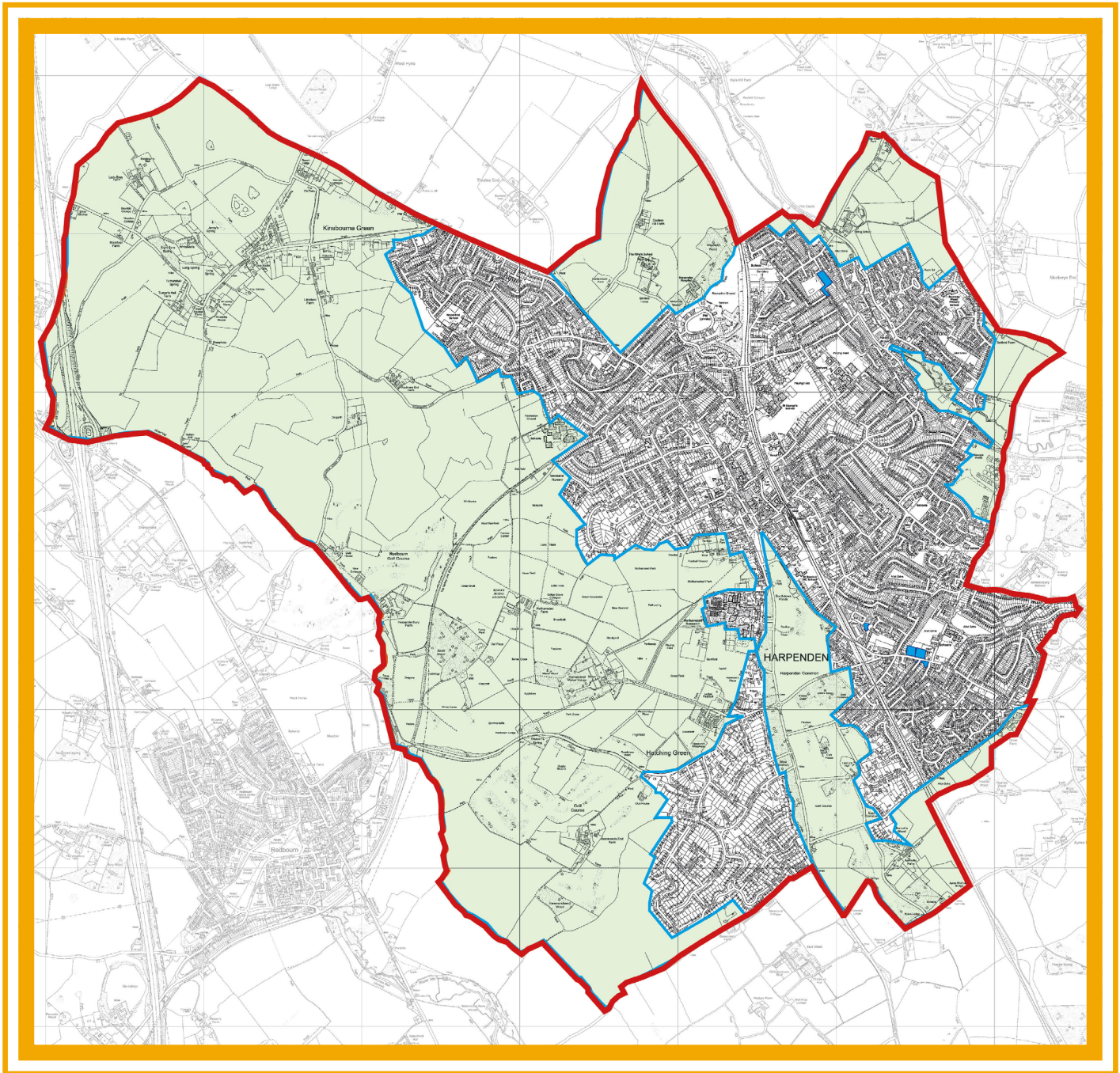


Figure 4.1: Built Up Area Boundary in Harpenden



## SS2 – Infrastructure Zones

The five Infrastructure Zones are shown in Figure 4.2. In order to mitigate the impact of new development, certain proposals in each zone must meet the following criteria as well as satisfying the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan.

<p>Significant development proposals in the North West must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate how impact of new development on the A1081 and local roads will be mitigated;</li> <li>• Demonstrate provision for appropriate education facilities in close proximity to new development to meet the need for school places arising from the proposed development*;</li> <li>• Demonstrate sufficient convenience shopping within a close proximity to new development*; and</li> <li>• Demonstrate sufficient open space, including recreational space in line with local community needs, within a close proximity to new development*.</li> </ul>	<p>Significant development proposals in the North East must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate how impact of new development on the Lower Luton Road and Station Road will be mitigated;</li> <li>• Incorporate a proportionate amount of public open space in accordance with community needs, including sports and recreational space*;</li> <li>• Demonstrate provision for appropriate education facilities in close proximity to new development to meet the need for school places arising from the proposed development*; and</li> <li>• Demonstrate sufficient convenience shopping within a close proximity to new development*.</li> </ul>
<p>Significant development proposals in the South West must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate how impact of new development on the A1081 and Redbourn Road will be mitigated;</li> <li>• Demonstrate how Harpenden Common will not be negatively impacted by new development including key views in to and from the Common;</li> <li>• Demonstrate adequate convenience shopping provision in close proximity to new development*;</li> <li>• Demonstrate provision for appropriate education facilities in close proximity to new development to meet the need for school places arising from the proposed development*; and</li> <li>• Demonstrate sufficient open space, including recreational space in line with local community needs, within a close proximity to new development*.</li> </ul>	<p>Significant development proposals in the South East must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate how impact on Southdown Road, Grove Road, Wheathampstead Road and Piggotshill Lane will be mitigated;</li> <li>• Demonstrate provision for appropriate education facilities in close proximity to new development to meet the need for school places arising from the proposed development*;</li> <li>• Demonstrate sufficient open space, including recreational space in line with local community needs, within a close proximity to new development*; and</li> <li>• Demonstrate how pressure on parking will not significantly increase as a result of the proposed development.</li> </ul>
<p>Major development proposals in Harpenden Town Centre must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate how road congestion will be mitigated or reduced as a result of the proposed development;</li> <li>• Demonstrate how the proposed development will protect the character and appearance of the historic town centre; and</li> <li>• Demonstrate how pressure on parking will not significantly increase as a result of the proposed development.</li> </ul>	

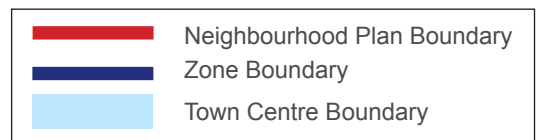
Table 4.1: Infrastructure Zones

\* Residential proposals only





Figure 4.2: Infrastructure Zones







- 4.6 The Infrastructure Zones cover the entire Neighbourhood Plan Area, but relate primarily to any future greenfield development adjacent to the Built Up Area Boundary of Harpenden, or major redevelopment within the town centre. The Neighbourhood Plan is aware that there will be considerable growth in St Albans District over the Neighbourhood Plan Period, including in Harpenden. St Albans City and District Council is preparing a new Local Plan, which is expected to identify a number of large housing sites for release from the Green Belt in order to meet the requirements set by central government. Policy SS2 seeks to be pragmatic and ensure that any development outside of the Built up Area Boundary addresses infrastructure deficiencies in each part of Harpenden.
- 4.7 The boundaries of the four Infrastructure Zones other than the Town Centre have been chosen based on physical boundaries within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The east-west boundary is established by the railway line. The north-south boundary is more complex, following field boundaries in the west and then heading along the settlement boundary. To the east, this boundary follows Station Road until it reaches the Lower Luton Road, at which point it heads south. The town centre boundary is in line with the boundary detailed further in to this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.8 The themed policies of this Neighbourhood Plan add detail to the requirements of Policy SS2.

## Key Themes

- 4.9 To support the delivery of the Overall Vision, the content of this Neighbourhood Plan is guided by five Key Themes, which form the following chapters of the Neighbourhood Plan. The themes are detailed below with some brief information on the content of each chapter.

## 1. Employment and Retail

This chapter outlines the approach to employment and retail growth in Harpenden. It considers how best to protect important employment and retail uses in the Neighbourhood Plan Area and sets out policies for the management of that growth.

## 2. Environment and Sustainable Design

This chapter sets out how the Neighbourhood Plan will protect important environmental assets. It also sets design expectations for all forms of development, including residential and other uses, ensuring design is considerate of the environment and local character.

## 3. Housing

This chapter details the type, tenure and size of housing expected to be delivered in Harpenden. It also identifies some sites for residential development, which are within the built up area of Harpenden.

## 4. Social Infrastructure and Community Facilities

This chapter sets out how important community assets will be protected and enhanced. It also outlines a framework for the provision of new social infrastructure to be provided as the town grows.

## 5. Transport and Movement

This chapter puts forward measures to reduce congestion and increase sustainable travel in Harpenden. It also details expectations of new development, including the amount of parking to be provided.

# 5. Employment and Retail

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## Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter sets out the approach to developing existing and new retail and employment uses. Harpenden Town Centre functions as a destination for residents of surrounding villages as well as Harpenden and incorporates a wide ranging retail offer. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, Harpenden Town Centre is supported by a cluster of shops in Southdown and smaller parades of shops in North Harpenden, Kinsbourne Green and Batford. Despite its image as a commuter town, Harpenden has a number of important employment locations, which this Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and enhance, and a significant number of home workers, whom the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support.



## Community Feedback

### Engagement 1 – Issues

- 5.2 At this stage, residents were asked to share their views on a number of statements about employment and retail. Respondents overwhelmingly supported the protection of existing shopping areas (88%) and many supported the need for a greater range of shops. A number of people commented about particular types of shops that they perceive to be needed, in oversupply, or important to retain. While a small number of people supported an increase in industrial or business space, some shared concern around the loss of employment land to residential due to ‘market forces’.

### Engagement 2 – Vision, Objectives and Policy Ideas

- 5.3 86% of respondents agreed with the Vision and all seven objectives presented at engagement received over 70% support. This Neighbourhood Plan reflects those objectives presented at engagement.

### Engagement 3 – Regulation 14 Draft Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.4 All proposed policies presented in the draft were well supported, with each gaining at least 80% approval. Following specific feedback received, Policy ER3 (Rothamsted Research) has been updated to prescribe more clearly what type of development at that site would be supported.



## Employment and Retail Vision

*That Harpenden has accessible, thriving and flexible retail areas, with a vibrant, attractive Town Centre that encourages people to spend time there, by offering a diverse range of quality retail and other Town Centre uses. To create a sustainable economy that protects existing, and supports new, employment use where appropriate, making Harpenden an attractive and accessible place for both employers and employees to work.*

## Employment and Retail Objectives

**ERO1:** Support a prosperous economy through encouraging improvements to existing employment and retail areas.

**ERO2:** Maintain retail and employment centres that are adaptable and able to keep pace with technological development and other innovations.

**ERO3:** Provide a community atmosphere for the Town Centre where residents, visitors and those employed in local businesses can relax and socialise, at all times taking in to account the viability of the surrounding retail units.

**ERO4:** Promote easy access to and increase footfall to the Town Centre, Southdown and Batford.

**ERO5:** Manage an attractive eating, drinking and entertainment scene that transitions through the day into a thriving evening economy (including the pubs and restaurants).

**ERO6:** Support the principle of residents having easy access to small local convenience shops.

**ERO7:** Protect existing employment and retail sites, encourage full usage and support new employment developments.

**ERO8:** Support small and medium enterprises including business start-ups and homeworking, through encouraging flexible working practices, shared offices and workshops.

## Employment and Retail Facilities Policies

### ER1 - Supporting Harpenden's Economy

In order to support the Harpenden economy, the following proposals will be supported in suitable locations:

1. **Appropriate improvement, enhancement and redevelopment of existing employment and retail sites for such uses.**
2. **Provision of smaller commercial units suitable for use by local businesses.**
3. **Appropriate facilities for the use of flexible workers.**

5.5 The Neighbourhood Plan is committed to supporting the improvement of Harpenden's employment and retail sites. Many employment locations designated in this Neighbourhood Plan are historic areas, which are increasingly occupied by companies requiring the provision of modern technology. It is important to allow these sites to be redeveloped appropriately to meet the needs of those companies, without negatively impacting local character or amenity. Retail units benefit from regular adaptation and modernisation to allow retailers to remain viable. The Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of local small and medium sized enterprises and seeks to ensure local people starting up companies are able to find local premises. The Neighbourhood Plan also recognises the significant proportion of the population that works at or primarily from home and encourages development that would support these residents.

### ER2 – Designated Employment Locations

The locations set out in Table 5.1 and shown at Figure 5.1 are designated as protected employment locations. At these locations, change of use to a non-B Class use will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the premises are no longer suitable for business use or there is clear evidence that there is no prospect of a new commercial occupier being found.

Reference	Name
DEL1	Rothamsted Research
DEL2	Southdown Industrial Estate
DEL3	Coldharbour Lane
DEL4	Batford Mill Industrial Estate

Table 5.1. Designated Employment Locations

5.6 The employment locations set out in Table 5.1 provide almost all employment (B Class) floorspace in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, with the exception of small offices in Harpenden Town Centre. Their continued protection will ensure that Harpenden retains a small but productive amount of employment floorspace. All four of these employment areas are protected in the current adopted Development Plan at St Albans City and District Council, the 1994 District Local Plan Review. In addition, Southdown Industrial Estate and Coldharbour Lane are protected with Article 4 Directions preventing the loss of employment land to residential use without planning permission. The Neighbourhood Plan would support the introduction of further Article 4 Directions protecting employment locations in the Batford Mill Industrial Estate and Harpenden Town Centre.



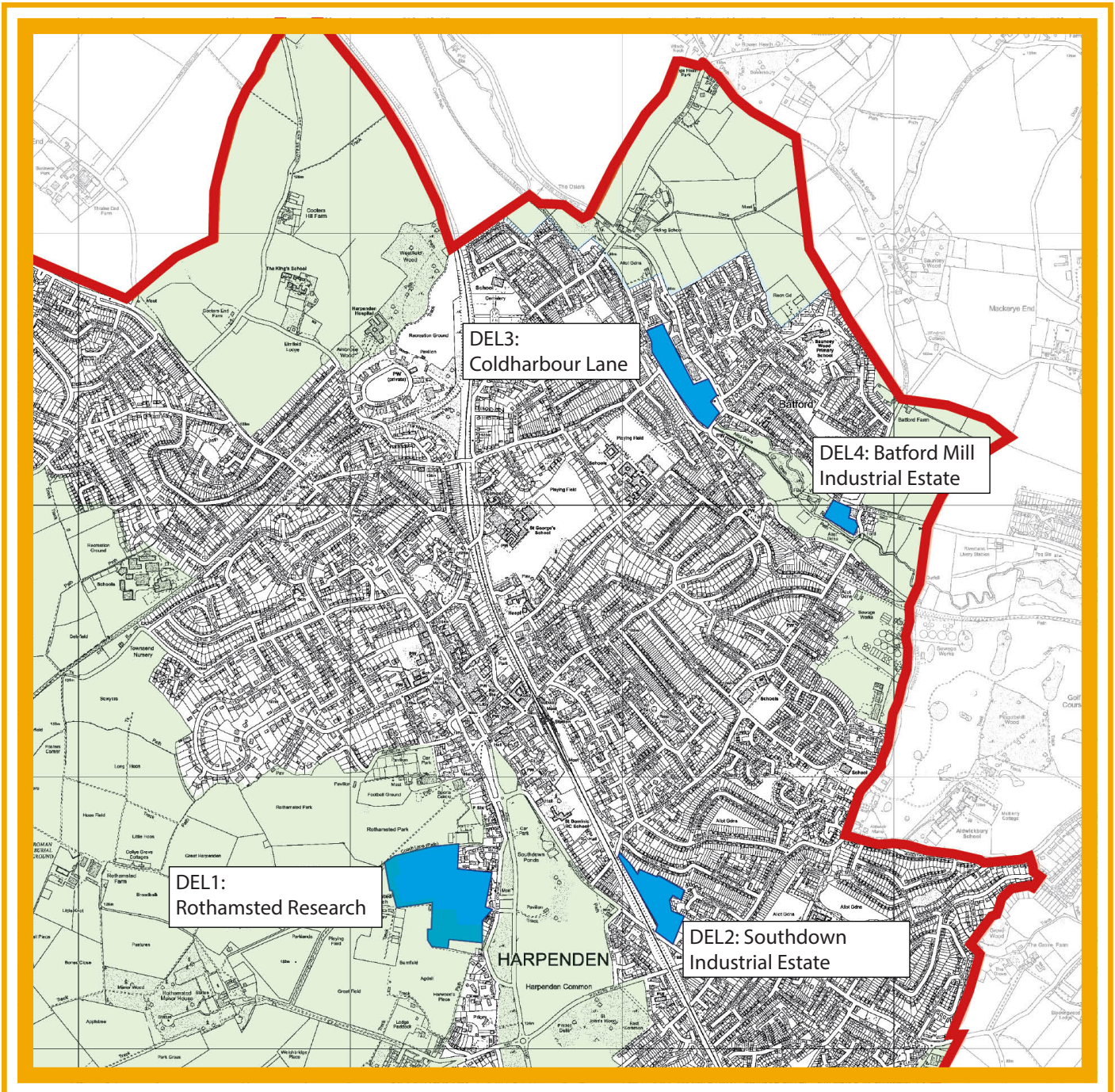
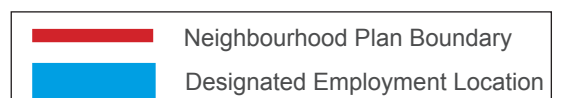


Figure 5.1. Designated Employment Locations



### ER3 – Rothamsted Research

**This Neighbourhood Plan supports appropriate redevelopment or expansion of Rothamsted Research to meet Rothamsted’s long-term agro-tech research needs and to accommodate firms carrying out complementary knowledge-based research and development activities.**

- 5.7 Rothamsted Research is a world leader in its field and a key local business. Its success as an agricultural research centre is sufficient to be regarded by the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership as part of the Hertfordshire “Green Triangle”, alongside BRE in Bricket Wood and the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield.

### ER4 – Designated Retail Areas

**Table 5.2 identifies the Designated Retail Areas within the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Area, which are identified at Figure 5.2.**

Reference	Name	Type
DRA1	Harpenden Town Centre	Large retail area
DRA2	Southdown Local Centre	Large local centre
DRA3	North Harpenden Local Centre	Small parade of shops
DRA4	Kinsbourne Green Local Centre	Small parade of shops
DRA5	Batford Local Centre	Small parade of shops

Table 5.2. Designated Retail Areas