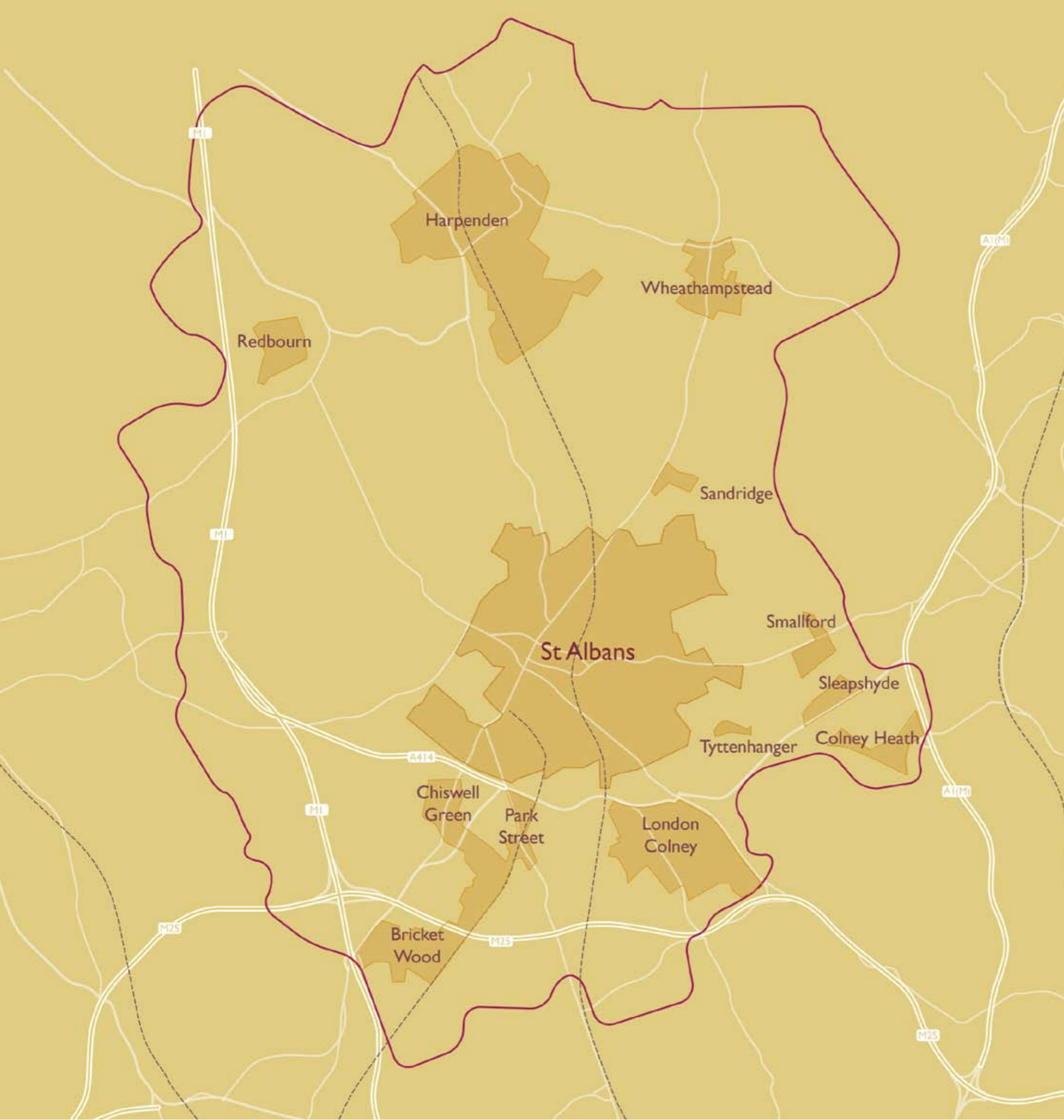


St Albans Rural Vision

Final Report | July 2009



Corrections

Please note the following corrections to this report:

The M10 should read A414 throughout.

Page 12, first paragraph: Reference to a station at Frogmore is incorrect.

2016 rural vision
Wheatthampstead
Shops & Businesses

Transport

2016 rural vision
Wheatthampstead
Other Issues



St Albans Rural Vision

Final Report | June 2009

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oots & Shoes

Pizza

Challis

HALIFAX

NO PARKING
ANYTIME
EXCEPT AT THE
BUS STOP

I. Introduction

I. Introduction

Urban Practitioners has been commissioned by St Albans City and District Council to develop a St Albans Rural Vision for the coming twenty years. A comprehensive programme of engagement and consultation was devised for the project, including events covering each of the rural parishes within the District.

The project has been developed in close collaboration with the relevant Town and Parish Councils wherever possible, and in the context of the St Albans City Vision, which has also been developed by Urban Practitioners (see below). In compiling the Rural Vision, the views of relevant organisations have also been sought wherever possible, including the Woodland Trust in relation to Heartwood Forest, and the Herts Rural Community Council.

This report provides a review of relevant documentation including the Local Plan, Sustainable Community Strategy, any relevant plans and strategies available for each Parish, together with a review of the results and key findings from the consultation exercises. Additionally, vision statements, key priorities and next steps are identified for each settlement.

Role of the Rural Vision

St Albans City and District Council are currently developing their Local Development Framework (LDF). This will replace the District's Local Plan, and will help to shape spatial planning in the District up to 2026.

As an evidence base document, the Rural Vision has been prepared for the District Council to inform the preparation of Development Plan Documents in the LDF - particularly the Core Strategy.

St Albans City and District Council will have a key role in delivering the Vision as the local planning authority and a delivery body. For proposals that are not directly within the Council's control or remit, it will perform the role of an enabling body, helping to identify funding priorities and opportunities for partnership working with other organisations and service providers in the District.

Project programme

The full project programme runs from February 2009 until June 2009, and includes five key stages:

Stage 1: Familiarisation

Feb/March 2009

- Review of existing information
- Meeting with members of the SACDC Planning
- Department

Stage 2: Scoping of consultation exercise

Feb/March 2009

- Identification of relevant contacts at Parish and Town Councils
- Meet with the Parish and Town Councils
- Agree scope and content of consultation events
- Agree venues
- Publicity of consultation events
- Invitation letters sent to stakeholders
- Community panel recruitment

Stage 3: Facilitation of consultation events

March/April 2009

- Write-up of workshop feedback

Stage 4: Preparation of report

May 2009

- Analysis of results
- Identification of a vision statement and key priorities for each settlement
- Identification of overarching vision with links to City Vision project
- Report production

Stage 5: Finalisation of the report

June 2009

Report structure

This report sets out an overarching vision for the future of the rural parts of the district, and includes vision statements, key priorities and next steps for each of the Parishes.

The structure of the report is set out as follows:

Chapter 2 sets out the rural vision and key conclusions for each of the Parishes and the District;

Chapter 3 sets out the project context, including links to the City Vision, a review of relevant policy and other documentation, and the strategic development context for the rural areas within the district; and



Chapter 4 sets out the local context for each parish within the district, and for each includes details of the local development context and relevant documentation, reviews the consultation exercises which have been undertaken, and presents the key findings for each area.

Consultation programme

Following initial meetings with the Parish Councils to identify key issues and scope out the consultation programme, the following consultation has been carried out:

Wheathampstead

Drop-in event Friday 3rd April
Farmers market Sunday 19th April

Redbourn

Drop-in event Tuesday 21st April

Colney Heath

Drop-in event Wednesday 22nd April

Harpenden

Workshop Monday 27th April
Market stall Saturday 2nd May

St Stephen

Drop-in event Thursday 30th April

Sandridge

Drop-in event Friday 1st May

London Colney

Drop-in event Tuesday 5th May

Additionally, meetings were held with the Woodland Trust on the 1st May, and the Herts Rural Community Council on the 29th May. Findings from a workshop at the Parish Conference on the 23rd April have also been incorporated into this report.



2. Rural vision

Wheathampstead



Key findings

As one of the larger villages in the District, Wheathampstead has a relatively mixed community and a range of local shops, services and businesses, giving it the potential to become one of the more self-contained and sustainable settlements within the District in the future.

Wheathampstead has retained much of its historic village character and identity, particularly in comparison with some of the other towns and villages within the District, and is located in close proximity to both the strategic rail and road network (Harpenden for the train service to London, and the A1(M) / M1 at Welwyn Garden City and Redbourn). Additionally, Wheathampstead is in close proximity to the future site of Heartwood Forest, which may help to make it a suitable location for tourists and day trippers in the future.

The consultation undertaken in Wheathampstead indicated that the village retains a significant and impressive range of listed buildings within its Conservation Area, but scope exists for further promoting the historical legacy of the village and nearby Devils Dyke. In association with this, the village may benefit from promoting itself as a centre by which Heartwood Forest can be accessed and visited in the future.

Vision statement

Wheathampstead has the potential to develop its role as a large and sustainable village settlement by supporting local shops and businesses, and improving integrated access to sustainable modes of transportation which provide access to surrounding towns and St Albans city. The local economy will benefit from promotion as a local tourist and recreational destination, by fostering links with Heartwood Forest and the surrounding countryside, and by maximising opportunities to promote heritage interests and its unique village character.

Future priorities

Future priorities for the village and parish include:

- Promoting local businesses and filling empty shop units to encourage local economic development and sustainable living patterns;
- Improving connectivity to surrounding towns and villages, particularly in terms of improved cycle and pedestrian routes, and improved local public transportation provision;
- Retaining the distinctive village identity and promoting local heritage and natural assets;
- Promoting the village as a destination for visitors to Heartwood Forest and the surrounding countryside; and
- Strengthening local amenities and facilities, and ensuring improved access to secondary schools places for local residents.

Next steps

The District Council should seek to promote planning policies which protect empty shop units from conversion to alternative uses, and where possible to protect the existing local village shops and services. Policies to encourage home working practice and the support of local businesses would strengthen employment in the village, reducing the need to travel and enhancing the local economy.

The Council should seek to retain and protect the Conservation Area and listed buildings, and where possible encourage the promotion of local historic and natural assets. Transportation policies should seek to encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transportation, improve existing walking and cycling routes, and promote the delivery of new routes linked to neighbouring towns and villages. The Council may wish to encourage a review of the distribution of secondary school places, improving access for children within the Parish where possible.

Issues

- Herts County Council as the Local Education authority manages local school provision.
- District Council unable to directly influence and adjust local rents and business rates.

Redbourn



Key findings

Redbourn High Street follows the line of the Roman Watling Street in the north-west of the District. As a result, the village contains a significant amount of listed buildings in and around the High Street, and has retained a unique and largely unspoilt village character. The village includes a significant area of Common land to the west of the High Street, and the River Ver runs to the east. The village centre includes a relatively limited range of shops and services.

Redbourn experiences a considerable amount of development pressure, given that it has good access to the strategic road network (the M1 motorway is located directly to the west of the village), and is in close proximity to the National Rail network (Thameslink) at nearby Harpenden. Should the potential expansion to the east of Hemel Hempstead take place in the future, there may be implications for the infrastructure of the village. Additionally, Redbourn includes several traveller sites.

The consultation undertaken in Redbourn indicated that the village shops and services are in decline, and improved free parking facilities are required to support businesses. Concern was also voiced in relation to the frequency of bus services, the lack of local secondary school places available, the lack of affordable and sheltered housing

in the village, along with the future of the travellers sites located within the Parish. The need to protect the Common and Green Belt was also emphasised. Key assets identified included the strength of the local community, the Common and rural surrounds, the self-contained nature of the village, and the village heritage.

Vision statement

Redbourn has a unique village identity and protecting the historic fabric of the village, and maintaining links to the surrounding natural environment will preserve and enhance this. The Common is particularly central to the village's identity and will be preserved and enhanced. Existing local businesses should be supported, and the development of local niche shops promoted where possible in the High Street.

The strong sense of community will be used to encourage and foster a strong sense of civic pride for all residents and help to support local services. Sustainable modes of transportation linking Redbourn with surrounding areas can be promoted to encourage a modal shift, and to enable residents to reach Harpenden and St Albans more easily. The Nicky Line is a great asset and will be promoted as a sustainable and user friendly route linking Redbourn with Harpenden.

Future priorities

Future priorities for the village and parish include:

- Improving local bus links and connections with nearby rail services;
- Supporting local businesses;
- Promoting a greater range of housing types;
- Ensuring that new development is sensitive to the village character and Green Belt; and
- Improving car parking facilities in the village centre.

Redbourn

Next steps

St Albans City and District Council should seek to promote policies which improve accessibility to facilities and amenities at nearby centres. The use of sustainable methods of transportation should be encouraged, including walking and cycling facilities (such as the Nicky Line), and the improved provision of public transport services integrated with rail links at Harpenden. Policies should support the vitality and viability of shops and services in Redbourn by protecting empty shop units from conversion to residential and other alternative uses, and supporting the improved provision of short-term car parking facilities in the village centre.

Housing policies should seek to increase the provision of affordable housing by ensuring that either a percentage of new developments are classified as affordable, or by ensuring that contributions are received from all new housing developments which contribute to the provision of affordable housing in appropriate locations locally. Additionally, policies should make provision for a range of housing types and sizes within the village. New development should respect the unique character of the village, and be of a high design quality.

The Council should seek to encourage a review of the distribution of secondary

school places, improving access for children within the Parish where possible.

Issues

- Public transport provided by private sector operators.
- District Council unable to directly influence and adjust local rents and business rates.
- Identification of suitable sites for central short term car parking requirements may be problematic.
- Herts County Council as the Local Education authority manages local school provision.



Colney Heath



Key findings

Colney Heath Parish incorporates several small villages and settlements, including Colney Heath, Smallford, Sleafshyde, Highfield and Tyttenhanger, and the Parish is split by major roads, including the A414. The settlements retain varying degrees of their historic cores, with a range of more recent development throughout. The settlements are smaller, and generally of a more varied and fragmented character than those found in the north of the District.

The consultation undertaken within the Parish indicated that the key concerns were the lack of affordable housing, protection of the Green Belt and the need to protect from potential future coalescence between settlements and with surrounding areas (particularly Welwyn and Hatfield), fear of crime and the range and frequency of bus services. Key local assets were identified as local pubs, the Trestle Theatre and local areas of countryside. The need to consider the appropriateness of the parish boundary was raised, particularly in relation to the inclusion of Highfield within the Parish, which is largely considered to be within the St Albans City area.

Vision statement

Colney Heath's strong links to the surrounding countryside and selection of local pubs with character will help to establish the Parish as a local visitor destination and centre for recreational activities, including walking, cycling and horseriding.

The village centres within the Parish will be well integrated in terms of community events and forward planning to help reach the Parish's potential and maximise opportunities in the area.

Future priorities

Future priorities for the Parish include:

- Maintaining, protecting and improving access to the local countryside;
- Increasing the provision of affordable housing;
- Protecting the Green Belt and maintaining separation between settlements;
- Improving local bus services; and
- Updating the Parish boundary to more closely reflect the nature of settlements within the Parish.

Next steps

St Albans City and District Council should seek to promote policies which aim to maintain and improve access to local countryside for recreational purposes. In determining the future locations for development and expansion, the Council should consider the relative impacts of new development on smaller settlements, particularly where the gap between settlements has already been significantly reduced over time.

Housing policies should seek to increase the provision of affordable housing by ensuring that either a percentage of new developments are classified as affordable, or by ensuring that contributions are received from all new housing developments which contribute to the provision of affordable housing in appropriate locations locally. Additionally, policies should make provision for a range of housing types and sizes. New development should respect the unique character of settlements within the Parish, and be of a high design quality.

Although not directly within the Council's remit, the Council may wish to consider promoting the revision of the Parish boundary, and promoting the improvement the provision of bus services locally.

Issues

- Public transport provided by private sector operators.
- District Council does not have the authority to alter Parish boundaries.

Harpenden



Key findings

Harpenden is the second largest settlement in the District after St Albans, and despite its size, is characterised by its village feel. As a result of its size and status, Harpenden is largely self-contained and generally has a complementary role to St Albans City.

Several recurring themes can be identified from the consultation undertaken. The town itself is generally thought to be prosperous, with a high standard of living, access to a good range of facilities and school, and transport links to the strategic rail and road network. However, as a consequence, the town suffers from significant development pressures and high property prices. There is significant opposition to future housing development in Harpenden, as a result of concerns relating to local infrastructure provision and traffic congestion in the town. Car parking for the station was identified as an issue, and concern was also expressed in relation to the provision of local healthcare facilities.

A number of respondents suggested that Harpenden, as the only town in the District outside of St Albans itself, should be independent both economically and politically from the City.

Harpenden Common and the surrounding rural areas are frequently cited as significant assets for the town. Rothamsted Research facility was also identified as a key asset.

Most respondents to the consultation identified that they were generally satisfied with the provision of shops, services and facilities locally, and thought that there was a good sense of community. The separate identity of Southdown and Batford centres within the Harpenden town area was also identified, and both centres are generally thought to complement the retail offer within Harpenden itself.

Vision statement

Harpenden will become a sustainable town which offers a good range of shops and services providing for the everyday needs of the local and surrounding community. The town can also promote small independent niche retailers and businesses which complement the offer of St Albans City nearby, increasing the synergy between the settlements. Building on the successful farmers market and nearby attractions such as Harpenden Common, this would help to attract a greater number of visitors to the town.

Harpenden has the potential to significantly increase the local use of sustainable modes of transportation. A modal shift away from car use will be achieved by introducing improvements to local bus services to increase integration with the train service, and improving local cycling and walking routes.

Future priorities

Future priorities for Harpenden include:

- Improving integrated public transport provision to encourage a modal shift away from car use;
- Supporting local independent shops and businesses;
- Maintaining the unique character and village feel of the town, and ensuring that future development is appropriate in scale and character;
- Improving local healthcare provision and the quality of local public facilities, including the Library and Harpenden Halls; and
- Improving car parking provision for Harpenden station.

Harpenden

Next steps

St Albans City and District Council should seek to promote the provision of improved integrated public transport provision both for local shoppers, workers and commuters. The use of sustainable methods of transportation should be encouraged, including walking and cycling facilities (such as the Nicky Line). A review of car parking arrangements at Harpenden Station should be encouraged.

Policies should support the vitality and viability of shops and services in Harpenden by protecting empty shop units from conversion to residential and other alternative uses, and by retaining and developing local independent shops and businesses. A review of local healthcare provision should be encouraged to ensure that accessible healthcare is available where possible.

Housing policies should seek to increase the provision of affordable housing by ensuring that either a percentage of new developments are classified as affordable, or by ensuring that contributions are received from all new housing developments which contribute to the provision of affordable housing in appropriate locations locally, taking into account infrastructure requirements and local congestion. Additionally, policies should make provision for a range of housing types and sizes

within the town, including the promotion of sustainable town centre living through the use of residential units above shops and businesses. New development should respect the unique village character of Harpenden and be of a high design quality.

Issues

- Public transport provided by private sector operators.
- District Council unable to directly influence and adjust local rents and business rates.
- Primary Care Trust responsible for healthcare provision in the District.
- Some public facilities may be owned by other bodies, such as Hertfordshire County Council, and may be operated by private sector companies.
- Identification of suitable sites for station car parking requirements may be problematic.



St Stephen



Key findings

St Stephen Parish includes Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green, Park Street and How Wood, and is interspersed with a number of strategic roads, including the M25, M10 and M1. Settlements in the Parish range in character, from suburban to rural village, but all have experienced significant development and expansion over the last century.

Several key concerns were raised by consultees, including the quantity of infill development, the potential new rail freight terminal, the reliability and frequency of public transport, noise pollution and parking difficulties. Butterfly World was largely considered to have the potential to benefit the area in the future.

Settlements within the Parish were generally considered to have a strong sense of community and local character. The largely rural surrounds and ease of access into the countryside was noted as an asset. Additionally, the relatively high levels of accessibility were considered to be an asset, particularly in terms of the proximity to the strategic road network.

Vision statement

St Stephen Parish stands to benefit significantly from the development of Butterfly World in Chiswell Green, which has been granted planning permission, and this national attraction can help to provide local jobs and encourage visitors to the area.

The separate settlements within the Parish will provide for the everyday needs of their local communities and develop community hubs accordingly, to strengthen the roles of the local centres.

Future priorities

Future priorities for the Parish include:

- Ensuring that future development respects local surroundings and character, and that infrastructure requirements are carefully considered;
- Improving integrated public transport provision to encourage a modal shift from car use;
- Restricting future amounts of infill development;
- Ensuring that the public realm is well maintained; and
- Providing adequate local facilities – particularly for young people.

Next steps

St Albans City and District Council should seek to promote the provision of improved integrated public transport provision within the Parish, connecting the villages with St Albans and surrounding areas. In terms of future development, policies should ensure that development proposals are appropriate in terms of design, scale and massing in relation to their surroundings. Where necessary, steps should be taken to ensure that detrimental impacts arising from development within the Parish are minimised. Maintenance of the public realm and the provision of youth facilities should be considered, and where necessary financial contributions should be sought from developers.

Issues

- Local infrastructure is largely managed and maintained by a number of external organisations.
- Public transport provided by private sector operators.
- District Council is not necessarily best placed to deliver local facilities for the young.

Sandridge



Key findings

Sandridge Parish includes Sandridge village, Marshalswick and Jersey Farm. Sandridge village has retained a largely rural village identity, however, Marshalswick and Jersey Farm are more suburban in character, given their coalescence with the wider St Albans built up area. As a result, the Parish has a rather fragmented character. Heartwood Forest, a new 850 acre native forest, is to be located in close proximity to the Parish.

Key concerns raised at the consultation event related to the range of housing available (specifically the lack of affordable housing within the Parish), the need to preserve the Green Belt, the frequency and reliability of bus services, pedestrian safety and the quality of road surfaces. The supply of parks and open spaces, and range of local facilities were identified as assets for the Parish, along with the proximity to St Albans.

Vision statement

Sandridge village will become the primary visitor centre for Heartwood Forest, with local businesses benefiting economically from the carefully managed increase in visitors to the area. Jersey Farm and Marshalswick can be sustainable settlements, with a range of transport choices, and shops and services catering for the everyday needs of the local community.

Future priorities

Future priorities for the parish include:

- Preserving the Green Belt;
- Promoting the village as a destination for visitors to Heartwood Forest and the surrounding countryside;
- Providing a greater range of housing for the local community;
- Improving public transport links; and
- Maintaining and improving pedestrian safety.

Next steps

St Albans City and District Council should seek to promote policies which aim to ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt, and that access to surrounding countryside is improved and encouraged for recreational purposes.

Housing policies should seek to increase the provision of affordable housing by ensuring that either a percentage of new developments are classified as affordable, or by ensuring that contributions are received from all new housing developments which contribute to the provision of affordable housing in appropriate locations locally. Additionally, policies should make provision for a range of housing types and sizes. New development should respect the unique character of settlements within the Parish, and be of a high design quality.

St Albans City and District Council should seek to promote the provision of improved integrated public transport provision within the Parish, providing improved accessibility into St Albans and surrounding areas.

Issues

- Public transport provided by private sector operators.
- Private sector intervention is likely to be required to ensure that Sandridge can benefit economically from the emergence of Heartwood Forest.
- Highway maintenance and pedestrian crossings are generally the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council.

London Colney



Key findings

London Colney includes a number of historic buildings within its conservation area, separated by the River Colne. Additionally, the Parish includes a nature reserve to the west of the High Street, an out of town retail centre (Colney Fields) adjacent to the junction with the M25, and a number of disused gravel pits.

Key concerns raised at the consultation events related to high levels of noise and air pollution arising from the proximity of the village to the M25, the lack of short term parking facilities, and the proposed rail freight terminal (at nearby Park Street). Assets identified by consultees included the strength of the local community, the good bus links to surrounding towns and villages, the conservation areas at Waterside and Napsbury and local natural and landscape features.

Vision statement

London Colney will promote and enhance existing Conservation Areas and natural assets within the Parish. Local shops and businesses will be supported to promote sustainability and ensure that the everyday needs of the local community can be met.

Future priorities

Future priorities for the parish include:

- Reducing noise and air pollution from nearby road and rail links, especially the M25;
- Protecting and enhancing the conservation areas;
- Implement measures to support local shops and businesses, such as increasing short term parking facilities;
- Protecting and enhancing local rural and landscape features; and
- Reducing social exclusion and deprivation within the Parish.

Next steps

St Albans City and District Council should seek to promote policies which will protect the vitality and viability of shopping facilities, by protecting the conversion of ground floor town centre uses to residential uses. Policies should ensure that new development respects the unique character of the conservation areas and local natural assets.

The Council should seek to promote policies which aim to ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt, and that access to surrounding countryside is improved and encouraged for recreational purposes.

The Council may wish to promote measures to reduce the impacts of noise and air pollution associated with the proximity of London Colney to the M25 motorway, such as a quieter road surface or the development of a noise barrier as part of future road works relating to the M25 expansion.

Issues

- Management and maintenance of the motorway is the responsibility of the Highways Agency.
- District Council unable to directly influence and adjust local rents and business rates.
- Identification of suitable sites for central short term car parking requirements may be problematic.

District Rural Vision

The rural areas and communities within the District will be enhanced through the promotion of sustainable measures to boost the local economy and increase integration.

The need to promote sustainability is widely acknowledged across the District. A modal shift away from car use can be encouraged by providing enhanced and affordable local integrated public transport services, and improving the provision of local walking and cycling routes.

Accessibility and integration between the rural centres and St Albans City and surrounding towns should be improved to enhance access to local shops, services and employment opportunities for local communities.

The rural areas of the District have a wealth of historic buildings, and settlements with strong identities throughout. Local heritage and natural assets can be promoted both to local residents and visitors, and access to the surrounding countryside improved.

The vitality and viability of local centres must be maintained and enhanced to ensure that they can support the everyday needs of the local community, with some centres supported to encourage visitors.

New development should be appropriate in its location and scale so that it enhances the physical environment where possible and minimises any associated detrimental impacts on rural areas.



District Rural Vision

Key Priorities

In addition to the specific priorities for each of the rural parishes within the District, it is also possible to identify the following key common priorities which relate to the rural areas of the District as a whole. In accordance with the Rural Vision statement, enhancing sustainability, improving the local economy and increasing integration are all central to the priorities identified. The priorities have been grouped into the following themes:

- Community;
- Transport;
- Economy;
- Physical Environment; and
- Management & Coordination.

Community

- **Enhancing the provision of affordable housing whilst protecting the Green Belt**

Provision of affordable housing in the District was identified as an issue across the settlements, with specific mention of the need to provide affordable homes for young people and older people. The District has relatively high property prices on a national and regional scale and this should be considered a key priority.

The proportion of infill development in the District could exacerbate housing affordability issues, given that on-site affordable housing targets of 35% are triggered by development of 15 units or greater. Potential exists for the new Local Development Framework (LDF) to seek on-site affordable housing for 10 or more dwellings, and for off-site affordable housing contributions for all new housing. This would help to ensure a mix of housing provision in villages and prevent against younger and older people being priced out of certain areas.

Opinions varied regarding the benefits of intensifying development in local centres to help preserve the Green Belt. A case-by-case system for considering development sites would be most

beneficial, which takes account of urban design issues, such as view corridors, scale and massing and architectural character, along with the specific characteristics of Greenfield sites.

- **Promoting civic pride and fostering local ownership**

Community organisations and the local community in general were mentioned as key assets in a number of settlements during consultation for the Rural Vision. The benefits of having an engaged local community cannot be underestimated, with greater participation in local decision making, greater care for the physical environment and support for local shops and services, helping to create successful and sustainable local centres that can provide a high quality of life.

Active and creative engagement from the town and parish councils with local residents will help to extend the input into planning the future for local settlements. Hertfordshire Community Development Agency (CDA) could help to provide guidance and support in this.

- **Engendering trust and integration between communities**

Concerns were raised regarding integration between parish communities in the District, along with relations between transient and established communities. For instance, in some areas the emergence of traveller sites resulted in a rise in the fear of crime in the area, and there was a lack of willingness to integrate.

Proactively managing the allocation of sites for transient communities and promoting schemes and initiatives to increase trust and integration between communities could help to improve relations. For instance, the Herts Community Development Agency (CDA) operates playbus facilities and outreach healthcare on sites across the County and could support initiatives that help to build greater trust between communities.

- **Assessing and reviewing the access to secondary school places across the District**

Secondary School access for young people in the District was considered a key issue in many local settlements, particularly in villages which formally had their own secondary education

provision. The potential for this situation to intensify in the short term was also identified as a result of the number of young people switching from private to state education in the area as a result of the changing economic climate.

Education provision in the District is directed at County level and details of suggested additional provision are set out in the Core Strategy consultation document. This includes potential for a new secondary school to the north of St Albans City and a new primary school in London Colney. This would significantly help to address the shortage in school provision and correlates with the need identified anecdotally through consultation for the Rural Vision. In the long term, it will be important to continue to monitor school access in the District in order to coordinate with sustainability objectives and ensure that children are not travelling long distances for school places unnecessarily.

- **Assessing and reviewing the access to healthcare across the District**

Access to healthcare was raised in a number of settlements, particularly

with regard to access to hospitals for older people living in the community. The District Council has limited control on the provision of healthcare, with direction coming from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and restructuring for the NHS on a national scale, with the introduction of polyclinics.

The District could help to ensure access to healthcare is maximised through transport provision and education regarding services available.

Coordination with local transport providers can help to ensure that it is possible to access the hospital in Watford, for example, by public transport. Greater communication regarding the changes in services from the PCT and the District Council could also help to inform the local community of improved access to GPs in the mornings, evenings and at weekends.

- **Ensuring that the benefits to local residents from Heartwood Forest are maximised**

Local businesses, such as the pubs in Sandridge, have already experienced an upturn in customer levels following public access to the lands that will become Heartwood Forest, and

significant opportunity exists in Sandridge and Wheathampstead to harness benefits from the increase in visitor numbers to the local area. If advertised successfully, local shops and businesses could be given a significant boost once the Forest opens.

The Forest also provides a great opportunity for educational visits, with local school children helping to plant trees, and for local food production, with potential for an 'edible forest' area, with fruits, nuts and berries.

Transport

- **Assessing and reviewing the provision and coordination of public transport across the District**

Public transport was commonly found to be one of the key issues throughout the District, with provision generally considered to be expensive and unreliable and therefore not effective in providing a convenient alternative to car use.

The provision of public transport should be reviewed to ensure that sustainable integrated transport links are available between the rural settlements and surrounding towns, particularly in terms

of links to nearby mainline rail stations, such as St Albans and Harpenden.

- **Strengthening cycling and walking routes between the towns and villages**

Improving walking and cycle routes in the District is widely considered to present a sustainable alternative to car use. It will be necessary to ensure that existing routes, such as the Nicky Line and Alban Way are enhanced and promoted, and that further routes are created which connect the towns and villages of the District and offer a desirable usable route for all. This means ensuring that routes are created which avoid fast and busy main roads. Additionally, routes should connect up easily to the places that people need to get to, such as town centres and railway stations, and avoid the need for users to dismount their bicycles frequently to cross obstacles, such as main roads and bridges.

- **Improving east-west transport links**

The majority of the transport links in the District are radial routes, focusing on London. As a result, there is a need to enhance east-west transport links,

District Rural Vision

where possible such as the Abbey Flyer service.

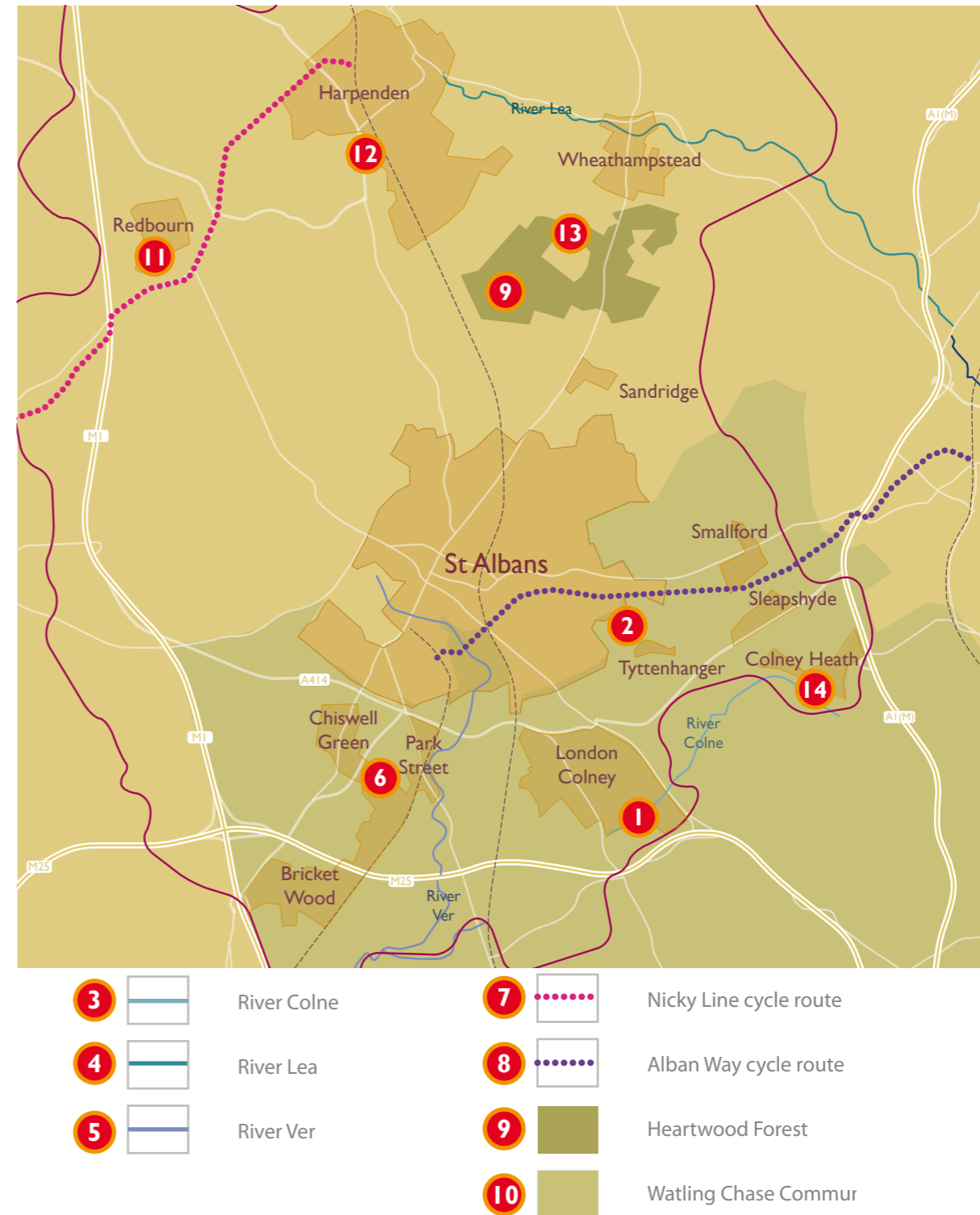
Economy

- **Encouraging local employment**
Encouraging home working practices by developing communications infrastructure and supporting local businesses will help to enhance the local economy and promote sustainability by reducing the need to travel. It will be necessary to ensure that an adequate supply of employment land and workspace, including live-work units, exists locally. It may also be possible to strengthen and develop existing local employment areas within the District, such as Rothamsted Research Centre in Harpenden.
- **Supporting local shops and businesses**
It will be important to promote the vitality and viability of shopping centres within the District, and protect town centre uses through the inclusion of appropriate policies within the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents. Local shops and businesses may be supported through the promotion of local and Farmers Markets. Settlements could also

consider a variation on a Business Improvement District Scheme (BIDS) in which local businesses contribute to a central pot in order to fund improvement initiatives in the area. A partnership could be created to manage these funds and ensure a strategic approach to supporting the centre. This system could provide networks for financial and organisational support.

Physical Environment

- **Protecting the unique character of the settlements**
The settlements within the District all have their own unique characteristics as a result of the various influences which have contributed to their development. Many of the historic cores of the villages and towns have been well preserved. However, the District has experienced significant and rapid growth and development over the last century, and more, both in the form of substantial new housing development and the creation of major new transport infrastructure. In some instances, particularly in the south of the District, this has detracted slightly from the historic and rural character. As a result, it will be important to ensure that new development respects



the unique character and urban design quality of the various settlements within the District.

- **Encouraging access to the Green Belt, including Heartwood Forest and Watling Chase Community Forest**

There are many areas of attractive countryside within easy reach of the rural settlements in the District, and it will be important to ensure that access is maintained and improved wherever possible. This will help to promote local recreational opportunities and support healthier communities.

- **Protecting and promoting natural and heritage assets**

Key natural and green assets in the District to be protected and promoted include:

- 1 London Colney nature reserve;
- 2 Highfield Park;
- 3 River Colne;
- 4 River Lea;
- 5 River Ver;
- 6 Greenwood Park;
- 7 The Nicky Line cycle route;

- 8 The Alban Way cycle route;
- 9 Heartwood Forest;
- 10 Watling Chase Community Forest;
- 11 Redbourn Common;
- 12 Harpenden Common;
- 13 Nomansland Common; and
- 14 Colney Heath Common.

These are set out in the plan to the left.

Additionally, the Conservation Areas and historic village centres within the District should be protected and promoted.

Promoting these assets may help to encourage visitors to the area. Additionally, it may lead to increased awareness of both natural and historic assets amongst local residents, and foster a greater sense of civic pride.

Management & Coordination

- **Forging external links at Parish, District and County level**

Improving links and creating partnerships between different agencies in the District will help to improve synergy, and produce more effective working practices.

The annual Parish Conference, last held in April 2009, provides a useful forum for parishes within the District to work together and coordinate objectives. Ensuring that communication paths are also encouraged across parish, district and county level will help in ensuring that the responsible body or organisation is aware of identified need and aspirations.

- **Encouraging Parishes to undertake community led planning and develop community hubs**

Promoting planning at a local level, through the development of Parish / Village Plans can help to ensure that local priorities are considered in the planning and development process. As the name suggests, community led planning should incorporate the views and opinions of the whole local community, and ideally travel plans should also be included. Parishes should consult the Community Development Agency (CDA) for Hertfordshire for further guidance in how effective community led planning can be undertaken.

Promoting and developing community hubs can help to provide a focal point for communities in rural areas, and increase interaction between different sections of the community,

potentially reducing social exclusion. The development of community hubs can promote a sense of belonging and ownership, fostering civic pride locally.

Next steps

Addressing all of the above priorities will be important for the future of the rural areas, and in maintaining and improving the ways in which the rural areas interact with each other, and with the City of St Albans.

It is important to acknowledge that the Core Strategy in itself will not be purely responsible for achieving these priorities. Some will need to be achieved by alternative means or bodies, such as Hertfordshire County Council or the Primary Care Trust, and encouraging coordination between organisations will be critical in achieving this.

However, the Core Strategy will be central to ensuring an appropriate approach to the planning of the rural areas within the District.



St. Albans (A 5183)
Harpenden (A 487)



Atelier
Salon & Spa



J&P Windows 01582 792 686



Atelier
Salon & Spa
01582 794 994

Atelier
Salon & Spa
01582 794 994

NO PARKING
ANY TIME

3. Project context

3. Project context

City Vision

Urban Practitioners was commissioned by St Albans City and District Council in 2008 to lead a multi-disciplinary team in developing a St Albans City Vision for the next twenty years. The vision covers the social, cultural and economic development of the city over the coming decades, along with the spatial framework that can support these developments whilst providing an attractive place to live or visit. The project has included a comprehensive programme of engagement and consultation.

The brief for the project identified a number of key themes which should be considered throughout the project, as priorities for St Albans. These themes were:

- Defining the city's identity
- Public participation and involvement
- Environmental sustainability
- Equality and disadvantage
- Partnership development
- Creation of lasting structures and delivery mechanisms

The City Vision will help to inform the production of LDF documentation by the District Council. However, the development of a Rural Vision is also required to supplement the findings of the City Vision. At present there is no cohesive vision for the smaller settlements within the District, and there is a need to clearly identify their distinctive identities, including local characteristics and assets.

The Rural Vision will be closely linked with City Vision to ensure that there are interrelationships. Although the smaller settlements have their own distinct character and role, it is important to emphasise that St Albans City drives the District's wider spatial economy. Therefore, the rural visioning project has been framed in the context of the central City Vision.

Policy Review

Introduction

The City Vision report includes a review of national and regional statutory plans along with the findings of relevant studies commissioned by the Council in order to draw out the key issues for the City Vision. This section complements the review within by identifying key local planning policy and relevant documentation which relates specifically to the rural areas of the District. This includes a review of the relevant policies in the Local Plan and emerging Core Strategy, together with a review of Sustainable Community Strategy which has been adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership. Relevant national and regional policies have been reviewed as part of the City Vision project.

A review of local plans and strategies at a parish level is included within section three of the report for each area.

Local context

St Albans District Council is currently in the process of preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) which will comprise a series of documents setting out policies and proposals for future development in the District. Once adopted, the LDF will replace the current District Local Plan Review which was adopted in 1994. However, until then the saved

policies of the Local Plan (1994) constitute the development plan for the District, along with the East of England Plan (2008), the Hertfordshire Minerals Plan and saved policies from the Hertfordshire Structure Plan and Waste Plan.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan (1994) states that the District Council will seek to protect and enhance the essential character of existing settlements. Proposals contrary to the policies in the design and environment and the conservation and historic buildings...will not normally be permitted. The Council will have regard not only to the impact of individual developments but also to the cumulative effect.

The Policy sets out the settlement strategy for the District, which the nature and intensity of acceptable development will reflect. St Albans and Harpenden are classified as towns and excluded from the Green Belt. Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green, How Wood, London Colney, Park Street / Frogmore, Redbourn and Wheathampstead are classified as specified settlements and are excluded from the Green Belt.

Public consultation was last undertaken on the *Joint Issues and Options Consultation Document* (2006). This contained a series of Core Strategy options. The Council are currently producing an updated emerging Core Strategy document for consultation in summer 2009.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Paper was published in July 2007. This takes into account comments raised by consultees during the initial May 2006 consultation, the Council's evidence base and relevant local strategies and plans, national policy guidance, and the views and observations of the Council's Sustainability Appraisal consultants.

The paper identifies the key characteristics of the District (including the rural areas) as follows:

There is a fairly even geographical distribution of settlements across the District, of which the historic cathedral city of St Albans (with a population of just over 64,000) is the largest... The residential commuter town of Harpenden has a population of almost 30,000 and is the second largest settlement within the District. Today, both St Albans and Harpenden are prosperous towns, which continue to grow in popularity, due to their high quality environment and proximity to the capital. Almost three quarters of the District's population lives in these two main settlements, which are also the main focus for commercial and leisure activity in the District. Both have thriving centres providing a variety of retail, leisure, community and cultural facilities, in addition to providing

broad employment opportunities. Also lying within the District and excluded from the Green Belt are the settlements of Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green, How Wood, London Colney, Park Street/Frogmore, Redbourn and Wheathampstead. Each has a distinct character and provides some limited job opportunities, together with essential health, education and community facilities (but no secondary schools). London Colney, Redbourn and Wheathampstead are the largest of these settlements with their own village centres, but there are also retail and service facilities to be found elsewhere across the District in more local shopping parades. Finally, there are a number of smaller settlements lying entirely within the Green Belt, including: Annables (Kinsbourne Green); Colney Heath; Folly Fields; Gustard Wood; Lea Valley Estate; Radlett Road (Frogmore); Sandridge; Sleepshyde and Smallford.

The paper also identifies that there are a number of important transport routes which pass through the District, including the M1, M10 and M25 motorways, the A414, A1081, the First Capital Connect and Midland Mainline railway line into Kings Cross/St Pancras and the Silverlink Abbey Line to Watford Junction. Additionally, London Luton Airport lies approximately 6 miles to the north of Harpenden. However, the main routes (both road and rail) run primarily in a north-south direction, providing easy access into and out of London, but East-West transport links are less well established and give rise to high dependence on the private car for making journeys across the District and into neighbouring Hertfordshire Districts.

St Albans District has 18 Conservation Areas, 897 listed buildings and 15 scheduled ancient monuments across the District. The District falls within two defined Countryside Character Areas – the Northern Thames Basin and the Chilterns.

In terms of the socio-economic composition:

The District has a slightly younger population than the national average, with an average age of 38. Around a fifth of the population is aged under 16, with another fifth aged 60 or over. St Albans' residents generally have high educational attainment, with only 17% of people aged 16-74 holding no formal qualifications (much lower than the county average) and over 65% achieving at least 5+ GCSEs, grades A* - C. Despite being close to London, the ethnic diversity of the District is low, with only about 7% of the local population coming from minority ethnic communities.

St Albans is one of the least deprived districts in the country (ranking 331st out of 354 local authority areas in England on the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings), with good quality housing, low unemployment, but very high house prices. Notwithstanding this overall prosperity, the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004 identifies a number of pockets where deprivation is higher than the national average, including Colney Heath and Park Street wards, and parts of London Colney.

3. Project context

The District has a highly skilled workforce, with unemployment well below the national and regional averages. However, over half of the workforce commute out of the District for work and 42% of local jobs are taken by in-commuters.

The Issues and Options identified the following key issues facing the District:

- *Balancing development pressures and protection of the built and natural environment* – development pressure for housing is particularly high given accessibility to London, however, supply of land is limited by the Green Belt;
- *Transport and other local infrastructure* – Traffic congestion is a particular problem, and there is a need to promote greater use of sustainable methods of transportation. Additional growth will need to be directed to areas which have the capacity in terms of transportation and other social and community infrastructure;
- *Housing needs* – providing a range of housing types including affordable housing is a key issue, and the Core Strategy must ensure that supply of housing is adequate to meet housing targets included within the East of England Plan;

- *Creating sustainable communities* – in some areas commercial pressures are threatening local distinctiveness, and there is a need to ensure that adequate facilities are provided – particularly in rural areas outside of Harpenden and St Albans to ensure that settlements are sustainable and can provide for basic local needs;
- *Meeting employment needs* – the District has low unemployment but high levels of out-commuting, and existing employment areas are under pressure from other uses. The Central Hertfordshire Employment Land Review identified an under-supply of floorspace in the District;
- *Quality of the natural environment* – Development pressures place Green Belt land and attractive countryside under threat. Some areas of the countryside also require improvements, such as Watling Chase Community Forest;
- *Character of residential areas* - growing pressures for more development within existing urban areas and at higher densities have begun to change the physical character of some areas;
- *Growth pressures outside the District* - The future growth of Hemel Hempstead and Welwyn Garden City/Hatfield, as

identified in the East of England Plan, is likely to have significant implications for St Albans District, as will other proposed development in neighbouring local authority areas, such as the expansion of London Luton Airport; and

- *Deprivation and social exclusion* – the Council has committed to review the impact of its services on addressing poverty and social exclusion, through the establishment of a Deprivation Working Group.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Paper proposed the following draft vision for the District:

Between now and 2021 we do not envisage substantial expansion of any of the settlements in St Albans City and District, rather we envisage a period of more limited growth, focused within and adjacent to the built up areas of St Albans, during which we will seek to protect and, most importantly, enhance what we already have in the way of community facilities and infrastructure in all of the District's settlements.

Throughout the Plan period, there will be a strong focus on improving accessibility to varied employment opportunities, shops, cultural and leisure facilities and community

services in St Albans and Harpenden for all the District's residents and ensuring that the location of any new development contributes towards creating more sustainable communities and improving residents' quality of life, from an environmental, educational, cultural and economic perspective. By 2021, we want the District to be a place which values the character, distinctiveness and rich heritage of each of its settlements and which continues to place considerable importance on the conservation and enhancement of its natural and built assets for future generations. We will strive to maintain the attractiveness of the District by seeking to retain the broad extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt and by securing improvements to the wider countryside, in terms of quality and public access. We also want there to be improved access to good quality housing for all and a renewed vitality and vibrancy within, not only our town centres, but also those smaller centres that provide the focus of village and suburban life.

The Paper also includes a number of Core Strategy Objectives, many of which are relevant to the production of the Rural Vision:

- Growth should be focused within those parts of the District where sustainability of settlements can be maintained or improved and where residents can benefit from a better quality of life;
- Sufficient land should be provided to accommodate future housing and employment growth;
- There is a need for more affordable homes across the District and to support a diverse housing market;
- The need to travel should be reduced by steering development to appropriate locations, and the transport system should be improved and better integrated to encourage modal shift;
- A high standard of sustainable design and layout for new development that respects local character should be promoted;
- The vitality and viability of the smaller District, village and local centres, which provide for the day to day needs of the community should be protected;

- Landscape quality, green spaces and biodiversity should be protected and enhanced;
- The District's historical heritage should be protected and enhanced;
- Accessibility to good job opportunities and key services should be improved to meet local needs;
- The future impact of development on the environment should be reduced;
- Arts and cultural facilities should be improved;
- The development of diverse, safer and healthier communities should be supported; and
- The distinctiveness of each settlement in the District should be protected and promoted.

The Spatial Strategy for the District identifies the following settlement hierarchy:

Main towns (excluded from the Green Belt):

- St Albans and Harpenden

Large Villages (excluded from the Green Belt):

- Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green, How Wood, London Colney, Park Street/Frogmore, Redbourn, and Wheathampstead

Green Belt Settlements:

- Annables (Kinsbourne Green), Colney Heath, Folly Fields, Gustard Wood, Lea Valley Estate, Radlett Road (Frogmore), Sandridge, Sleafshyde and Smallford

The Paper proposed the following hierarchy of shopping centres:

- Major Town Centre (St Albans)
- Town Centre (Harpenden)
- District Centres (Fleetville, Southdown, Marshalswick)
- Village Centres (London Colney, Redbourn, Wheathampstead)
- Local Centres (To be defined in the Development Control Policies DPD)

Section 11 of the Issues and Options Consultation Paper puts forward several possible broad locations to accommodate future growth needs for the District. It should be noted that the Council has not yet concluded whether one or more of the areas identified should be excluded from the Green Belt, and it will certainly not be necessary to build in all of these areas. Possible locations include:

- South West of St Albans - between the A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road and the M10 motorway and comprises approximately 30 hectares of Green Belt land.
- South East of St Albans - up to 40 hectares of Green Belt land, situated to the east of the main railway line, north of the A414 and the London Colney roundabout and to the east and west of London Road.
- West of London Colney - approximately 30 hectares of Green Belt farm land, situated to the west of the existing settlement of London Colney and mainly to the south of the Napsbury development.
- South of London Colney - around 44 hectares of Green Belt land to the west of the Colney Fields retail park, south of the Broad Colney Nature Reserve and north of the River Colne.
- East of St Albans - approximately 40 hectares of Green Belt land, situated to the east of the built up area of St Albans and to the north of the A1057 Hatfield Road and south of Sandpit Lane.

3. Project context

- Smallford – approximately 25 hectares, this area is located within the Green Belt and comprises a mixture of existing land uses, including Glinwell Nurseries, Notcutts Garden Centre, two further glasshouse sites, a concrete fabrication works, a vacant Hertfordshire County Council depot and back garden land to houses along Station Road in Smallford.
- North of St Albans - approximately 30 hectares, situated to the north of the built up area of St Albans, lying between the A1081 Harpenden Road and the main railway line.
- North of Harpenden - approximately 23 hectares, situated to the north of the built up area of Harpenden, lying north east of the A1081 Luton Road and either side of Cooters End Lane

The Sustainable Community Strategy 'Shaping our District Together for 2021' was adopted by the St Albans and District Local Strategic Partnership in 2007 and aims to provide a vision for improving the quality of life for everyone who lives, learns, works and visits St Albans district.

The Strategy includes the following vision:

"We want to continue to be a progressive, unique and vibrant district, which values its heritage and cares for the future: an outstanding place to live where everyone can flourish."

The Strategy identifies three broad priorities for the District as set out below:

Priority 1: Ensuring the district is a great place to be

- Protecting, enhancing and promoting our history, culture and landscape
- Tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime
- Supporting arts, leisure and sports activity
- Providing facilities and activities for young people
- Encouraging the development of lifelong learning so that people can access local job opportunities

- Encouraging business, entrepreneurship and enterprise
- Supporting the development of affordable housing
- Securing a well-maintained, accessible and safe network of transport links across the district

Priority 2: Keeping the district healthy

- Encouraging and supporting healthy lifestyles
- Ensuring residents have access to excellent healthcare services and empowering individuals to self care
- Supporting the voluntary and community sector to provide preventative and support services

Priority 3: Supporting an active community that has pride in itself and cares for its future

- Reducing our impact on the environment
- Encouraging green and sustainable travel
- Reducing inequalities
- Encouraging and promoting community participation and volunteering

The Strategy then identifies the specific plans and programmes that are already in place (or are proposed) to support the required areas of further work and suggests possible ways in which success can be measured. The LDF and specifically the proposed DPDs are frequently cited within the Strategy document as likely mechanisms through which the key priorities for action can be successfully delivered.

Strategic development context

Core Strategy Allocations

The East of England Plan (RSS14) includes housing requirements for the District and surrounding Districts. Following the findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the Core Strategy will include further details of where new housing development should be directed (through the development of urban extensions and/or strategic sites) across the District. It is important to note that public consultation on proposed changes to RSS14 is due to begin in September 2009. This is likely to have implications for the District's housing land supply, particularly as the revised RSS14 will have a timeframe to 2031. In addition to new housing within St Albans District, housing expansion to be included within neighbouring districts may have an impact on St Albans and the surrounding rural areas.

St Albans City and District Council recently won a High Court ruling against the East of England Plan policies LA2 and LA3, relating to housing targets for Dacorum District and Welwyn Hatfield District. However, development pressure from neighbouring districts may still have an impact on St Albans District in the future.

Major Applications

Planning permission has been granted for the development of Butterfly World, near Chiswell Green in St Stephen Parish, south west of St Albans City. Butterfly World will be developed on a 25 acre site, and will include a 9,100m² dome surrounded by a large exhibition of British flora and fauna, parking and access roads. It will be the largest butterfly walk-through exhibition in the world. According to an economic impact assessment, Butterfly World could be one of the most popular tourist attractions in the UK with over 800,000 visitors annually.

Plans have recently been re-submitted for a new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange on land in and around the former aerodrome in Park Street. The original application, which included buildings up to 330,000m², together with parking for up to 1665 cars and 617 lorries, was refused on appeal following a planning inquiry by the Secretary of State in 2007. Should the revised application be granted planning permission in the future, there would obviously be significant implications for the south of the District.

There are a number of other significant planning applications with strategic implications for the District, such as an application to develop a business park at junction 3 of the A1(M). Additionally, other contentious applications impacting generally on the rural areas of the District generally relate to infill development, telecom masts and gypsy and traveller policy.

Reduce driving speeds
on rural roads.
People drive far too
fast

Crossing required
on Waltes R
to link both sides
of the Common

Pioneer electric
car use in
the area.
(from a 9 yr old)

Free

IN Lan...
High St
w/... Barts etc.

Crossing on Top Street
lay is good, but
close to the
end about
it further
please.

fix the
roads

Train fares
are too expensive
for young people.

Extend the
cycle route from
the south up
rough central
Harn...

Parking
a good
ven...

The
the
Cro...



Working
needed in
the centre!

Event impor...

4. Local context and consultation

4. Local context and consultation

This section sets out the local context and consultation feedback for each of the settlement areas which have been identified for the Rural Vision project. This information helps to build an evidence base for each of the Parishes which can inform the Core Strategy for the wider District. Each of the settlements are addressed in turn in the following order:

- Wheathampstead;
- Redbourn;
- Colney Heath;
- Harpenden;
- St Stephen;
- Sandridge; and
- London Colney.

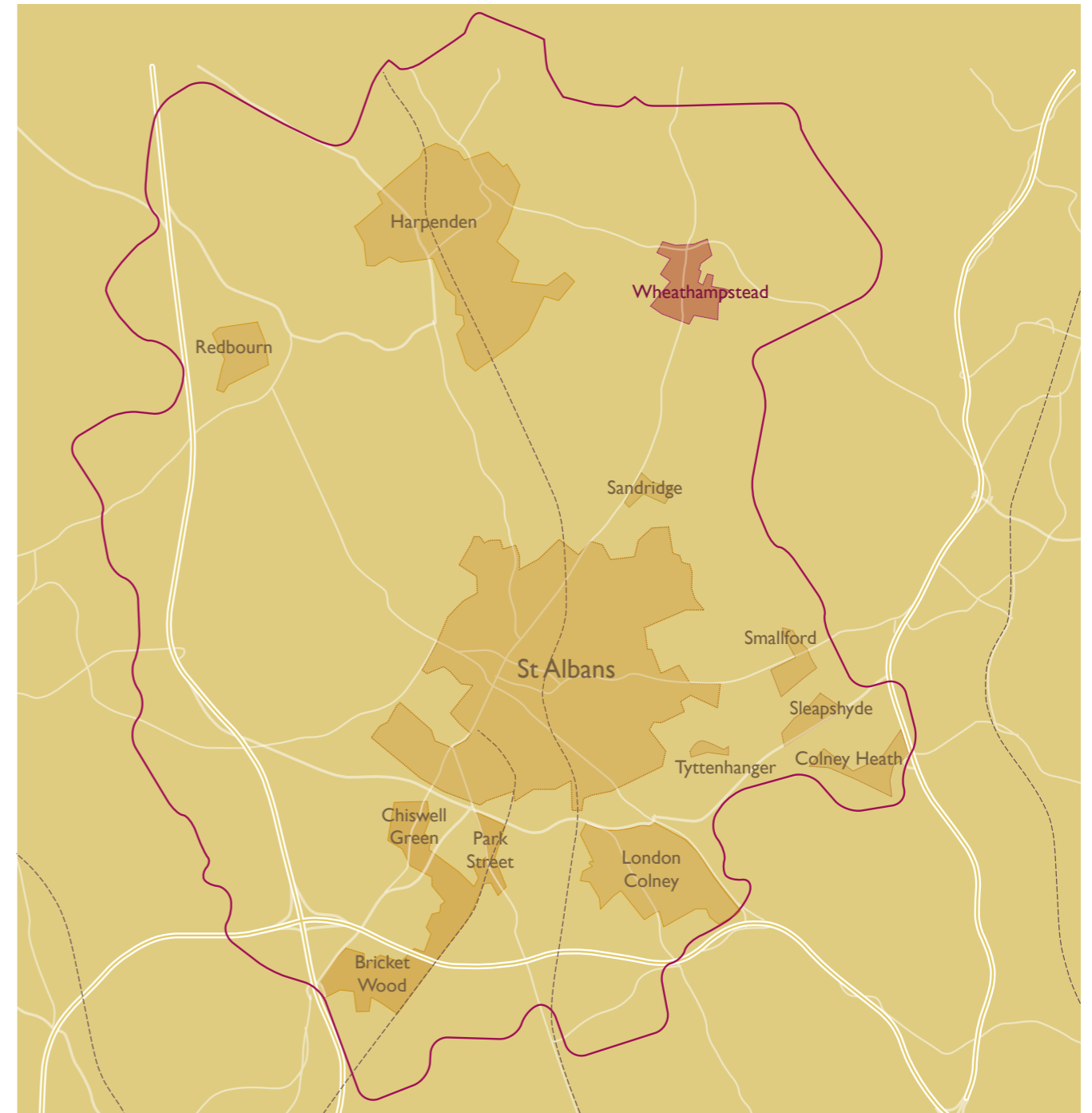
For each settlement, an introduction to the area is provided, including a review of any local policy documents developed, such as Village Plans. Details of the consultation events are then set out, with a summary of the consultation feedback that was received.



Wheathampstead

Wheathampstead is located in the north east of the district, to the north of St Albans and the east of Harpenden. According to the 2001 Census, the population of Wheathampstead was approximately 6,000. The River Lea runs through the village.

Devil's Dyke earthworks is located to the east of Wheathampstead, part of the remains of an ancient settlement of the Catuvellauni tribe and thought to have been the tribe's original capital, although the exact nature of Devil's Dyke is disputed by historians. The capital was then thought to have been moved to St Albans in approximately 20BC. Wheathampstead was recorded in the Domesday Book under the name of Watamestede.



Wheathampstead local context

Local Plans and Development context

Conservation Area Character Statement for Wheathampstead

The Character Statement was produced by St Albans City and District Council in April 2000. The Statement includes details of the historical background of Wheathampstead and industrial archaeology, including:

- The village dates back at least to Saxon times;
- The Late Iron Age earthwork incorporating Devils Dyke and the Slad is located nearby, just outside the conservation area boundary (this was the site of the first capital of a Celtic tribe, the Catuvellauni, before their move to Verulamium);
- The Domesday Book recorded four mills in the parish;
- The Parish is still largely agricultural, although most of the recent development backs onto open farmland;
- Associated with the surrounding arable land there were three other local industries of note, namely, brewing, milling and straw plaiting; and
- Only one mill remains in the High Street, although it has now ceased operation.

The Statement also includes a number of essential characteristics of the village. The High Street still has a village character and retains a number of retail shops, public houses and restaurants. The conservation area boundary as originally designated in 1969, included most of the former Saxon and Medieval village settlement which grew up around the church and mill, although was later extended to include the eighteenth and nineteenth century expansion of the village, and further in 1987 and 1999. Although a substantial number of old buildings survive in the village, approximately half of the historic core has been rebuilt since 1900. However, a bypass has taken some of the traffic out of the village, the chemical works has been demolished and the sewage works relocated. The Statement states that further development outside of the current footprint should now be contained. The area to the north of the village is located in a landscape conservation area, and is very attractive and popular with walkers. In terms of materials, there is no cohesive appearance and a variety of local traditional materials can be found.

According to the Character Statement the High Street contains the bulk of the listed buildings and is the core of the conservation area. Most of the existing shopfronts are modest in scale and generally in keeping with the area. A few

shopfronts are of interest in their own right and should be maintained or repaired as necessary. The continued existence of small shops in the High Street is an important factor in the preservation of its character. The Statement also includes details of the other areas within the conservation area, including Bury Farm and the Hill, and details significant views into and within the village, and important trees and landscape characteristics.

The Character Statement includes the following summary relating to the village:

It is the Council's policy to encourage the retention of those features which make the conservation area special; including historic buildings, trees, hedges, walls, fences etc. In addition the Council demands a high standard of design and materials for any new development within the conservation area.

Village Plan

The First Edition of the Village Plan was produced by Wheathampstead Parish Council in April 2009, and aims to set out the priorities for Wheathampstead, and to lobby local and central government for changes to facilities and services. The Plan provides background information on the village, identifies a number of key issues, and sets out a range of action plans which will address the issues raised. The development of the Plan has been largely informed by the Village Plan Questionnaire, which was undertaken in 2008.

The Village Plan includes a range of useful historical and current background information relating to Wheathampstead, including:

- Wheathampstead used to have railway station on the line between Luton and Welwyn Junction until its closure in 1965;
- Major traffic congestion was eased through building of the by-pass;
- The High Street area includes the site of most of the Saxon and medieval settlement, and has been designated as a conservation area; and
- The Woodland Trust have purchased 70 hectares of land between

Wheatthampstead and Sandridge where the largest new native woodland in England is to be created – known as Heartwood Forest.



Using the findings of the Village Plan Questionnaire, the Village Plan has identified that shops and businesses are the key area for improvement in the village. Specific issues identified include:

- High business rates are undermining business profitability;
- Marketing of local businesses; and
- Promotion of a sustainable community.



Traffic and transport is also identified as a key area for improvement, with concerns raised in relation to the volumes of traffic in certain areas, frequency of HGV traffic, pedestrian crossings, the speed of vehicles, parking, and the need for a cycle tracks and additional bus routes.

Wheathampstead consultation

Consultation drop-in event

A consultation drop-in event was held in the morning of April 3rd in the Memorial Hall, Wheathampstead. The event was publicised locally with the assistance of the Parish Council, and invitations were sent to relevant members of the District Council's Community Panel.

Overall, the event was well attended with approximately 60 attendees. Feedback was gained from attendees using the following methods:

Themed suggestions

Attendees were invited to identify suggestions for improvements within the key themes of shops and businesses, and traffic and transport identified as requiring improvement within the Village Plan. Additionally, a category for 'other' suggestions was included. Attendees were asked to note their suggestions onto a post-it note, and then to display the post it note under the appropriate heading on the wall.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Attendees were asked to annotate an AI plan of the village with any place specific issues or suggestions for improvement that they had.

Feedback forms

Attendees were asked to complete a feedback form which asked them to identify: Wheathampstead's greatest assets; Wheathampstead's future role in the District; and overall suggestions for improving Wheathampstead as a place to live. A total of 40 feedback forms were completed.

Farmers Market event

A stall at the Farmers Market in Wheathampstead on Sunday 19th April was used to obtain further feedback on key issues, suggestions and priorities for the village. Feedback was received using the same methods as for the consultation drop-in event, identified above. A total of 15 feedback forms were completed.

This use of a combination of feedback methods has enabled participants to submit a wide range of comments and suggestions, helping to develop a considerable understanding of the key issues within the village. Additionally, holding two different events at different times and locations in the village has ensured that the sample of participants has been as representative of the local community as possible.



Drop-in event key findings

As stated above, the Village Plan has identified that shops and businesses are the most important area for improvement, followed by traffic and transport. Additionally, the imminent arrival of a new Tesco store will have significant implications for the village shops and businesses.

The consultation undertaken as part of the Rural Vision project has complemented and further developed the Village Plan Questionnaire by grouping suggestions under the key priority areas of shops and businesses, and traffic and transport. Any further suggestions have been grouped separately in the 'other' category.

Themed suggestions for improvement

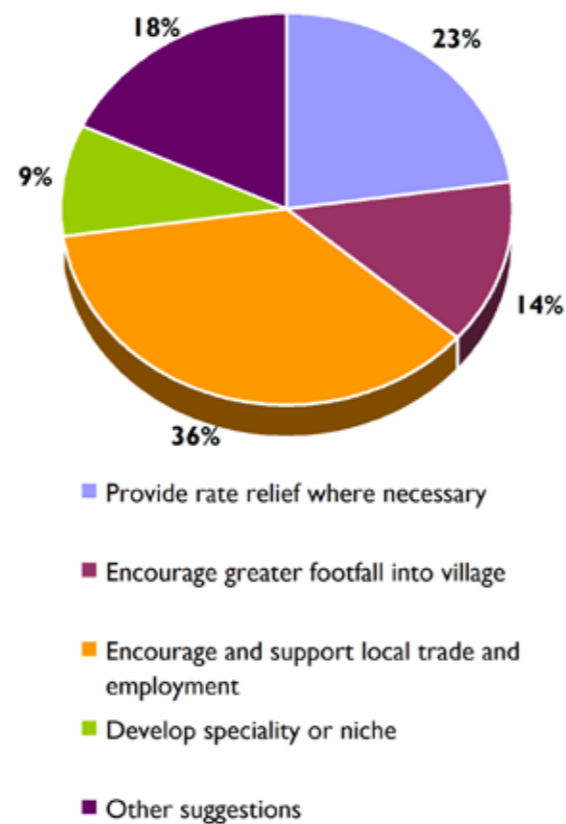
A range of suggestions and comments were received within each of the categories identified as set out below.

Shops and businesses

A total of 22 suggestions were received within the shops and businesses category. These included:

- Increase the quantity and quality of shops in the village
- Ensure empty shops are filled
- More local employment required
- Promote local shops and businesses
- Promote local assets and heritage

Shops and businesses % of comments:

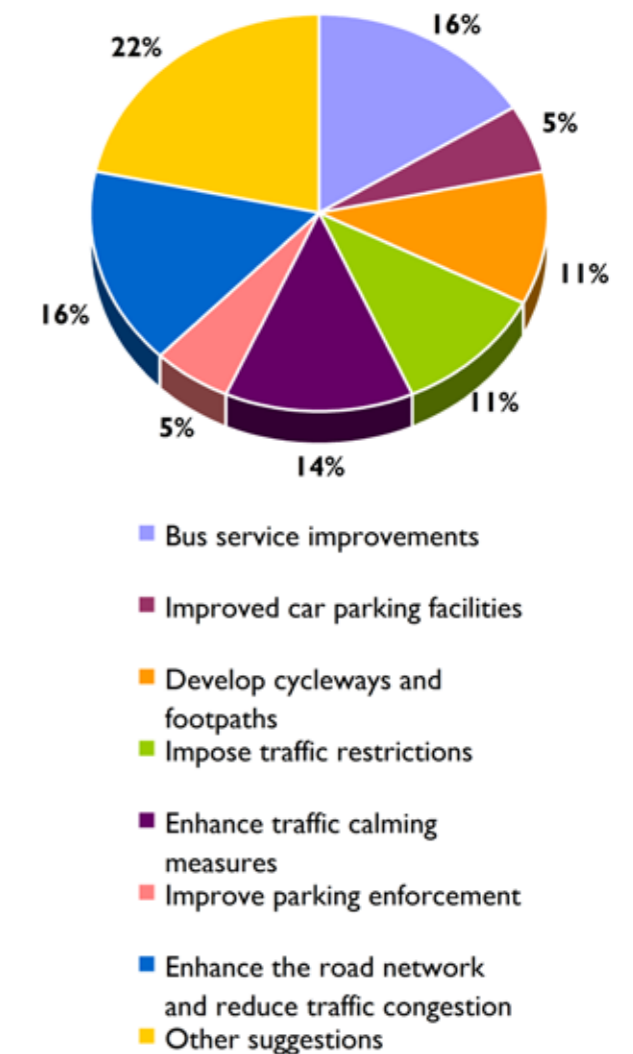


Traffic and transport

A total of 37 comments were received in relation to traffic and transport. These included:

- Improve the sustainable transportation links – enhance footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes
- Reduce access to lorries and HGV's
- Enhance 20mph zone and improve enforcement
- Avoid further traffic calming as this deters visitors
- Improve the frequency of local buses
- Improve traffic control and parking enforcement
- Increase public car parking in the centre

Traffic and transport % of comments:



Wheathampstead consultation

Other suggestions, total comments:



- Improve local facilities and services
- Promote sustainable development
- Improve schooling / secondary school required
- Improve river access
- Relocate post office
- Reorganise / protect open spaces
- Promote local heritage and enhance key buildings

Other issues

A total of 35 suggestions were received which fell into the 'other' category. These included:

- Improve access to local services and facilities
- Improve signage
- Improve children's play facilities
- More school places (and secondary school) required
- Improve access to the river
- Enhance youth facilities and activities

Identification of spatial issues

Several plans were annotated during the course of the consultation event. Annotations identified a range of issues, including:

- Proposed locations for improved cycleways and footpaths;
- Proposed alterations to the road network;
- Extension of the 20mph zone;
- Addressing the poor 'urban edge' at the western extent of the village;
- Reorganisation of open spaces; and
- The potential location of a new bypass.



Farmers Market key findings

Themes for feedback at the Farmers Market were set as the three topics used for the drop-in session, in order to ensure consistency in comments and allow clear conclusions from the feedback to be drawn.

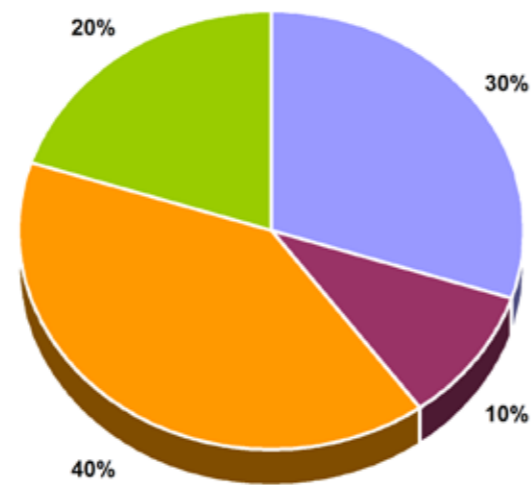
These themes were shops and businesses, traffic and transport, and other issues.

Shops and businesses

A total of 10 suggestions were received within the shops and businesses category. These included:

- Ensure effective use of vacant units - as gallery space or shop space for local groups, artists and charities. It was suggested that this could be staffed by a rota of volunteers;
- Support for small businesses through a support network, exploring short term leases and rate relief where possible;
- Establishing a museum in the Old Rectory; and
- Ensuring Tesco brings maximum benefits to the village, with suitable parking and promotion of local independent shops.

Shops and businesses % of comments:



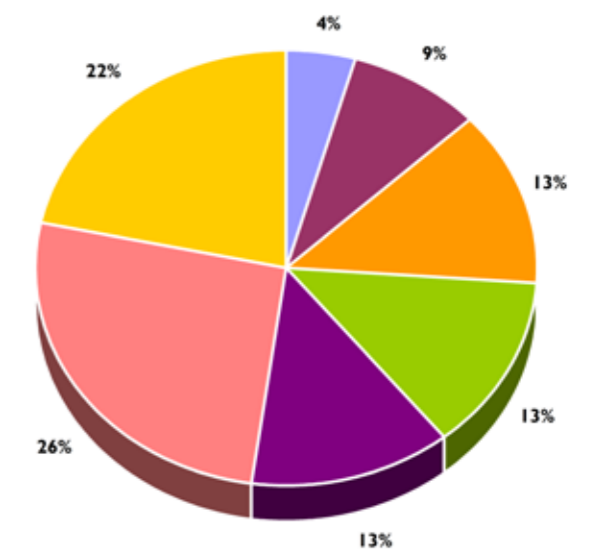
- Use vacant units for village groups and charities to display/sell local crafts
- Improve awareness of local businesses
- Support local businesses through rates and lease flexibility
- Other

Traffic and transport

A total of 23 comments were received in relation to traffic and transport. These included:

- Widen the roads in the village;
- Re-open East Lane and make it one-way;
- Add a zebra crossing near the Memorial Hall;
- Establish a footpath along the river and make more of this local asset;
- Enhance cycle routes, particularly between Wheathampstead and Harpenden and along Lower Lane; and
- Improve signage to the existing small free car park in the Village.

Traffic and transport % of comments:



- Restrict informal and inappropriate parking
- Improve condition of roads
- Improve public transport links to St Albans and Harpenden
- Review speed limits / control traffic speed
- Encourage free parking for shopping / short-term parking
- Provide more cycle routes and footpaths
- Other

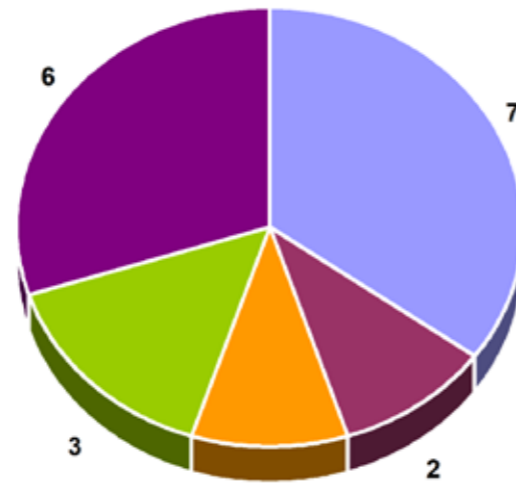
Wheathampstead consultation

Other issues

A total of 21 suggestions were received which fell into the 'other' category. These included:

- Suggestion to make good use of the Scout group, which is very strong in the area;
- Cinema showings at the Memorial Hall;
- A buffer to noise from Cory Wright Way through planting, particularly on the east of the Village;
- Revenue funding for youth organisations, to successfully uses resources that already exist;
- A sports centre with all-weather pitches; and
- Consideration of secondary school places shortages in the local area.

Other suggestions, total comments:



- Improve play and sports facilities for young people
- Improve the maintenance of the physical environment
- Preserve view corridors into and out of the village
- Ensure benefits from Heartwood Forest by attracting visitors
- Other



Vision based feedback forms

Feedback forms were distributed at both the drop-in session and the farmers market asking participants to respond to more vision focused questions. These were:

- What are Wheathampstead's greatest assets?;
- How do you see Wheathampstead's future role in the District?; and
- What overall suggestions do you have for improving Wheathampstead as a place to live?

Identification of key assets

Responses to the feedback form identified a range of assets for the village. The following key assets have been identified from the responses received:

- Village character;
- Strong sense of community and population mix;
- Heritage;
- Rural location and surrounds;
- Accessibility and links to urban areas; and
- The River Lea;

- Recreational opportunities and walking; and
- Local organisations

Identification of future role

Several suggestions were received for the potential future role of the village. These can be summarised as follows:

- Retain historical character and unique identity and utilise heritage;
- Promote as a local tourist or recreational destination offering access to local heritage interests, walking and the countryside (including Heartwood Forest), and a good range of local shops, services and restaurants;
- Promote as a sustainable centre for small retail outlets (independent shops and 'top-up' shopping) and businesses with improved alternative transport links to surrounding towns and villages;
- Promote as a local employment centre;
- Promote as a large sustainable village with improved local services and facilities;
- Promote as a place to live and work - self sufficiency;
- Promote cultural interests, such as arts and crafts; and

- Retain the vibrant local community with a mix of commuters and local workers.

Suggestions for improvement

Suggestions for improving Wheathampstead as a place to live include:

- Provide adequate amenities for the expanding village population and the elderly;
- Improved leisure and youth facilities (Wheathampstead Wanderers Football Club, leisure centre, etc.);
- Improved the provision of secondary school places for the village and enhance unity between schools in surrounding areas;
- Improved public transport provision, including reliability and later services;
- Reduce traffic and enforce speed restrictions;
- Retain and enhance free parking for the village;
- Create safe walking and cycling links to surrounding towns and villages;
- Encourage empty shop units to be filled, and provide short-term rent opportunities and start-up support for new local businesses;

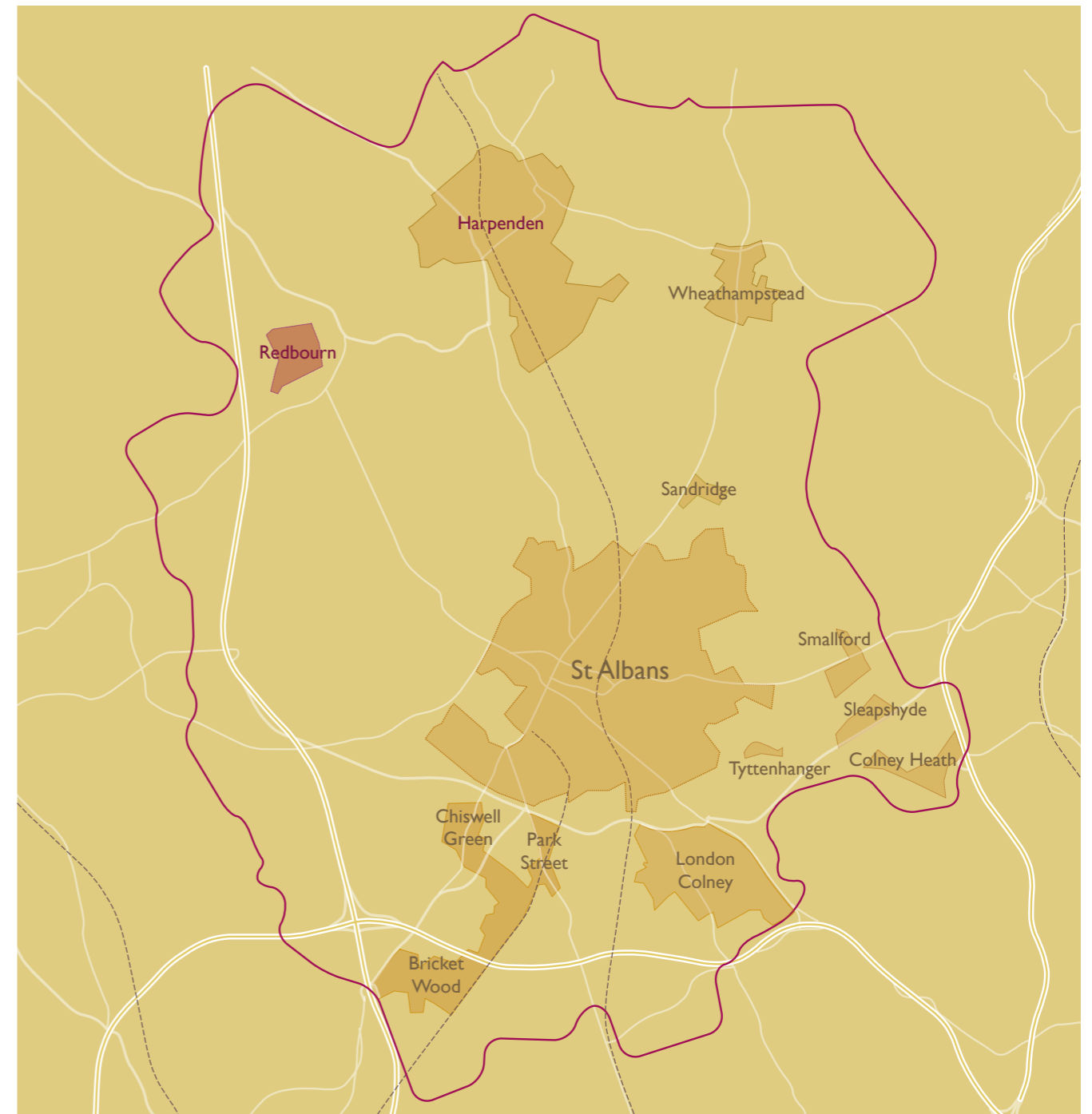
- Improve accessibility to the river;
- Improve community links with surrounding areas;
- Create a central meeting place within the village; and
- Emphasise the history and heritage of the village and improve signage.



Redbourn

Redbourn is located on Watling Street (the historic Roman road), five miles to the north west of St Albans, with Harpenden is located roughly three miles north-east of the village. The population of the village is approximately 6,000. The village has been settled at least since Saxon times and it is recorded in the Domesday Book. Traditionally, Redbourn was a farming community, and the River Ver was used to grow watercress and produce flour. Old industries included making straw plait and hat making. Silk throwing was carried out at Woollam's Mill near Redbourn Common, and the mill was later taken over by Brooke Bond.

Redbourn used to be known as the 'Street of Inns', boasting at least 25 pubs and inns at its peak, until the opening of the railway from London to Birmingham in 1838, reduced demand for stage-coaching. A branch railway line (the Nicky Line) used to connect Redbourn with Hemel Hempstead and Harpenden until its closure in 1979. The route is now a public footpath and cycle path.



Redbourn local context

Local Plans and Development context

Conservation Area Character Statement for Redbourn

The Conservation Area Character Statement was produced by St Albans City and District Council in January 2001. The leaflet aims to show the way in which the form of the conservation area has evolved and to assess its present character; to indicate the principles to be adopted in considering planning applications in the area; and to form a framework within which more detailed proposals may be formulated.

The present day village dates back to at least Saxon times. The High Street follows the line of the Roman Watling Street, and by the late sixteenth/seventeenth centuries it was lined with coaching inns and shops. Redbourn was one of the first stops for the mail coaches to Birmingham, Liverpool and Carlisle. However, the coach trade was in decline by the mid-nineteenth century following the construction of the national rail network, and a branch line was constructed from Hemel Hempstead to Harpenden with a station at Redbourn. The railway seems to have had little effect on local industry other than agriculture, and therefore Redbourn escaped the dramatic expansion which affected nearby towns and villages.

Following the increase in haulage after the second world war, Redbourn suffered from traffic blight until the construction of the by-pass. Considerable housing development has taken place to the north of the Common since the last war, however, many historic buildings survive, particularly in the High Street. The present conservation area boundary is drawn around the supposed extent of the Saxon / Medieval settlement, which is an archaeological site which may be subject to a recording condition when considering planning applications.

According to the character statement, there are a total of 232 listed buildings within the conservation area. The Priory and Cumberland House are listed Grade II* and St Mary's Parish Church is Grade I. Most of the listed buildings are either situated in or close to the High Street or at Church End. The majority of buildings in the High Street are listed. There are also a number of more modest cottages especially around the Common and in the High Street which are of local interest and which contribute to the character of the area.

Because of the absence of a direct line to London, Redbourn largely escaped the suburban expansion which impacted on the character of Harpenden. It was not until after the war that a dramatic expansion of

the village to the north and east took place, and the M1 motorway was constructed in 1959 in close proximity.

In terms of the architectural style and character of the village, the Statement states that:

The style and architectural form of buildings throughout the village is diverse and ranges from timber-framed cottage to Georgian mansion. The variety of designs and details lends an informal appearance to the village especially around the Common. However, a unifying feature is the modest scale of the buildings and use of similar materials, mainly brick and tiles.

According to the Statement, one of Redbourn's most attractive attributes is its spacious location surrounded by open countryside, which rises away from the River Ver. Detrimental features are probably the almost incessant background noise from the M1 and the decline of traditional and rural industries. The High Street still has a village character and retains a number of shops which continue to provide animation to the area.

The conservation area, as originally designated in 1969, included most of the former Saxon and Medieval village

settlement but excluded most of the post-war development to the north and east and the industrial sites to the south and east. In 2001 the conservation area was extended.

The Character Statement includes the following summary relating to the village:

It is the Council's policy to encourage the retention of those features which make the conservation area special; including historic buildings, trees, hedges, walls, fences etc. In addition the Council demands a high standard of design and materials for any new development in the conservation area.

Village Design Statement

The Parish Council is intending to produce a Village Design Statement. The Plan is currently in its initial stages, but the Parish Council are keen to ensure that decisions with regard to the future of planning in Redbourn should be based on expertise and experience of the village and its surrounding area. At a meeting with representatives of the Parish Council, the following key recommendations were made for Redbourn:

- The Village Design Statement should be endorsed by the Local Development Framework;



- The Green Belt around the village should be protected;
- Village character should be protected;
- The immediate surroundings of conservation areas should be protected, as well as conservation areas themselves;
- Affordable homes should be provided in central locations within the village;
- Where previous planning decisions have had a resultant negative impact on the village they should not form future precedents for planning decisions;
- A mix of retail units should be provided in the High Street;
- Retail units should be protected from conversion to residential uses at ground floor level;
- Development should not be permitted in areas of flood risk;
- A centrally located car park is required to attract shoppers and help local businesses;
- Improved public transport should be provided at higher frequency;
- Improved leisure provision is required, particularly for the young;
- The natural habitat should be protected; and

- The Common should remain the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Development Context

Redbourn already experiences considerable development pressures, particularly given its proximity to transport infrastructure and its location in the Green Belt. There are also concerns that the future development expansion of Hemel Hempstead may impact negatively on the village, given that some of this development is likely to fall within St Albans District (see Section 2 above for further details).

Redbourn consultation

Consultation drop-in event

A consultation drop-in event was held in the afternoon of Tuesday 21st April on the forecourt to Redbourn Village Hall. The event was publicised locally with the assistance of the Parish Council, and invitations were sent to relevant members of the District Council's Community Panel.

Overall, the event was well attended with approximately 40 attendees. Feedback was gained from attendees using the following methods:

Themed suggestions

Attendees were invited to identify suggestions for improvements within the key themes of:

- community and leisure;
- shops and businesses;
- traffic and transport;
- the built environment;
- sustainability;
- housing;
- the natural environment; and
- other issues.

Attendees were asked to note their suggestions onto a post-it note, and then to display the post it note under the appropriate heading on the AI worksheets provided.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Attendees were asked to annotate an AI plan of the village with any place specific issues or suggestions for improvement that they had.

Feedback forms

Attendees were asked to complete a feedback form which asked them to identify: Redbourn's greatest assets; Redbourn's future role in the District; and overall suggestions for improving Redbourn as a place to live. A total of 17 feedback forms were completed.



Drop-in event key findings

Themed suggestions for improvement

A range of suggestions and comments were received within each of the categories identified as set out below.

Community and leisure

- 3 Need to ensure local school places for local children, particularly for secondary school places
 - Facilities should be within easy reach of village residents by foot or cycle
 - Good sports facilities exist for village
 - How can the Parish centre serve young people?
 - A late opening café or hang out place for young people- internet café?
 - Museum- upkeep of building a concern - it is a Grade 2 listed building so can't get a quote til we know what is possible
 - Transport is required for leisure community activities in the evening
 - The recreation centre should be supported in terms of running costs by the District Council - on a par with London Colney and Harpenden
 - Social infrastructure is needed for new residential developments
 - The care group is fantastic for the elderly

Shops and businesses

- 2 Business rates and rents too high - businesses will close and leave - The take aways are very good!
- 2 Need to retain post office - it is in danger of closing
 - Current amount of local shops is adequate for the village
 - Don't want to lose businesses to retail or will damage economy
 - There are no jobs in the village - encouraging commuting and raising age of villagers - need industry!
 - Want to support local businesses - important to keep those in the village.
 - Need a range of shops (predominance of take aways) so that is meets people's every day needs.
 - Help to avoid long commutes for residents
 - Measures to increase footfall
 - Don't want farms turning into workshops
 - Footfall is decreasing

Traffic and transport

- 6 More central short term car park required
- 3 Ensuring reliable and frequent public transport is very important for older people in the village
- 2 Make bus times to Harpenden and St Albans stations better linked to train times
 - A Speed limit through village and around common
 - Make better use of the Nicky Line or dedicated cycleways
 - Need to publicise changed and alterations to the bus timetables
 - Footpath badly needed in Chequer Lane, lighting also. Only road in village without a footpath
 - Positively, there are no speed humps anywhere in village
 - Greater provision of bus shelters
 - Current changes in the route and changes in the bus company mean there is no main bus link to Hemel for hospital visits and no evening buses
 - Better cycle routes to St Albans (and walking - currently have to swap sides of the road)

Redbourn consultation

The built environment

- 2** Only development required is bungalows for the elderly
- Need to maintain listed buildings
- Shared facility housing required for young
- New housing should meet community needs - not enough larger housing, mixed types
- Conservation planning needs to be more helpful
- Development of Universal Salvage site
 - new houses would have been better closer to centre
- Design should complement existing context- low cost housing should not be low design quality
- Retain urban boundaries
- Housing should not be inappropriate scale or density
- Need to help encourage and help businesses comply with listed building restrictions
- Replacing site of 1 house with 2 new houses should only be allowed if not detrimental to local character and environment

Sustainability

- Industry and secondary school required in village
- Buildings should be sustainable with low carbon footprint or have facilities for generating low cost energy alternatives- heat source pumps, solar panels- rather not wind turbines!
- Sustainable growth of village could be accommodated by maintaining village boundary

Housing

- 3** Affordable housing needed for young Redbourn people
- New houses should be accessible to the centre for amenities
- No housing in inappropriate areas - flood plains, Green Belt
- More 3-generational housing needed
- Affordable housing should be integrated with market housing
- Shared equity housing to give responsibilities
- Affordable housing should be kept as rental with rental control
- Village is comfortably full - leave it alone

The natural environment

- 5** Protect the Green Belt, the unique common and the River Ver
- Preservation and signposting of footpaths fine
- Crossing on the common should be removed
- Common should be kept rural
- Protect against coalescence with Hemel Hempstead
- Look at the vistas and protect the views. If you cannot see the space then it can be built on!

Other issues

- 4** Identity - don't want to become an extension of Harpenden, Hemel or St Albans
- 4** Planning decisions should be made locally through focused local membership of planning committee
- 2** It's a great place to live!
- Maintain District identity
- Coordination needed between County, District and Parish to avoid inconsistency in services (e.g. care groups moved from Hemel to Watford)
- Please reserve "special status" of village

Themed suggestions summary

Participants were concerned about the economic health of the village centre, particularly for the Post Office, and requested support through business rate adjustments. Residents also felt that more free, short-term central parking would help to support the local retailers.

Accessible school places were a concern for local people, with secondary school places apparently being particularly difficult to secure for local children, forcing longer school trips.

There was concern that the bus service in the local area was not reliable or sufficient. Recent changes in the service had not been well publicised and elderly residents find it difficult to reach the local centres, such as St Albans and Hemel Hempstead, and the nearest hospital.

Affordable housing for young people, comfortable housing for the elderly and family homes were identified as housing requirements in the area. Residents felt that any new development should be sensitive to the historic character of the village.

Residents were keen for the village to remain as a separate village and felt the Green Belt should be protected, along with local landscape features such as the Common and the River Ver.



Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Few comments were made on the AI plan at the Redbourn consultation event, with participants only noting that the footpaths in the local area need to have a tarmac surface and be repaired so that they can be used in the winter and are not dangerous for older residents.



Feedback forms

Redbourn's greatest assets

Participants felt that Redbourn has an extremely strong sense of community, with a number of local organisations such as the Redbourn Care Group providing tremendous support for the local community. The Museum and the Cricket Club were also specifically mentioned as local community assets. The village's character was also considered a key asset, with the River, the Common and the Church mentioned specifically.

What are Redbourn's greatest assets?

- 15 The community/local organisations
- 7 The Common
- 6 The rural landscape and character
- 4 Redbourn's contained village status
- 3 Heritage/historic buildings
- 1 The mixture of residents

Redbourn's future role

Many of the participants felt that Redbourn has potential as a small cultural and leisure centre in the local area and would like to encourage local businesses.

Participants felt that Redbourn's future role should be informed by its great history and were keen for the village boundaries to be maintained. It was considered important for young people to be involved in the future of the village and for the Recreation Ground to be used effectively as an area for activities for young people.

How do you see Redbourn's future role?

- 4 As a small centre for leisure/culture
- 4 As a thriving local business centre
- 3 With a strong character/identity
- 2 A small, specialist shops location
- 1 As a local rural centre

Improving Redbourn as a place to live

Participants had a number of suggestions for improving the village, including support for small businesses through the development of small offices/workshops with centralised IT infrastructure and Wifi in the village. Specific requests for improving public transport included access to hospitals for the elderly and provision of real-time bus information.

How can Redbourn be improved?

- 9 Better bus links, connecting with rail services
- 7 Support for local businesses/employment (including help with businesses rates)
- 3 Short-term central parking
- 3 Limits to traveller sites
- 2 Revenue support for leisure services
- 2 Greater Police presence
- 2 Improve access to secondary schools
- 2 Protect the Green Belt
- 2 Better walking and cycling links into the countryside
- 1 More affordable housing

Colney Heath

Colney Heath Parish comprises five small settlements or hamlets, situated to the east of St Albans city. These are: Colney Heath; Smallford; Sleapshyde; Tyttenhanger Green; and Highfield. The population of the Parish according to the 2001 census was 5,449. Colney Heath is located to the south-east of St Albans, and west of Hatfield. The Parish is split by major roads, including the A414.

The St Albans Branch Line used to run through the Parish, running from Hatfield to St Albans Abbey, with a station at Smallford. The line finally closed in 1969, however, the route has subsequently been turned into the Alban Way cycle path.

Local Plans and Development context

Local policy documents exist for Colney Heath and for Sleapshyde within the Parish.

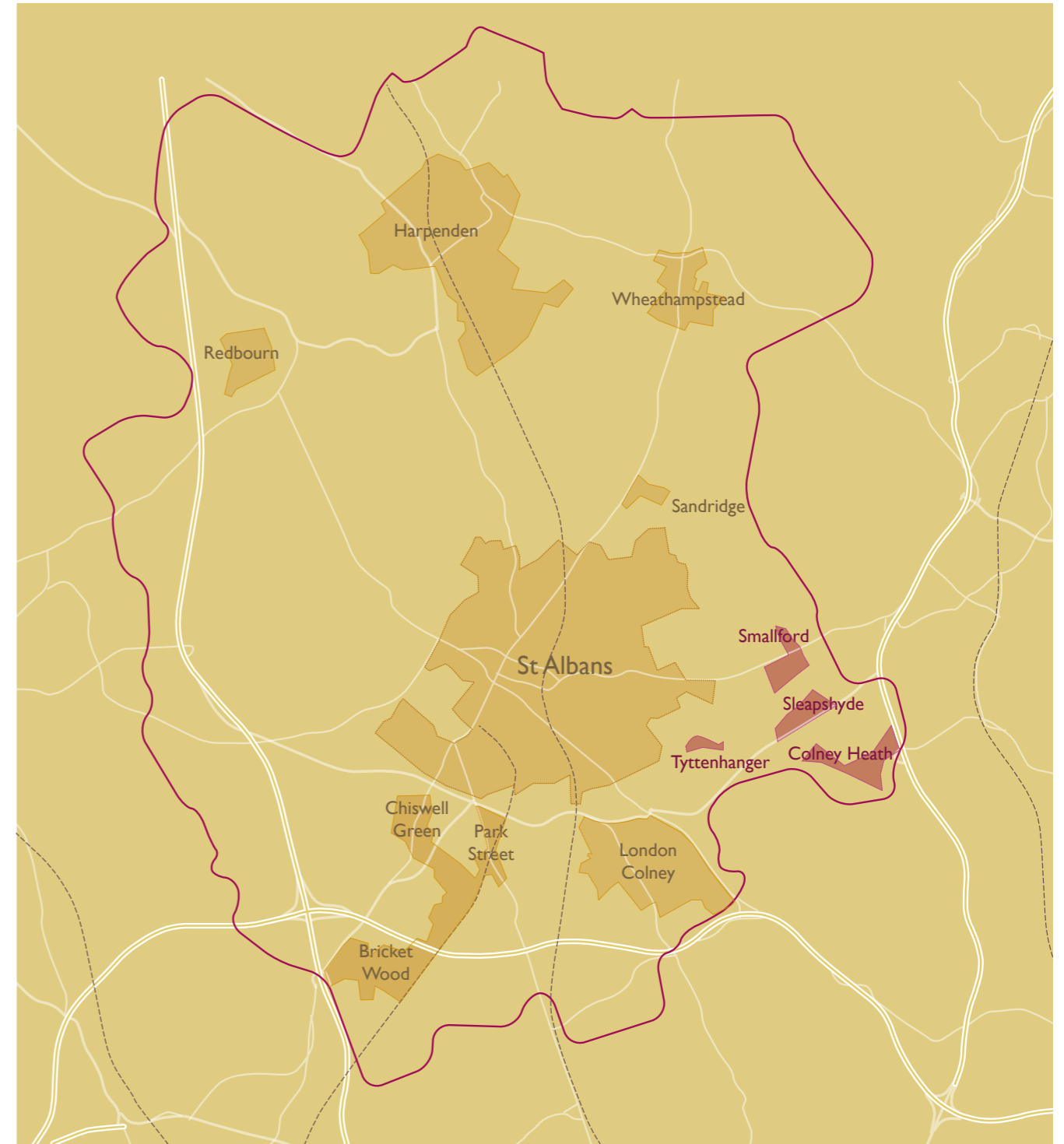
Colney Heath Parish Plan

The Colney Heath Parish Plan was produced in 2004 by the Colney Heath Parish Plan Working Party. This included local councillors, residents and a representative from the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire. The Plan identifies that the parish has a population of approximately 5,500. The Parish Plan questionnaire, which was used to inform the production of the Plan, was delivered to all households in the Parish, and half were completed. Drop in sessions were held across the Parish in order to form the content of the questionnaire.

The Plan summarises the key findings of the questionnaire within the nine categories of question included within the questionnaire, and includes an action plan of key issues, in the form of recommendations and actions for each:

You and your household – quality of life

- Remedy problems relating to the Longabout to make it more accessible



Colney Heath local context

and safer for motorists and pedestrians alike

- Improvements in bus services required

Environment

- Reduce flytipping
- Regular scheme required to maintain paths, verges, trees etc. to improve visibility, safety and security
- Initiate garden rubbish, glass recycling service and potentially a central composting bank
- Provide dog warden / community warden
- Providing information about footpaths in Parish
- Investigate feasibility of introducing cycle paths

Traffic

- As above, reduce problems associated with the Longabout
- Control speed of traffic at problem areas

Transport

- Improve bus services and provide a community bus

- Improve bus shelters
- Further explain the taxi voucher scheme

Security

- Increase policy coverage
- Improve street lighting
- Promote neighbourhood watch schemes

Business and the economy

- Seek subsidy of reduced rates and other incentives for local shops
- Improve availability of broadband

Health

- Ensure equity of access and provision of care for residents
- Provide fitness opportunities
- Provide easier access to prescriptions and medication
- Improved access throughout the Parish for those with a disability
- Develop a volunteer support scheme

Community and social facilities

- Increase access to local community sports and fitness facilities / activities
- Provide more play equipment in play areas
- Develop arts and cultural activities

Youth

- Provide pedestrian crossings and safe walkways on Colney Heath Lane and Smallford Lane
- Improve safety in local parks, the Alban Way and Roestock Lane underpass
- Provide more youth facilities
- Provide information about setting up Youth Councils around the Parish.

Conservation Area Character Statement for Sleapshyde

The Conservation Area Character Statement was produced by St Albans City and District Council in July 2001. The leaflet aims to show the way in which the form of the conservation area has evolved, to describe its character and appearance, to indicate the principles to be adopted in considering planning applications in the area; and to form a framework within which more detailed proposals may be formulated.

Sleapshyde is located immediately north of the A414 dual carriageway between St Albans and Hatfield, close to the District boundary and surrounded by flat agricultural land. The conservation area covers the historic eastern part of the hamlet, which is rural in character. The conservation area consists of approximately 20 dwellings, a Chapel, public house and farm. The buildings date from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. The settlement is not mentioned in the Domesday Book and is therefore likely to originate from the 12th century.

There are seven entries in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for Sleapshyde. There is no record of surviving buildings from the medieval period and most of the listed buildings appear to originate from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They are scattered throughout the hamlet and are all of timber framed construction.

The Character Statement also identifies two unlisted buildings which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and are locally listed. These are the Methodist Chapel and Angel Cottage. The remaining buildings date



from the twentieth century, and are not considered to be of interest architecturally or historically.

According to the Statement:

To preserve or enhance the hamlet's historic character and appearance, it is important that any development is of a high standard of design, sympathetic to its surroundings and the conservation area as a whole.

The Character Statement includes the following summary relating to the hamlet:

It is the Council's policy to encourage the retention of those features which it is felt make the conservation area special. These include listed and locally listed historic buildings; their historic and architectural features, their settings, trees and informal boundaries such as hedging, wooden picket and post and rail fencing, and the spacious and rural character and appearance of the area.

Development Context

Recent relevant planning applications for the Parish include:

- An application to develop new college buildings, residences, sports pitches, and associated car parking for Oaklands College in Smallford was called in by the Secretary of State in August 2008;
- An application to demolish the former Oaklands College site at Highfield Lane in Tyttenhanger and develop new housing is subject to a Section 106 Agreement;
- An application was recently refused in relation to a mixed use proposal including residential development, sports pitches and new school facilities for Beaumont School and on land to the north of Winches Farm, Hatfield Road; and
- A retrospective planning application for the retention of fifteen bed sits for nursery staff at Smallford nurseries was recently refused.

Colney Heath consultation

Consultation drop-in event

A consultation drop-in event was held in the afternoon of Wednesday 22nd April at two locations within the Colney Heath Parish. These were:

- 2.30pm - 4.30pm at Charles Morris Hall in Tyttenhanger; and
- 5.30pm - 7.30pm at Colney Heath Village Hall

The event was publicised locally with the assistance of the Parish Council, and invitations were sent to relevant members of the District Council's Community Panel.

Overall, the event was well attended with approximately 20 attendees. Feedback was gained from attendees using the following methods:

Themed suggestions

Attendees were invited to identify suggestions for improvements within the key themes of:

- community and leisure;
- shops and businesses;
- traffic and transport;
- the built environment;
- sustainability;

- housing;
- the natural environment; and
- other issues.

Attendees were asked to note their suggestions onto a post-it note, and then to display the post it note under the appropriate heading on the AI worksheets provided.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Attendees were asked to annotate an AI plan of the village with any place specific issues or suggestions for improvement that they had.

Feedback forms

Attendees were asked to complete a feedback form which asked them to identify: Colney Heaths greatest assets; Colney Heath's future role in the District; and overall suggestions for improving Colney Heath as a place to live. A total of 8 feedback forms were completed either at the event completed.



Drop-in event key findings

Themed suggestions for improvement

A range of suggestions and comments were received within each of the categories identified as set out below.

Community and leisure

- 2 Ensure Parish Council varies location for meetings and events around the Parish
 - 2 Important role for county walks, the pubs here are great and can support this
- Places required for teenagers needed - something engaging and exciting- mobile skate park or BMX space
 - Highfield Park residents currently feel excluded from the community - neither part of St Albans or Colney Heath. Bringing the community in would be helpful
 - The Trestle Theatre a great asset (was chapel) Hall can be hired, 125 people- plays, comedies
 - Access to healthcare and hospital parking should be reviewed
 - Highfield Park library closed

- Three primary schools next to each other- why is this?
- Local community focus is good. Local residents often organise local community events
- People would like to see more allotments as most house gardens are small

Shops and businesses

No comments

Traffic and transport

- 2 Unadopted roads in High Field Park are problematic
 - 2 Traffic in Highfield Lane is a problem
 - 2 Very poor bus service to/from Colney Heath - no service at all in the evenings- Rail links are very good
- Better coordination needed between bus and train times for commuters
 - Buses to Tyttenhanger should go through Highfield Park estate
 - Transport less of an issue in Tyttenhanger - schools are fairly close

- Provide safe cycle paths
- Segregate horses and cyclists on Alban Way
- Alban Way can be used by horse riders - signs should show this
- Keep horse riders off Alban Way
- A414 acts as a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists
- 20mph speed limit required in Colney Heath High Street and Tollgate Road
- There are too many road signs
- The quality of road surfaces is poor

The built environment

- 3 Don't lose Green Belt to housing - keep a rural surrounding
 - 2 Concern about coalescence due to Welwyn Hatfield's huge housing targets
- The development of the BT site for 13 homes is a positive thing
 - Encourage small business by setting up small rentable units on brown field sites
 - Loss of local shop, chapel and pub is a problem

Sustainability

- 2 We need a dedicated cleaner to collect litter
- A visible representative is required to answer village questions
 - Protect Common and native heathland
 - Water shortages need to be considered for new housing
 - In order to sustain village feel need to provide housing available for younger people

Housing

- 5 Need more affordable housing for young, local people required
- Concern that travellers community has greater access to cheap land/housing than youngsters looking to housing

Colney Heath consultation

The natural environment

- 4 Cattle and sheep should be allowed on the Common
- 2 River and Common should be promoted as assets
- 2 Create a nature trail please
- 2 Area should encourage access to the countryside
- Environment agency to improve flood warning
- Hedges and roads need constant upkeep

Other issues

- 2 Highfield Park neither in St Albans or Colney Heath
- How are ADSL connections to work at home? More sustainable- move
- Keep Barely Mow open to prevent ghetto
- Concern about vandalism along Barley Mows Lane - hence "gates" proposal
- CCTV was stolen
- There is a fear of crime
- Lighting Church Lane/Parish Corner needed

- Highfield Park should be within St Albans so benefit from better transport etc
- Home farm derelict causes problems - vermin etc

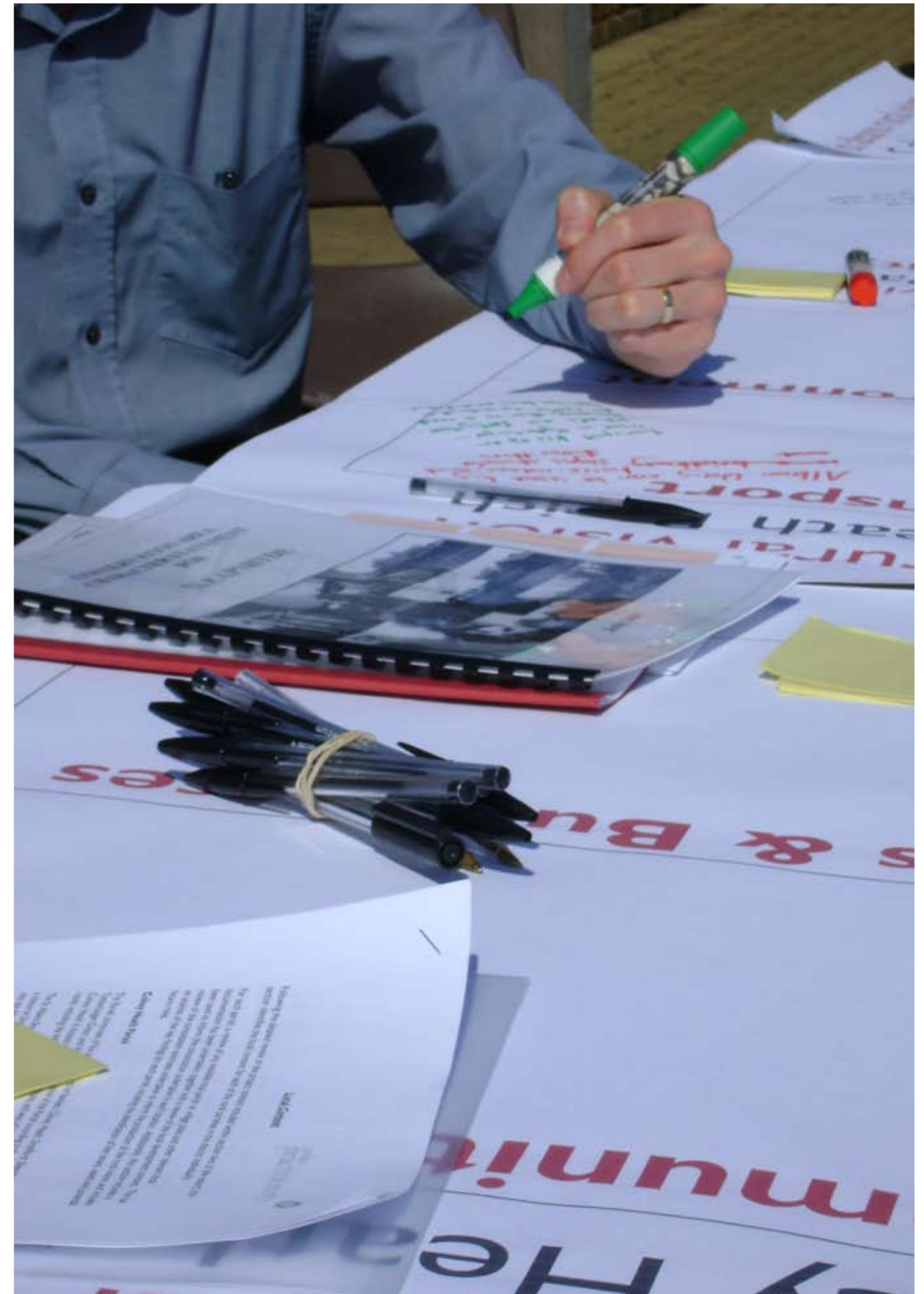
Themed suggestions summary

A large number of participants considered the provision affordable housing for local young people to be a key priority for the area, though there was significant concern about potential coalescence with Welwyn Hatfield, given the large housing targets for the District. In line with this, there were a number of calls to protect Green Belt land.

The boundary of the Parish, and specifically the inclusion of Highfield Park was questioned, with calls for the neighbourhood to be given more involvement in the Parish, or to be part of St Albans. Unadopted roads in Highfield Park were also referenced as issues.

Bus links were considered to need improvements, with Highfield Park and Colney Heath village specifically mentioned as needing better services.

The local pubs, the Trestle Theatre, the Common and the River were seen to bring real benefits to local residents. Participants did mention a fear of crime in the local area, however.



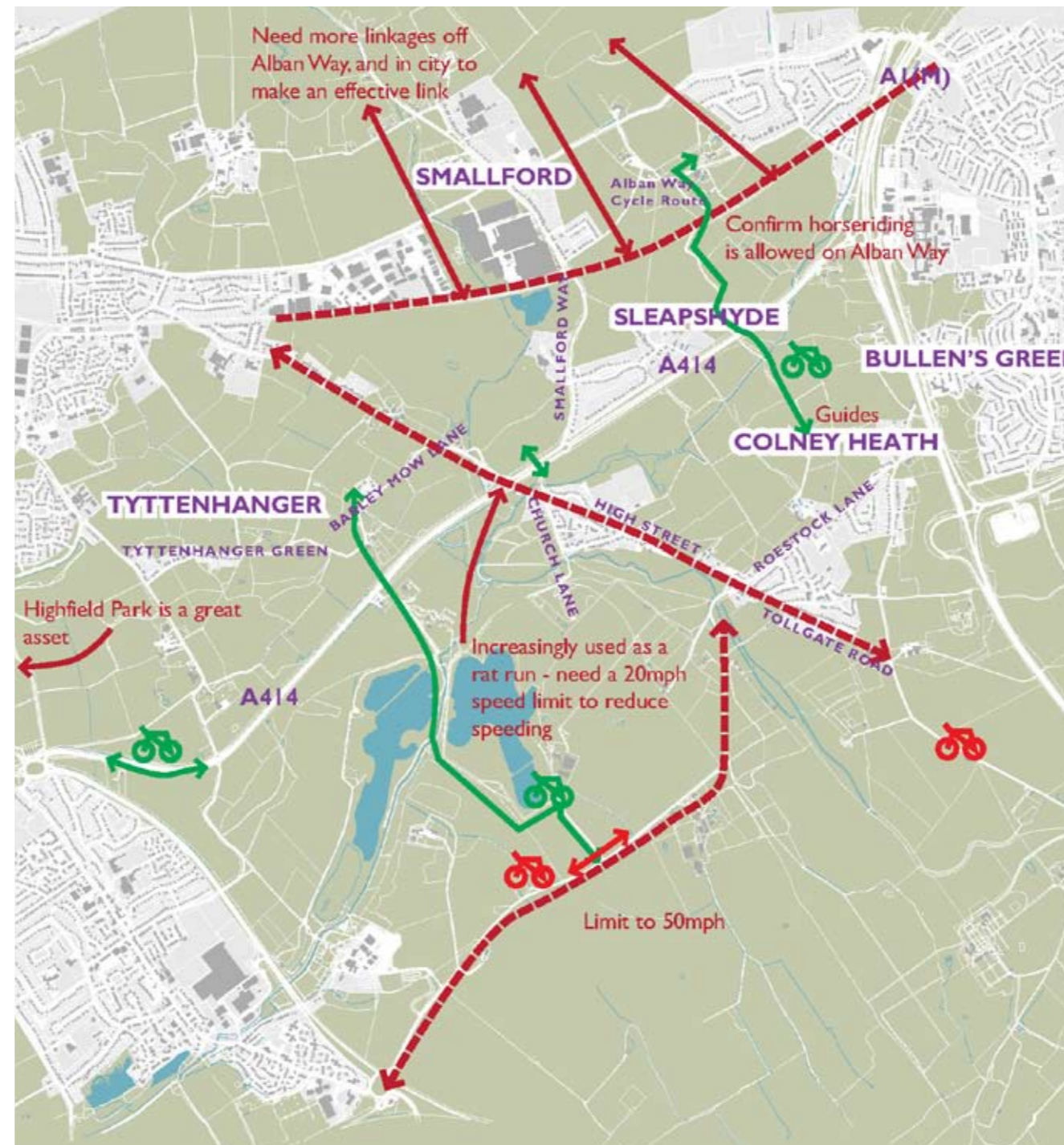
Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

The comments made on the AI plan of the local area for the Colney Heath Parish consultation included requests for a greater number of linkages from the Alban Way into the countryside and a connecting route into St Albans centre, to make this a viable means of transport into the city.

Concern about traffic speeds in the villages and 'rat running' through the area was raised, with Colney Heath village considered a particular problem area.

Cycling links in the area were generally considered to be fairly good, but suggestions were made for improving the links to create more of a network.

Lastly, Highfield Park was highlighted as a local asset by a number of people at the drop-in event.



Colney Heath consultation

Feedback forms

Colney Heath's greatest assets

Participants felt that Colney Heath's rural setting and landscape features such as the River and the Common were great assets, and were valued in particular given the local area's excellent communication links. The Trestle Theatre, Highfield Park and Colney Heath Village Hall were mentioned as great local community assets.

What are Colney Heath's greatest assets?

- 4 The rural landscape
- 4 The Common
- 2 The 'separate' village character
- 2 Access to the national road network
- 2 The village pubs
- 1 The local community
- 1 The river

Colney Heath's future role

Many of the participants felt that Colney Heath has great potential as an access point to the wider countryside within the local area. Alban Way and other links were considered to provide good walking trails, which could be combined on a day out with the excellent local pubs in the area.

Some saw the potential of Colney Heath as a horse riding centre, though there were varied comments about combining walking, cycling and horse riding routes. Suggestions were also made for more village events linked to local activities.

How do you see Colney Heath's future role?

- 4 As a nature sanctuary with trails into the countryside
- 1 As a buffer between St Albans and Hatfield
- 1 As a separate village

Improving Colney Heath as a place to live

Participants had a number of suggestions for improving the village, including addressing the boundary issue of the Parish, if possible, and preserving the rural character of the area. Local residents were particularly concerned about coalescence with Hatfield and about any industrial development. Better transport links and activities for young people were also suggested.

How can Colney Heath be improved?

- 3 Addressing the boundary issue
- 2 Maintaining a rural environment
- 2 Better transport links
- 1 Encouraging community involvement
- 1 Addressing congestions
- 1 Creating a skate park



Harpenden

Harpenden is located to the north of St Albans on the A1081, and has a population of approximately 30,000. Harpenden includes two parishes: Harpenden and Harpenden Rural.

Harpenden is served by a fast and regular train service to central London run by First Capital Connect (formally run by Thameslink), also offering direct access to Luton and Gatwick airports. The Nicky Line railway used to link Harpenden, Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead. It has since been converted to a path forming part of the National Cycle Network.

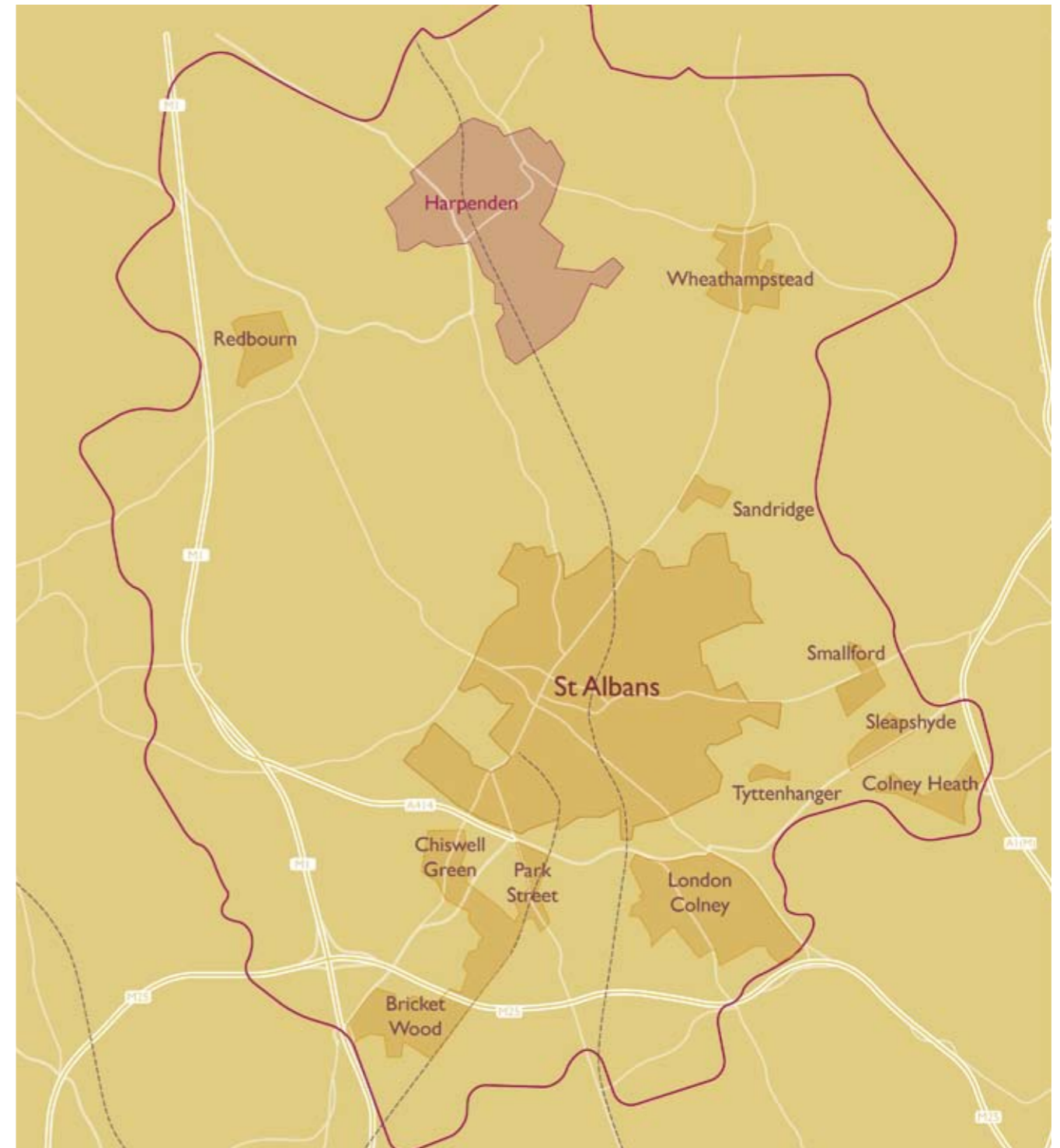
Local Plans and Development context

Conservation Area Character Statement for Harpenden

The Conservation Area Character Statement was produced by St Albans City and District Council in April 2008. The leaflet aims to show the way in which the form of the conservation area has evolved and to assess its present character; to indicate the principles to be adopted in considering planning applications in the area; and to form a framework within which more detailed proposals may be formulated.

The Character Statement includes details of the historical background for Harpenden, including:

- Until the late nineteenth century Harpenden was a small, mainly agricultural village but in the years since then it has greatly expanded in area and population;
- Artefacts of Roman date have been found in Harpenden and there are the remains of a Roman shrine on the Rothamsted estate;
- There is no mention in the Domesday Book of a church in Harpenden, but a Chapel of ease dedicated to St Nicholas existed before 1221;



Harpenden local context

- Harpenden achieved rapid growth not from a naturally increasing population but as the result of immigration from outside;
- By 1878, Harpenden was expanding rapidly with the coming of the railway age – the main Midland Line arrived in 1868 and a branch line (Nicky Line) was added to Hemel Hempstead;
- The Nicky Line closed to passenger traffic in 1947 and continued to be used for goods traffic until the 1970s – the track bed is now a cycle path;
- By the late 1890s the potential of Harpenden as a base for London commuters had begun to be exploited by developers and local builders;
- During the first four decades of the twentieth century, Harpenden was enriched by a variety of suburban domestic developments. The fringes of the Common in particular have many fine quality houses, displaying a high degree of craftsmanship in decorative timberframing, brickwork and moulded joinery; and
- To service the new middle class inhabitants, the High Street and Station Road were redeveloped, largely in the early 1900's, with shops set below decorative brick elevations,

complementary to the surrounding residential areas.

The 1969 Harpenden Conservation Area excluded many areas of historic interest and townscape value, but was substantially reviewed in 1983. The Conservation Area is now one of the largest in the county and consists of four main elements: the Town Centre, the Common, Hatching Green, and the post-railway suburbs. The interrelationships between these main elements has produced the unique character of Harpenden. The smooth transition from a landscape which contains buildings to a sequence of buildings containing landscape elements is visually one of the most satisfying aspects of the Harpenden Conservation Area.

The Character Statement identifies the following identity areas, and includes a detailed description and identification of key characteristics and buildings of interest for each:

- High Street;
- Harpenden Lodge;
- Luton Road and Hollybush Lane;
- Park Hill;
- Highfield Oval;

- The Avenues;
- Park Avenue;
- Station Road;
- Bowers Way North;
- St George's School and Harpenden Memorial Hospital;
- Ox Lane area;
- The Poets;
- The Common;
- Development surrounding the Common;
- West Common;
- Hatching Green; and
- Southdown area.

The Character Statement includes the following summary:

It is the Council's policy to encourage the retention of those features which make the Harpenden Conservation Area special; including buildings, trees, hedges, walls, fences etc. In addition, the Council demands a high standard of design and materials for any new development in the conservation area.

Local Planning Policy Guidance Document

Harpenden Town Council prepared a Local Planning Policy Guidance Document in August 2002. The document was produced following two years of considered debate, public consultation and advice from St Albans District Council, with the aim of assisting the Town Council and local planners in the sustainable development of Harpenden, whilst ensuring that the unique character of the town is retained. To develop the policy guidance, a working party was established to debate relevant issues and to consult with local stakeholders and the wider local community (including residents of neighbouring towns and villages).

The document includes specific non-statutory guidance on:

- Green Belt, Countryside and Conservation Areas;
- Design and Environment;
- Shopping Areas and Town Centre;
- Employment;
- Education and Public Amenities;
- Housing;
- Leisure, Recreation and Places of Worship;



- Transportation and Car Parking; and
- Tourism and Hotels.

The guidance proposes an expansion of the conservation area to include part of Hatching Green, Orchard Avenue, parts of Roundwood Park, and Sauncey Avenue.

Development Context

At the present time there are few opportunities for significant development in Harpenden, particularly given the relatively significant traffic congestion on the A1081. However, area of search 8 is located to the north of Harpenden, and the potential exists for the future expansion of Rothamsted Research as a hub for similar industries in the future.

Recent significant planning applications include the application to convert the Oaklands College buildings on Victoria Road into office accommodation (appeal dismissed in 2008), and the application for a new multiuse games area and pavilion at Porters Hill.

Harpenden consultation

Workshop

An evening workshop event was held on Monday 27th April 2009 in the Southdown Rooms at Harpenden Public Halls in Harpenden town centre from 6.30-8pm. The event was attended by 29 invited attendees, including councillors, local residents, and representatives from local organisations and businesses.

Themed Suggestions

Attendees were split into four groups and asked to provide their comments and suggestions for the future of Harpenden under the following headings:

- Economic development;
- Transport;
- Community and leisure;
- Physical environment;
- Shops and services; and
- Housing.

Each group was also asked to identify:

- Harpenden's three greatest assets;
- Three priorities for improving Harpenden; and
- Harpenden's future role.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Each group was also asked to annotate an AI plan of the town with any place specific issues or suggestions for improvement.



Workshop key findings

Themed suggestions for improvement

A range of suggestions and comments were received within each of the categories as set out below.

Economic development

- 3 Much of local employment is low paid and taken up by workers from outside Harpenden
- 3 Greater support required for small local businesses
- 2 Greater range of local businesses required in Harpenden
- 2 Dependence on London for employment
- 2 Rothamsted should be supported (science park, incubator units etc.)
- 1 Good range of employers in Harpenden
- 1 Develop service industries in technology
- 1 Economy is independent of St Albans
- 1 Existing industrial estates should be maintained
- 1 Need an appropriate mix of commuters and local businesses

- 1 Working from home should be encouraged
- 1 Provide free broadband
- 1 Avoid becoming a clone town

Transport

- 4 Improved car parking facilities required
- 4 Reduce car use in town / encourage modal shift
- 3 Good accessibility to London and strategic road and rail network
- 2 Poor east – west transport links
- 2 Improve coordination of public transport services and information
- 2 Luton Road already at capacity – no further development or airport expansion without road and rail improvements
- 1 M1 closure problematic
- 1 Improve transport links to St Albans
- 1 Bus service to St Albans and local villages is limited
- 1 Cycle routes good in area
- 1 Provide improved cycle routes between Harpenden and Kinsbourne Green
- 1 Against by-pass or ring road

- 1 Investigate by-pass
- 1 Poor public transport in Batford
- 1 Develop sustainable green transport

Community and Leisure

- 2 Harpenden Halls should be locally managed / upgraded
- 2 Increase allotment provision
- 2 Health and social care major issues - ageing population and improved local provision
- 2 Strong evening economy / No need for a nightclub
- 2 Improve Red House Hospital
- 2 Improve youth facilities
- 1 Nicky Line – good recreational and school route
- 1 Nicky Line – improved access required for London Road end
- 1 Good diversity of clubs and societies
- 1 Not a tourist destination
- 1 Good secondary school provision
- 1 Sports facilities adequate
- 1 Good community spirit
- 1 Good quality of life

- 1 Redevelop Memorial Hall
- 1 New secondary school required
- 1 Good cultural provision
- 1 Respite Centre
- 1 More networking places required for people to meet
- 1 Local sports clubs are assets
- 1 Retain school places for local people
- 1 Retain farmers market and local shopping services
- 1 Lack of community feeling in town – but high levels of local interest

Physical Environment

- 3 Resist convergence with Luton and surrounding areas / preserve the Green Belt
- 3 The Common and green spaces are an asset and should be protected
- 1 With new development, need to ensure that infrastructure is sufficient, character is retained, and assets are not undermined
- 1 Manage aircraft noise and pollution
- 1 Good historically / archaeologically

Harpenden consultation

- | Pedestrianisation of the High Street opposed
- | Protect character and heritage
- | Maintain design quality
- | Oppose Luton airport expansion
- | Harpenden is full

Shops and Services

- 2 Business rates / rents too high – negative impact on independent shops
- 2 Support independent retailers / preserve existing shops
- 2 Resilient in recession – showing underlying strength
- 2 Farmers’ market good
- 2 Additional post office required
- | Retail structure in Southdown is fragile
- | Restaurants good standard and successful
- | Improve environment at rear of Sainsbury’s
- | Improve variety of shops and services
- | Supermarkets impacting negatively on small shops
- | Develop lower High Street and make more pedestrian friendly

- | Maintain the separate identity of Southdown
- | Introduce school trains / walking buses
- | Protect council owned garages from development

Housing

- 4 Requirements for new affordable housing
- 2 Smaller and more affordable family homes required
- 2 Homes available above shops in centre / town centre living to be encouraged
- 2 Protect Green Belt / prevent convergence with neighbouring areas
- 2 No more housing required
- | New housing should be on brownfield land
- | Requirements for sheltered housing
- | Realistic residential parking should be provided
- | Ensure adequate water supplies exist to meet demand
- | Avoid too many blocks of flats
- | New housing should be sympathetic to surroundings

In addition to the themed suggestions, each group was also asked to identify what they thought to be Harpenden’s greatest assets; how the town could be improved in the future, and what role they saw Harpenden playing in the future of the District. The results to these questions are set out below.

Harpenden’s greatest assets:

- 4 The Common and Green Belt
- 4 Transport links / proximity to London
- 2 Schools
- 2 Rothamsted
- 2 Attractive town centre / village feel
- | Quality of life
- | Cultural and community life
- | Harpenden Society
- | Local community mix

Priorities for improvement

- 3 Increased autonomy for Harpenden (decentralisation of power from St Albans)
- | Support and develop small businesses
- | Highways – improve roads
- | Science Park at Rothamsted

- | Extend schools / hospital
- | Provide multi-storey parking
- | Improve secondary health provision – Red House
- | Provide good quality affordable housing
- | Reduce congestion and improve public transport
- | Improve facilities – community arts, cinema, etc.

Harpenden’s future role

- A sustainable residential town with outstanding facilities for families
- To be self governing, more decentralised power
- To maintain and improve its position as an attractive place to live, work and visit with its own special identity and greater developed autonomy
- Preserve local identity and retain green belt, and access for all to technology



Market Stall event

A market stall event was held on Saturday 2nd May 2009 in the following three locations within Harpenden:

- Harpenden High Street (concourse) from 10-12pm;
- Southdown (outside Somerfield) from 12.15-1.15pm; and
- Batford (outside the Co-op) from 1.30-2.30pm.

The event was advertised by the Town Council, and was open to all members of the public.

Themed suggestions

Respondents were invited to identify suggestions for improvements within the key themes of:

- Physical environment;
- Traffic and transport;
- Shops and businesses; and
- Other issues

Respondents were asked to note their suggestions onto a post-it note, and then to display the post it note under the appropriate heading on the AI worksheets provided.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Respondents were asked to annotate an AI plan of the village with any place specific issues or suggestions for improvement that they had.

Feedback forms

Respondents were asked to complete a feedback form which asked them to identify: Harpenden's greatest assets; Harpenden's future role in the District; and overall suggestions for improving Harpenden as a place to live. A total of 8 feedback forms were completed at the event.

Harpenden consultation

Market Stall event key findings

Themed suggestions for improvement

A range of suggestions and comments were received within each of the categories identified as set out below.

Physical environment

- 2 Protect the Green Belt
- 1 Street furniture should be consistent to complement the Common
- 1 Retain character of villages in area
- 1 Introduce wrought iron historic street lamps
- 1 River Lea is an asset

Traffic and transport

- 3 Improve the range / quantity / quality of bus services
- 2 Provide more parking in the town centre
- 2 Improve road surfaces
- 1 Increased parking in the town centre would have a negative impact
- 1 Use car park at rear of Oaklands College building for commuter parking

- 1 Keep car parking charges low
- 1 Parking is problematic and expensive
- 1 Concern about visitors to Heartwood Forest and associated parking
- 1 Pioneer electric car use in the area
- 1 Sustainable, modern transit system required
- 1 Pedestrianise lower High Street area outside Boots
- 1 Pedestrian crossing required on Walkers Road to link both sides of the Common
- 1 Traffic calming required on Cravells Road
- 1 Reduce speed limits on rural roads
- 1 Reduce traffic in the centre
- 1 Train fares too expensive for young people
- 1 Extend cycle route from south through central Harpenden
- 1 Introduce formal improved cycle paths linking rural areas and Heartwood Forest

Shops and businesses

- 1 Better selection of restaurants required
- 1 Reduce numbers of restaurants and provide shops
- 1 Greengrocer and fishmonger required in Southdown
- 1 Local, independent shops asset for Southdown
- 1 Introduce a café in Rothamsted Park for local arts and crafts (similar to Cassiobury Park)
- 1 Find use for empty shop units
- 1 Promote the sale of local produce in shops
- 1 Provide improve shopping facilities for the young
- 1 Provide local amenities to improve sustainability
- 1 Establish local enterprise committee for local small business
- 1 Affordable men's clothing outlets required
- 1 Batford provides a good stop-off point for groceries
- 1 Loss of post office in Southdown a big issue

Other issues

- 3 Retain the library and improve facilities
- 2 Provide improved youth facilities
- 1 Set up young enterprise committee/ forum for 14+ year olds
- 1 Survey required to understand what young people require and desire
- 1 Improve the provision of sports and recreation facilities for the over 8s
- 1 Involve the Harpenden and St Albans Youth Council more in consultation
- 1 Provide a BMX ramp for young people
- 1 Increase the provision of playgrounds
- 1 Use solar panels to power lamp posts
- 1 Provide outdoor sports facilities close to Southdown
- 1 Happy with Batford as it is
- 1 Batford is more closely aligned with Luton than Harpenden
- 1 Infill housing development is placing pressure on infrastructure
- 1 Provide an improved police presence
- 1 Local facilities are being lost – cinema, hospital etc
- 1 Community centre required

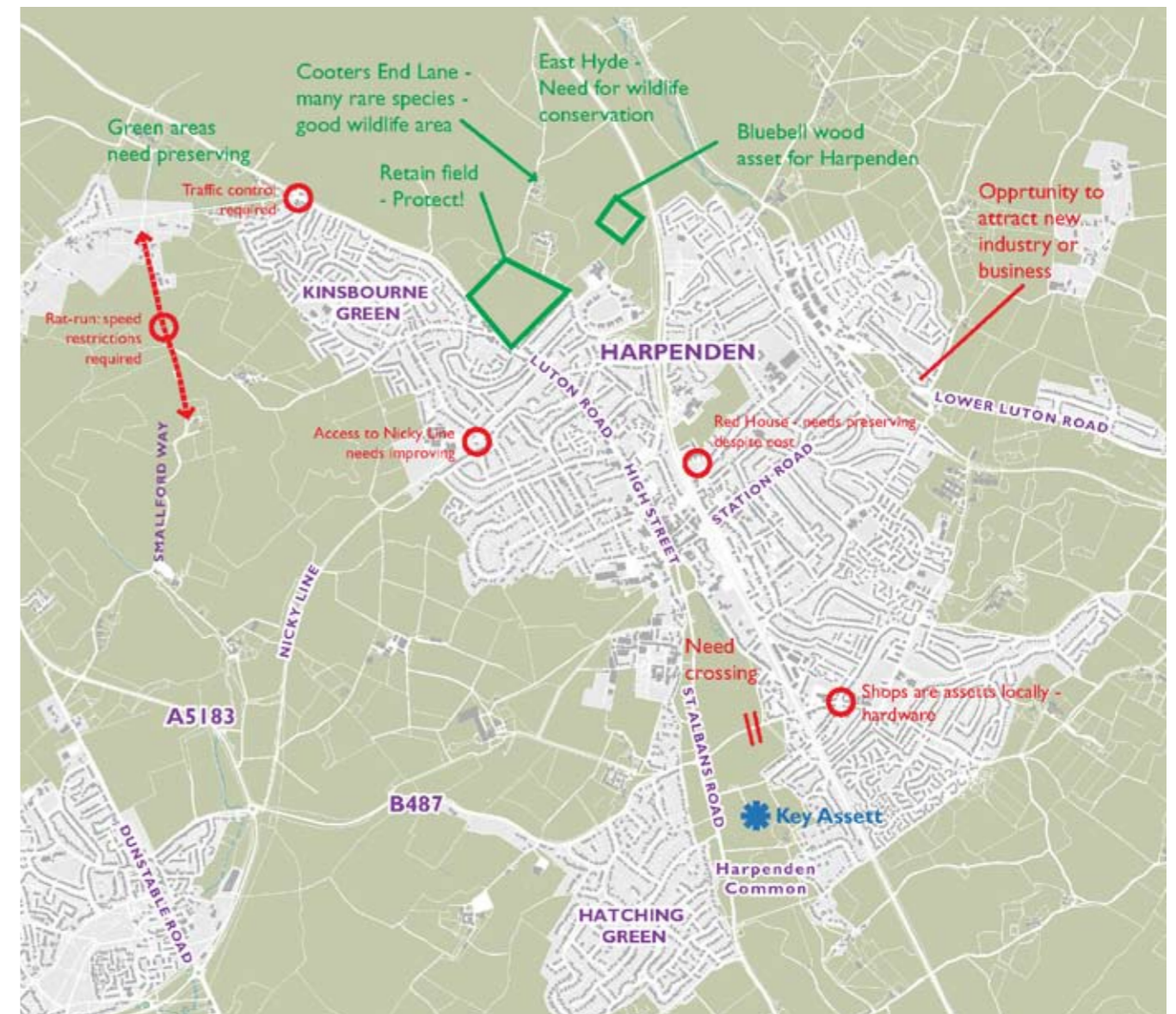
- | The library should spend more money on books in the library
- | Provide toilet facilities in the library
- | Don't build houses on the A6 to Luton
- | Improve hospital services and provide local A&E

Summary of themed suggestions

A range of suggestions were included within each of the identified themes. However, recurring suggestions included the retention of the Green Belt, improved public transport provision and repair of road surfaces, promotion and retention of local shops and businesses, and improved library facilities and youth facilities.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

As illustrated on the adjacent plan, several spatial issues and suggestions were highlighted on AI plans during the course of the Harpenden workshop and market stall events. These included the identification of specific assets for the town, such as the Common, shops and the Red House, the need to protect specific areas from development, and opportunities to attract new industry and businesses. The need for a new pedestrian crossing on Walkers Road, and improved access to the Nicky Line was also identified.



Harpenden consultation

Feedback forms

Harpenden's greatest assets

Participants generally felt that the Common, and 'green' village character of Harpenden was an asset, as well as the range of shops, services and local facilities.

What are Harpenden's greatest assets?

- 4 The Common / green space
- 3 Range of shops and services
- 3 Sense of community
- 2 Village character
- 1 The schools
- 1 Local clubs and organisations
- 1 Access to train
- 1 Access to countryside
- 1 The River Lea

Harpenden's future role

Generally, respondents envisaged that Harpenden operates independently from St Albans, and that it doesn't require too much change.

How do you see Harpenden's future role?

- 1 Southdown can operate as an independent village
- 1 Harpenden should progress with the times
- 1 Harpenden should be self-sufficient in terms of community and health provision
- 1 Should remain as an independent centre – no need to change
- 1 Range of shops and green character should be retained
- 1 Batford is convenient stop-off on way to Luton

Improving Harpenden as a place to live

Specific improvements suggested for Harpenden included the improved provision of public transport.

How can Harpenden be improved?

- 2 Improve public transport
- 1 Post office required in Southdown
- 1 Pedestrian crossing required on Walkers Road
- 1 Improve condition of the roads
- 1 Provide more for younger generation
- 1 Provide a central community space
- 1 Improve maintenance of the Common



St Stephen

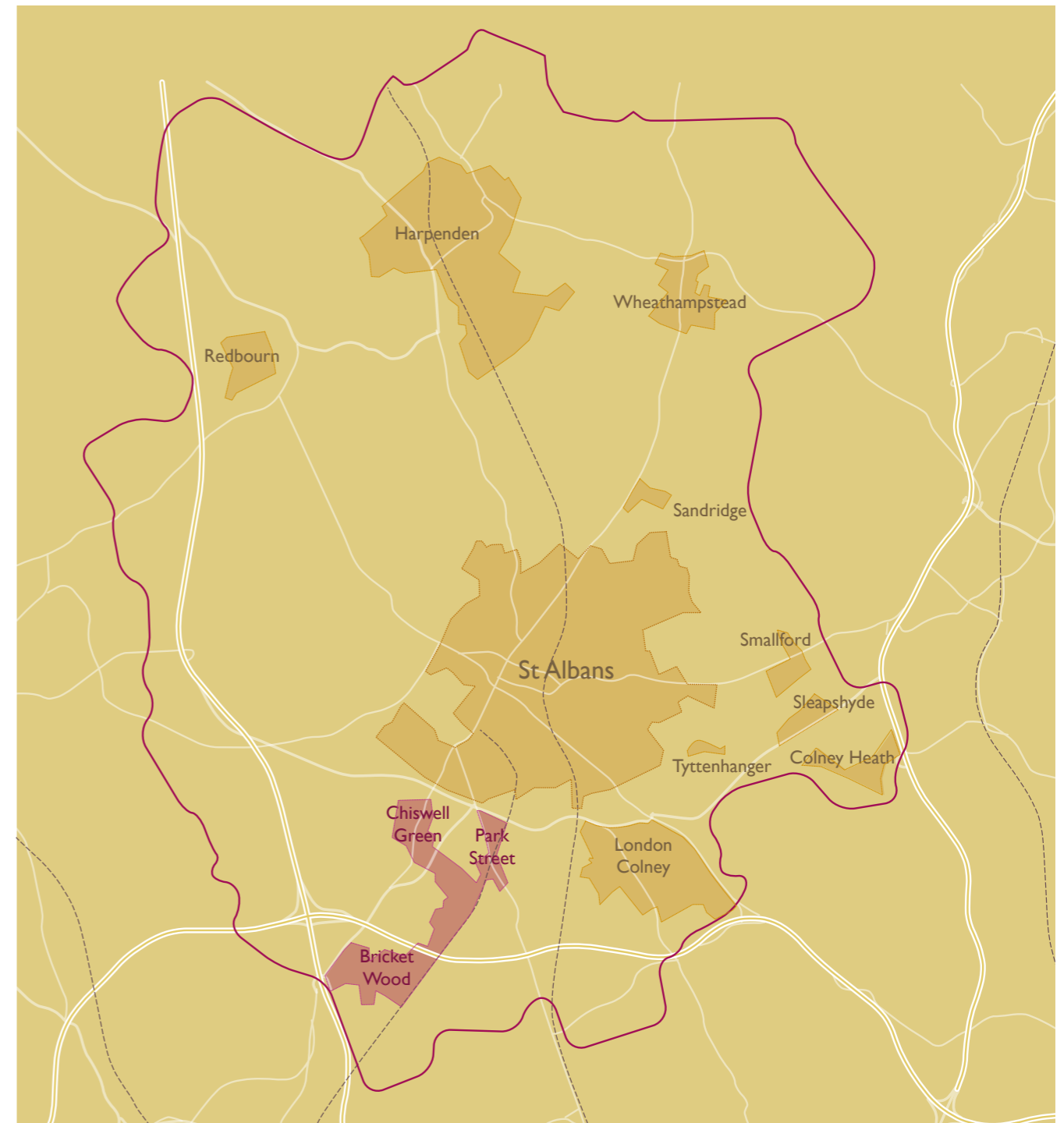
St Stephen Parish is located in south west Hertfordshire, and includes approximately 23,000 residents. The main villages and settlements within the Parish include Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green, Park Street and How Wood. The Parish includes many of the major roads within the district, including the M25, M10, M1 and A405. The Abbey Flyer train service St Albans to Watford branch railway line runs through the parish, with stations at Park Street, How Wood, Frogmore and Bricket Wood.

Bricket Wood has a population of approximately 4,000. Hanstead House is located close to Bricket Wood, which is now a training centre for HSBC.

Chiswell Green has a population of approximately 2,800, and includes one pub (the Three Hammers) and two schools (Killigrew Junior and Infants/Nursery). Chiswell Green experienced significant growth between the wars and subsequently, and as a result has a largely suburban feel. The Royal National Rose Society Gardens (formerly the Gardens of the Rose) are located in Chiswell Green and are the headquarters of the Royal National Rose Society.

Park Street is situated on Watling Street and has a population of approximately 7,000. To the east and south east of the village lies the former Radlett Aerodrome, which is currently the subject of a disputed major planning application for a new Rail Freight Terminal. An additional railway branch line was built in 1866 for goods services (the Park Street Branch), which linked Park Street to the main line from Bedford to St Pancras. However, this was subsequently closed in 1910. Park Street includes two primary schools and two pubs. The main landmark in the village is a Mill, which was converted into offices in 1984.

How Wood has a population of approximately 1,000 and is largely a residential expansion from Park Street. How Wood includes a row of shops, and a primary school.



St Stephen local context

Local Plans and Development context

Conservation Area Character Statement for Park Street and Frogmore

The Conservation Area Character Statement was produced by St Albans City and District Council in April 2001. The leaflet aims to show the way in which the form of the conservation area has evolved and to assess its present character; to indicate the principles to be adopted in considering planning applications in the area; and to form a framework within which more detailed proposals may be formulated.

According to the Character Statement:

- There are indications that the Park Street and Frogmore area was already an important centre in the years preceding the Roman conquest. Watling Street was the main road connecting Verulamium with London, and was laid out by the Roman army. The local area would have been populated as part of a thriving villa estate.
- Saxon pottery finds indicate there was a Saxon settlement by the sixth century
- Park Street Mill is first referred to in the twelfth century. The mill forms a very prominent, tall feature in the centre of Park Street, although unfortunately the mill house was demolished for road widening in the early 1960s. The mill is statutorily listed
- By the fourteenth century, Park Street was one of the largest and richest manors in the area, supplying large quantities of corn to the Abbey
- The growth of the coaching trade in the eighteenth century benefited the local inns
- There are a number of 17th, 18th and early 19th century buildings surviving in Park Street and Frogmore, although some immediately south of Burydell Lane up to the railway embankment were demolished for road widening in the 1960s.
- The most important group of statutorily listed buildings are in Park Street at the junction with Park Street Lane (no.s 72-80), and no.s 26-34 Frogmore form a group on the western side of Watling Street.
- In addition to the listed and locally listed buildings, there are a number of nineteenth century buildings which positively contribute to the appearance and character of Park Street, including the buildings around the ford, the Old Red Lion and the Swan public house.
- There are also many modest later-nineteenth century buildings within the Conservation Area. Most are concentrated in two locations closely related to the two railway lines.
- There are a number of Victorian terraces in Park Street and Frogmore
- A variety of traditional buildings materials can be found, reflecting Park Street and Frogmore's rural past, its location on a major trunk road and the arrival of the railway.



Development context

St Stephen Parish is likely to be affected by two of the most significant planning applications within the District. Butterfly World has been given planning permission on a 25 acre site near Chiswell Green, to the south west of St Albans city centre. The development will include a large dome surrounded by British flora and fauna. It will also include parking and access roads and has the potential for contributing to a Park and Ride service for the City.

Lastly, Bricket Wood Recreation Centre is due to cease operating on 28th February 2010, due to the fact that it is no longer fit for purpose and is located near alternative, more modern leisure facilities at Woodside (in Garston, outside the District Boundary).



In addition to this, plans have recently been re-submitted for a new Strategic Rail freight Interchange on land in and around the former aerodrome in Park Street. The original application, which included buildings up to 330,000m², together with parking for up to 1665 cars and 617 lorries, was refused on appeal following a planning inquiry by the Secretary of State in 2007.

Should the application be granted planning permission in the future, there would obviously be significant implications for St Stephen Parish.



St Stephen consultation

Consultation drop-in event

A consultation drop-in event was held in the afternoon of Thursday 30th April at three locations within the St Stephen Parish. These were:

- 2.30pm - 4.00pm at the Village Hall in Park Street
- 4.15pm - 5.45pm at Greenwood Park Community Centre in Chiswell Green; and
- 6.00pm - 7.30pm at The Parish Centre, in Bricket Wood.

The event was publicised locally with the assistance of the Parish Council, and invitations were sent to relevant members of the District Council's Community Panel.

Overall, the events were relatively well attended, particularly in Bricket Wood, where the event coincided with the parish annual meeting. Feedback was gained from attendees using the following methods:

Themed suggestions

Attendees were invited to identify suggestions for improvements within the key themes of:

- community and leisure;
- shops and businesses;

- traffic and transport;
- the built environment;
- sustainability;
- housing;
- the natural environment; and
- other issues.

Attendees were asked to note their suggestions onto a post-it note, and then to display the post it note under the appropriate heading on the AI worksheets provided.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Attendees were asked to annotate an AI plan of the village with any place specific issues or suggestions for improvement that they had.

Feedback forms

Attendees were asked to complete a feedback form which asked them to identify: St Stephen's greatest assets; St Stephen's future role in the District; and overall suggestions for improving St Stephen Parish as a place to live. A total of 14 feedback forms were completed.



Drop-in event key findings

Themed suggestions for improvement

A range of suggestions and comments were received within each of the categories identified as set out below.

Community and leisure

- 2 We are losing Bricket Wood Leisure Centre - need a provision locally for the lost facilities. Park Street Village Hall is trying to raise funds to meet these needs
- 2 Newsletter helps inform local villages
 - A doctors surgery in Bricket Wood
 - New village hall required in Park Street
 - Good link from Butterfly World into St Albans city centre to double up visitors
 - Good community spirit in villages
 - Preserve green belt at all costs
 - Review parish boundary in Chiswell Green
 - Bricket Wood identifies and links with St Albans in terms of identity, but residents more likely to shop in Watford
 - Restore local cinema to its former glory
 - Greenwood Park is an asset for Chiswell Green for all ages

- Playgrounds in parish should include facilities for disabled children - see Greenwood Park playground

Shops and businesses

- 2 Chiswell Green shops and post office are vital local resources
 - 2 Change the parking layout at Oakwood Road shops to accommodate more vehicles
- More account should be taken of home working opportunities afforded by the internet, to promote less travel - an important part of the Bricket Wood community
 - We need real industry, not warehousing in the village (Park St), such as a Science Park drawing on local heritage

Traffic and transport

- 7 Coordinated transport plan required (buses and trains) to carefully considered destinations (St Albans, Watford and Watford hospital etc), including more frequent and Sunday services
- 6 Severe parking problems in Mount Pleasant Lane by schools, needs urgent attention

- 6 The slip road from A405 to M1 southbound should not be a residential road, needs re-routing
- 6 Reduce road noise on M1 between junction 5-6, using new type tarmac or sound barriers
- 3 Road conditions are poor and need repair
- 3 Impact of Butterfly World was not properly considered, potential for highway congestion considerable
- 3 Totally the wrong location for a rail freight exchange
- 2 Rail freight access need to be direct from M25 or will be terrible/ unsuccessful
 - By pass may be required to ease congestion in Chiswell Green
 - Parking required close to school in a safe way and to minimise disruption
 - Through traffic is an issue. Don't want rail freight traffic (light goods vehicles and cars) travelling through Bricket Wood to access M1

The built environment

- 4 Stop infill development to protect garden character and open green space in village
 - 3 Existing green areas must be preserved
 - 2 Maintain village character with open green space, attractive gardens and well spaced dwellings
- Protect green belt surrounding our village

Sustainability

- 2 In general Bricket Wood is not a sustainable village, poor public transport, no secondary school available to all, must travel by car to shop
- Better, more frequent and cheaper public transport
 - Cycle paths should be separated from vehicles and should be consistent, to encourage more people to cycle

St Stephen consultation

Housing

- 4 Need to consider infrastructure requirements of new housing - this should come before development
 - 3 The area has very low water pressure, how will we cope with new development?
 - 2 Sewage will be a health problem with more houses
- Controlled infill developments is acceptable but with adequate gardens that are at least the size of the building footprint
 - Accommodation for old folks is not thought important enough

The natural environment

- 2 Protect established trees within Bricket Wood - all mature oaks should have TPOs to maintain character
- Need to be able to reach countryside within 15 mins walk to maintain character of green belt
 - Chiswell Green is beautiful in the Spring with all the daffodils and the various roundabout.
 - Good stone entry signs to St Albans

- Improve bridleways and public footpaths with better network and access for all walkers, horse riders and cyclists informal exercise and health
- Improve non motorised user crossing points on A405 and A414
- Heartwood Forest is positive for District
- No street cleaning in area of Bricket Wood for 2 years
- Potters Crouch is great asset in Chiswell Green, you don't need to go far in to be in countryside
- Watling Chase Forest has not resulted in improvements locally - should be promoted more

Other issues

No comments

Themed suggestions summary

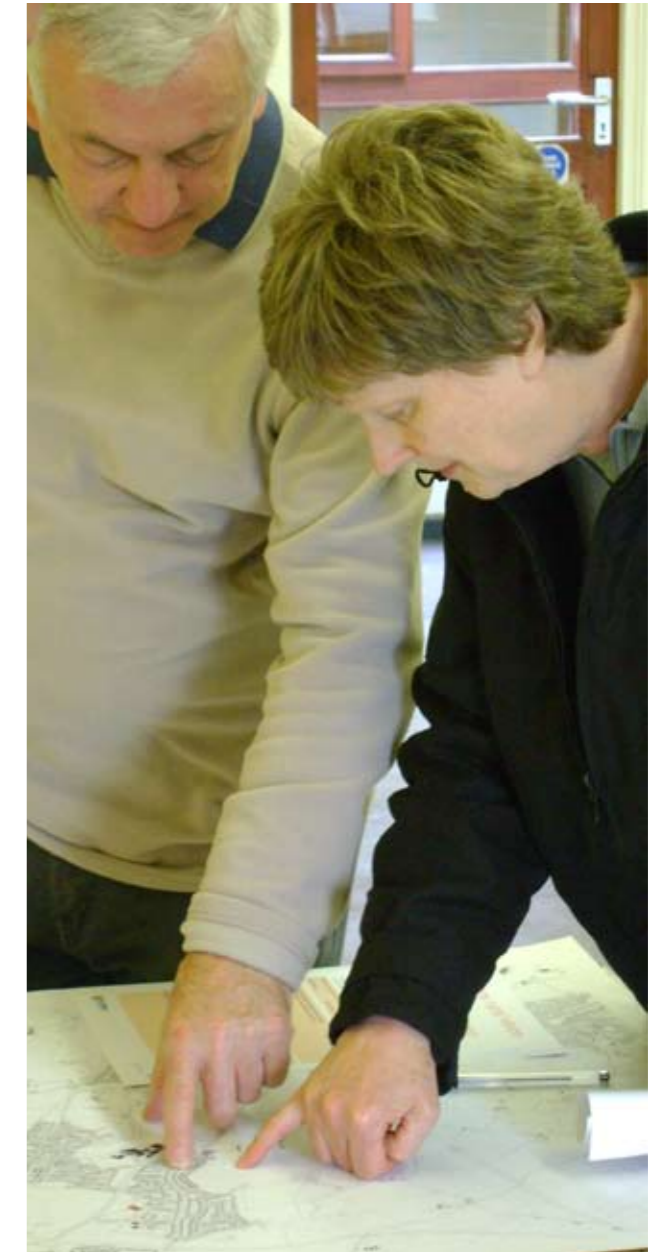
Infill development was identified as a key concern for participants at the St Stephen Parish consultation, possibly as a result of recent developments in the local area.

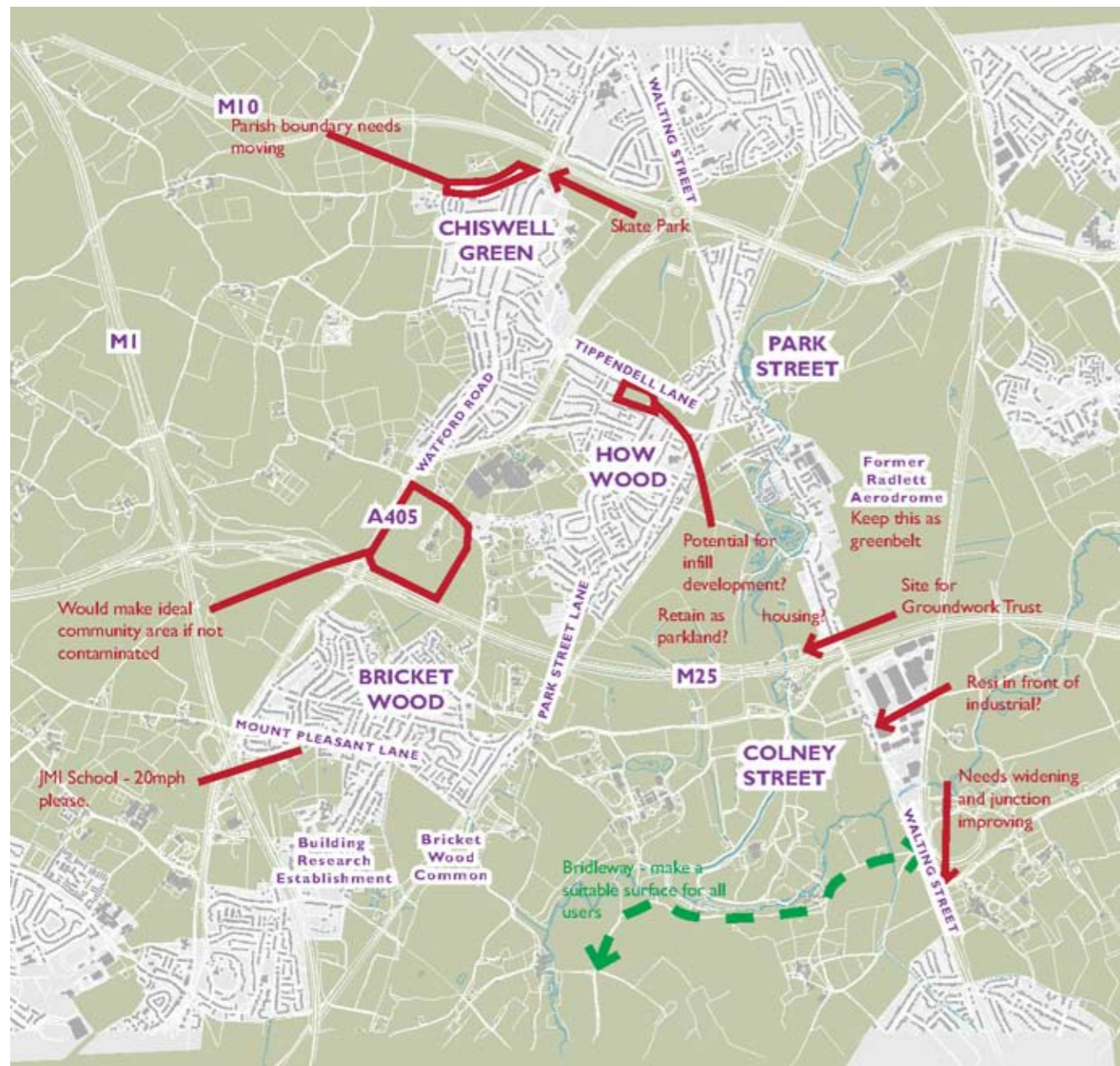
Public transport was considered to be a critical issue, with improved bus provision and the integration of this with rail services identified as a key priority.

Noise pollution from the M1 was identified as a problem, with requests for surfacing upgrades or noise barriers.

Parking was also identified as a problem on the traffic and transport sheet, particularly with regard to schools and free parking by local shops.

Butterfly World was considered a benefit for the local area and participants identified a potential link in attracting visitors to St Albans city centre. The application for a Rail Freight terminal was cause for concern in terms of traffic levels in the area and access issues for trucks.





Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

The comments made on the AI plan of the local area for the St Stephen Parish consultation included requests for residential development to front Colney Street, masking the light industrial uses behind these. Most residents were concerned about infill, but one site close to Tippendell Lane was highlighted as an opportunity for housing which would expand onto Green Belt land.

The area to the north of the M25 and east of the A405 was identified as an ideal community area, providing it is not contaminated by previous waste disposal in the area.

A skate Park was suggested by Watford Road and the M10 and a request was made for a slight boundary realignment, as residents on the north side of Ragged Hall Lane find themselves in the St Michael Parish.

St Stephen consultation

Feedback forms

St Stephen's greatest assets

Participants felt that St Stephen Parish benefits from a strong combination of a rural setting, with villages of character and a good location with strong transport links. The mature trees in the Bricket Wood area were specifically mentioned as assets, as was Greenwood Park

What are St Stephen's greatest assets?

- 7 The community
- 6 Rural setting with access to the countryside
- 6 A good location with good car travel links
- 5 The character of the villages
- 5 Green spaces, including Greenwood Park
- 2 Trees and woodland
- 2 The local shops and services
- 1 Mixed housing
- 1 The Parish magazine

St Stephen's future role

Participants felt that the village centres within St Stephen Parish should retain their current character as local village and neighbourhood centres. Bricket Wood was identified as having potential for developing a home-working, small business centre. Suggestions were also made that the local centres could provide leisure activities for the area in the south of the District., particularly in Park Street.

How do you see St Stephen's future role?

- 3 As a home-working and/or small, hi-tech business centre
- 3 As a local leisure and culture centre
- 2 As a good community centre
- 2 As a retained village
- 2 To provide attractive, rural surrounds to St Albans
- 1 As providing local, green power generation

Improving St Stephen Parish as a place to live

Participants had a number of suggestions for improving the local centres, including providing considerate new housing development but avoiding infill development in back gardens. Maintenance of the public realm and addressing the noise from the nearby M1 were also considered to be priorities. Improving bus services, protecting the Green Belt and updating leisure facilities were also mentioned.

How can St Stephen Parish be improved?

- 4 Prevent piecemeal, infill development as infrastructure should come first
- 3 Public realm maintenance
- 2 Address noise from the nearby motorways
- 2 More facilities and greater community involvement of young people
- 2 Address congestion in the local area



Sandridge

Sandridge Parish is located to the north east of St Albans City, and includes Sandridge village, Marshalswick and Jersey Farm. There are a number of farms and small rural settlements within the parish, such as Coleman Green, and Sandridgebury. The Parish also includes Nomansland Common, and the future site of Heartwood Forest (see below).

According to the 2001 Census, the population of Sandridge ward (including some of Jersey Farm) was just under 5,000. The village has three pubs: The Green Man, The Rose and Crown and The Queen's Head. The village church is St Leonard's and is thought to date back to 1119. Sandridge was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, and the rout of the Second Battle of St Albans in 1461 is thought to have been played out through the village. A large part of Nomansland Common is within the parish boundary today, but has been the subject of ownership dispute over the years. The present Lord of the Manor and patron of St Leonard's church is Earl Spencer, however, now only a few acres of Nomansland Common remain in his property.

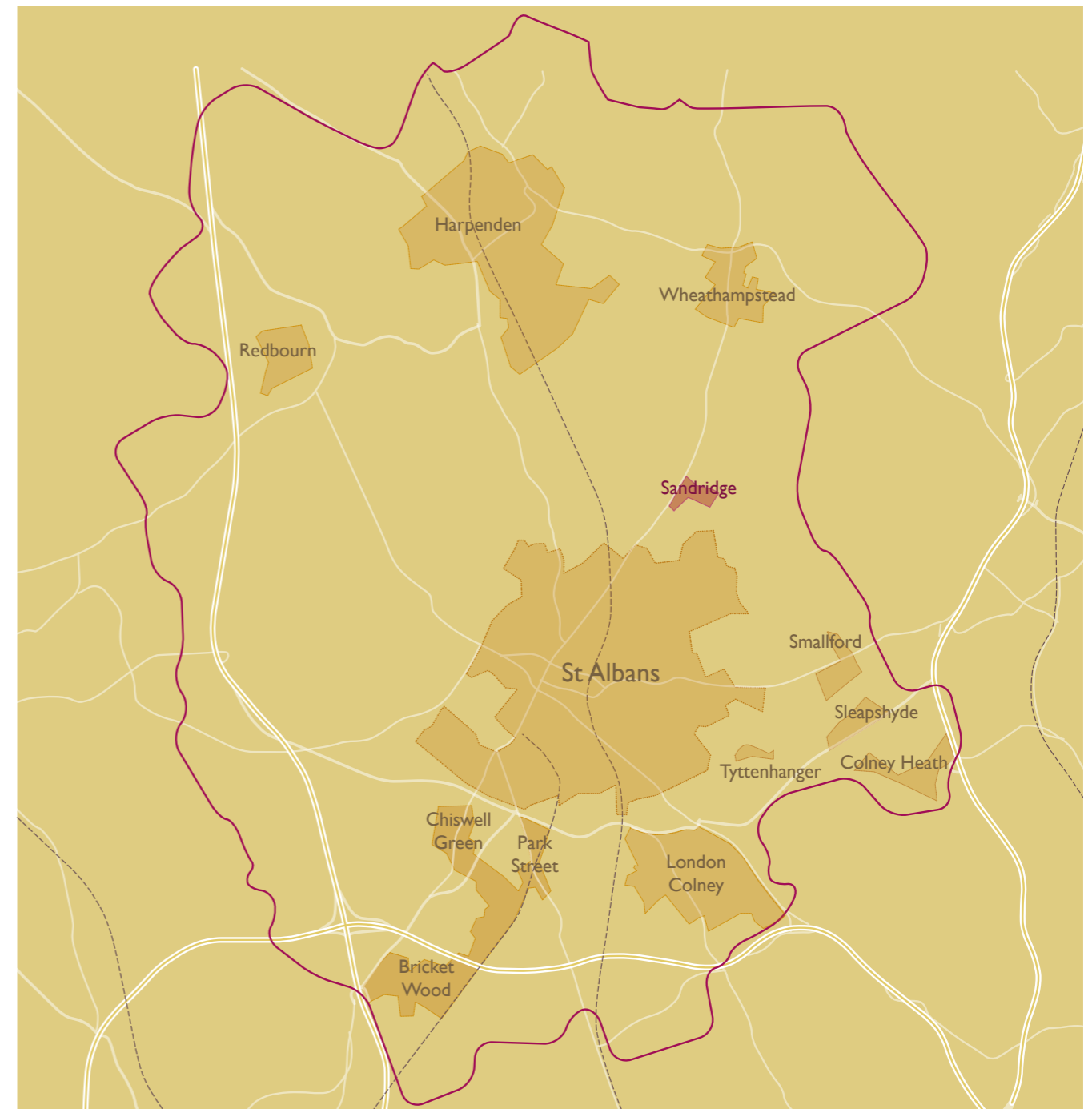
Jersey Farm was developed as a residential estate in the 1970s. Local amenities include pubs, small shops and a community centre. Jersey Farm has one pub, The Blackberry Jack, as well as a branch of Tesco Express (including a post office), a pharmacy, a

beauty salon, a cycling store, an Indian Restaurant, and a hair salon.

Marshalswick Mansion House was demolished in 1927 and most of the land is now part of the Marshalswick housing estate. Marshalswick Farm was sold in the 1930s for private housing and occupied the same site where the Quadrant shopping precinct now stands. The only remaining historic building is the old brewhouse in Marshals Drive.

Heartwood Forest

Heartwood Forest will be located in close proximity to Sandridge, and will be a new 850 acre native forest. The site already boasts 45 acres of ancient woodland, and is home to species such as rare butterflies and English bluebells. The Woodland Trust aims to plant an additional 600,000 trees, creating wildlife meadows and laying miles of footpaths and bridleways to create the largest new native forest in England. The Trust is hoping to begin planting in spring 2010, and expect to be finished around a year later. It'll then take about 10 to 12 years for the saplings to mature into a thriving woodland with a rich mix of trees, flowers and animals. Already, some of the area has been opened up for public access, improving walking and recreational facilities within the local area.



Sandridge local context

Local Plans and Development context

Conservation Area Character Statement for Sandridge

The Character Statement was produced by St Albans City and District Council in April 2000. The Statement includes a range of background details for Sandridge, including the historical background and essential characteristics.

The initial conservation area boundary comprised the presumed extent of the Saxon and Medieval village, but was extended northwards in 1977 and again in 1986. The settlement grew up alongside the main road between St Albans and Wheathampstead, with an additional cluster of buildings around the Church. The village remained small until the 1930s when two Rural District Council Housing developments were commenced. Further development has taken place since the War to the north east. The western side of the village has largely escaped development.

The majority of the listed buildings are clustered around Church End and probably formed the core of the original settlement. Most of these were originally timber framed. The majority of buildings are two storey in height, and buildings take a variety of forms.

Being situated in the centre of a shallow valley and surrounded by fields, the village

of Sandridge is prominently visible from several locations on roads and paths in the neighbouring countryside and the railway. Approaching Sandridge from the south along St Albans Road, there is a change in density when reaching the High Street. The almost continuous inter-War development along the main road gives way to a village character. It is especially important to maintain the approach to the village free from further development to preserve this character.

In summary, the Statement concludes that:

“it is the Council’s policy to encourage the retention of those features that make the conservation area special; including historic buildings, trees, hedges, walls, fences etc. In addition the Council demands a high standard of design and materials for any new development in the conservation area.”



Sandridge consultation

Consultation drop-in event

A consultation drop-in event was held in the afternoon of Friday 1st May at two locations within the Sandridge Parish. These were:

- 4.00 - 6.00pm Marshalswick Community Hall; and
- 6.15pm - 8.55pm at Jersey Farm Community Hall.

The event was publicised locally with the assistance of the Parish Council, and invitations were sent to relevant members of the District Council's Community Panel.

Feedback was gained from attendees using the following methods:

Themed suggestions

Attendees were invited to identify suggestions for improvements within the key themes of:

- community and leisure;
- shops and businesses;
- traffic and transport;
- the built environment;
- sustainability;
- housing;

- the natural environment; and

- other issues.

Attendees were asked to note their suggestions onto a post-it note, and then to display the post it note under the appropriate heading on the AI worksheets provided.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Attendees were asked to annotate an AI plan of the village with any place specific issues or suggestions for improvement that they had.

Feedback forms

Attendees were asked to complete a feedback form which asked them to identify: Sandridge's greatest assets; Sandridge's future role in the District; and overall suggestions for improving Sandridge Parish as a place to live. A total of 14 feedback forms were completed.



Sandridge consultation

Drop-in event key findings

Themed suggestions for improvement

A range of suggestions and comments were received within each of the categories identified as set out below:

Community and leisure

No comments

Housing

- 2 Better balance of housing types required
- 1 No more housing on Jersey Farm

Sustainability

- 1 Jersey Farm has good local shopping facilities
- 1 Poor bus service to St Albans
- 1 Few local shopping services

Built environment

- 1 Preserve historic buildings
- 1 Oppose building of flats on the Ridgeway

Natural Environment

- 3 Good supply of small parks in the parish, and sports centre in village
- 2 Preserve the green belt
- 2 Woodland Park is a great asset
- 1 Heartwood Forest should include 'edible' section where people can freely pick fruit
- 1 Encourage people to walk to Heartwood Forest from Marshalswick / Jersey Farm
- 1 Put up signs to stop bluebells being picked in Langley Wood
- 1 Broken glass in Jersey Farm adventure playground
- 1 Separate areas required for teenagers

Traffic and transport

- 5 improved bus services required to surrounding areas
- 3 Roads in poor condition
- 3 Improve pedestrian crossing facilities at Sandringham Crescent
- 2 Improve linkages and accessibility across Sandridge High Street to connect both sides of Heartwood Forest
- 1 Improve condition of footpaths

- 1 Rail depot will add traffic to A414 and other main roads in district

Shops and businesses

- 1 Café required – particularly for the young
- 1 Oppose visitor centre in Heartwood Forest
- 1 Visitor centre in Heartwood Forest would maintain focus of people away from the village
- 1 Need to encourage small, niche shops

Other issues

- 2 Like it as it is
- 1 Oppose more travellers sites, particularly on the green belt
- 1 Enjoy own identity and separation from the city
- 1 Replace roundabout in Sandridge near Tara's Retreat with traffic lights
- 1 Parish shouldn't extend into St Albans – village needs own council

Summary of themes issues

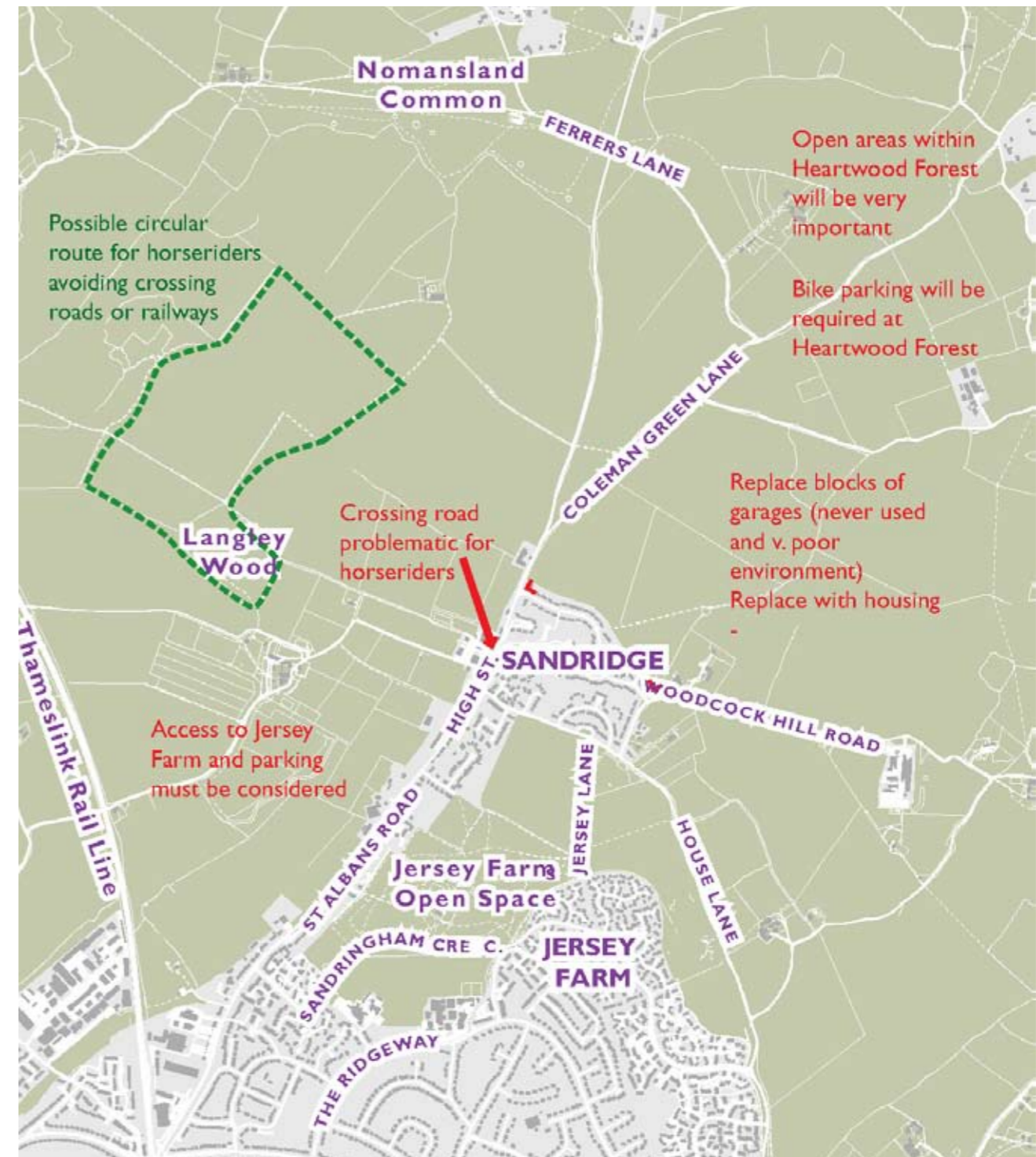
A range of suggestions and comments were received within most of the themes identified. However, recurring suggestions and comments related to improved provision of affordable housing and different housing types, and preservation of the Green Belt. Recurring traffic and transport comments related to improvements required to bus services, road surfaces, pedestrian crossing facilities, and links across Sandridge High Street to Heartwood Forest.

The supply of parks and open spaces were identified as an asset for the Parish, and some respondents stated that there were happy with the Parish the way it currently is.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

As illustrated by the adjacent plan, several comments were made specifically in relation to Heartwood Forest. These included the identification of a possible circular route for horse riders within the forest, the importance of retaining some open areas, and the need to include bicycle parking facilities.

Other annotations on the AI plan related to crossing Sandridge High Street, and the consideration of parking implications from Heartwood Forest.



Sandridge consultation

Feedback forms

Sandridge's greatest assets

Respondents identified a range of assets for the Parish, including its tranquillity, distinct identity and local facilities.

What are Sandridge's greatest assets?

- 4 Local facilities – schools, pubs, shops etc
- 2 Peaceful, rural location
- 2 Close proximity to St Albans but with a separate identity
- 1 Historical interest
- 1 Outdoor recreational facilities
- 1 Sky larks in Woodland Park

Sandridge's future role

Only a small number of comments were received in relation to the future role of the Parish. Suggestions included:

How do you see Sandridge's future role:

- 1 Small, local village distinct from St Albans
- 1 Provision of free leisure activities, such as walking and cycling
- 1 Local businesses should be valued
- 1 Remain as a dormitory area
- 1 More local employment required and support agriculture
- 1 Too small to have a significant separate role

Improving Sandridge as a place to live

How can Sandridge Parish be improved?

- 1 Include picnic areas in Heartwood Forest
- 1 Include circular horse rides in Heartwood Forest
- 1 Improve public transport links and bus service
- 1 Improve local facilities for teenagers
- 1 Prevent urban sprawl and merging with St Albans
- 1 Doctors surgery required in Marshalswick
- 1 Reduce vandalism in Jersey Farm
- 1 Increase police presence
- 1 Provide greater social networking opportunities
- 1 Integrate agricultural and recreational activities



London Colney

London Colney is located to the south east of St Albans city, between St Stephen Parish and Colney Heath Parish. In 2001, the village had over 7,700 residents.

The southern end of the village has a number of historic buildings and two popular pubs, The Bull and the Green Dragon. These are separated by the River Colne (a tributary of the River Thames) and an attractive open green space.

The High Street running also crosses the River Colne at the multi-arched brick-built Telford Bridge (a Listed Building).

A popular nature reserve is located to the west of the High Street, along the River Colne from the Green Dragon pub. This includes large ponds formed from flooded gravel pits.

An out of town retail centre (Colney Fields) is located to the south of the village, at a junction on the M25. The centre includes a large Marks and Spencers, Next, Monsoon and Borders and a large Sainsbury's superstore. The centre provides minor competition for St Albans city centre, which does not have a department store.

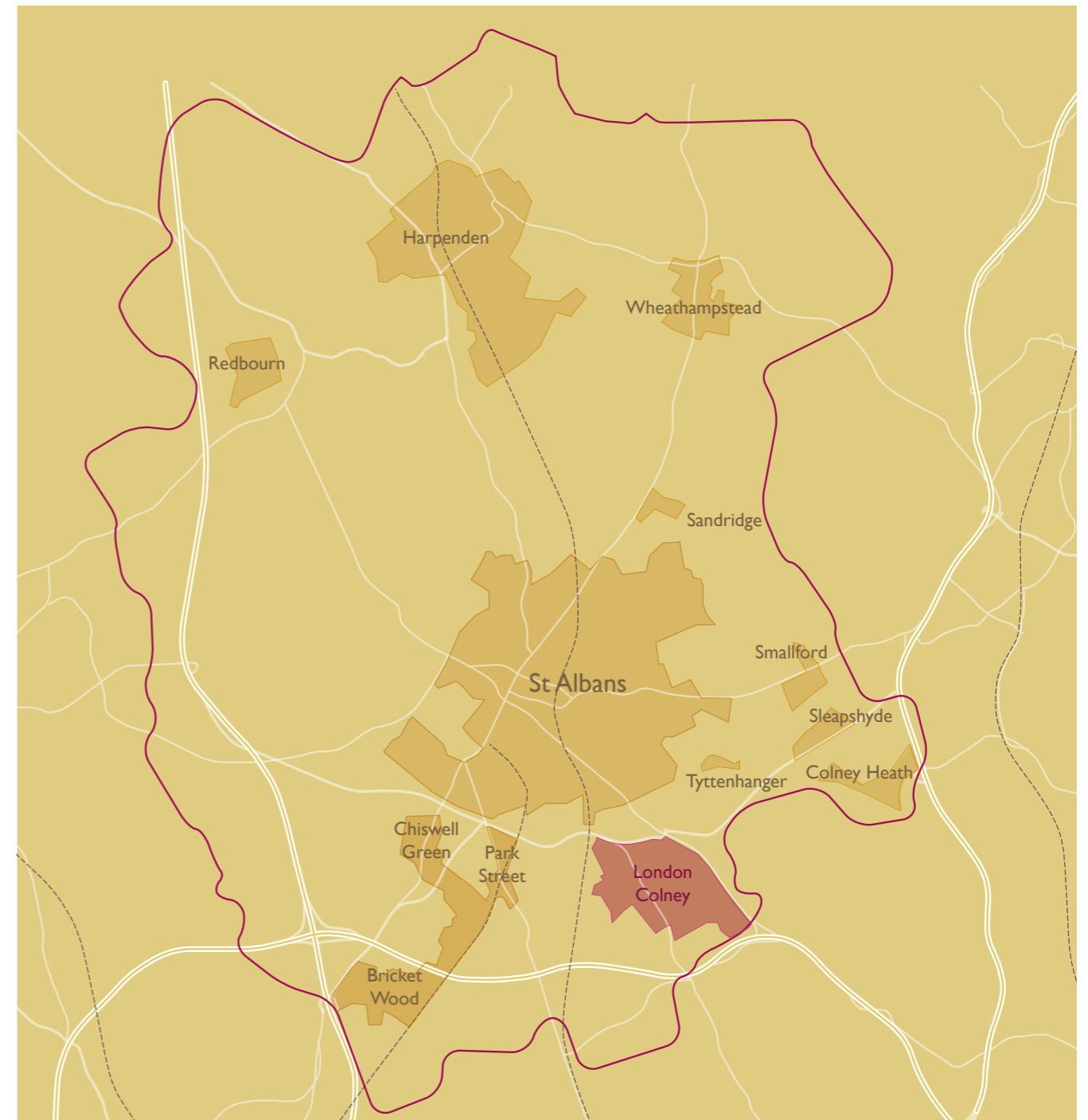
Local Plans and Development context

London Colney Parish Environmental Action Plan

The Parish Environmental Action Plan was produced by a steering group of the Parish Council in 2008, in association with the Countryside Management Service. The main aim of the Plan is to identify what makes London Colney special, and support the local action required in order to make such features relevant and accessible. The Plan provides a detailed framework for an effective and coordinated approach to local environmental improvements.

The Plan includes details of:

- Background to London Colney;
- Wildlife and heritage;
- Access and rights of way;
- Demography;
- Possible threats to development;
- Environmental health; and
- Climate change.



London Colney local context

The Plan includes the following information about the Parish:

- The landscape of London Colney has been vastly changed by mineral extraction and modern development in recent decades;
- The village grew when the coaching route from London to Holyhead was in its heyday, and at one stage had 26 inns and pubs to accommodate the travellers;
- Interesting buildings which still remain include Salisbury Hall (formerly Shenley Manor), Colney Park House (Pastoral Centre) and Tyttenhanger Lodge (Colney Fox); and
- There are six County Wildlife Sites designated within the Parish of varying habitats, including Broad Colney Lakes which is owned and managed by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. This nature reserve has a range of wetland habitats including the nationally rare wet woodland.

The Plan identifies a number of possible threats and developments within the Parish, including:

- The M25 will be widened to four lanes in each direction by 2012. Evidently there will be an increase in traffic in the

next 20 years with a perceived increase in noise, air and light pollution;

- A new 100 bed hotel is to be built close to the petrol station on the Colney Fields site with parking for around 100 cars. This will generate increased traffic and place additional demands on infrastructure;
- Possible additional housing to be developed to the south of the Napsbury Estate (possibly 1200 houses) as well as possible new housing to the north of the Napsbury Estate up to the A114 bounded by Napsbury Lane, and possible further development including close to the Pastoral Centre, and in-filling within the village. Therefore, potential development could potentially significantly change the size of the village, adding practically 50%;
- Gravel extraction is taking place close to the village, and it is intended to fill the resulting excavations with 'inert waste'. This will cause an increase in large lorry movements on the Bell Roundabout; and
- Plans for the rail freight terminal to the west of the village. There is no planned direct access to the site from the M25 which will result in increased localised congestion.



The final section of the Plan includes an action plan, intended to represent a five-year rolling programme. Action Plan objectives include:

- Surveying all footpaths in the Parish and developing a plan for their improvement;
- Monitor noise and air pollution levels within the Parish and attempt to reduce the impact of traffic pollution on residents;
- Determine improvements required to play area and allotment provision in the Parish;
- Determine the feasibility of dredging rivers to improve water flow, reduce flood risk and encourage wildlife;
- Plan to reduce the carbon footprint of the village; and
- Draw up a plan to maintain / enhance the conservation areas.



London Colney consultation

Consultation drop-in event

A consultation drop-in event was held in the afternoon of Tuesday 5th May at the London Colney Recreation Centre.

The event was publicised locally with the assistance of the Parish Council, and invitations were sent to relevant members of the District Council's Community Panel.

Feedback was gained from attendees using the following methods:

Themed suggestions

Attendees were invited to identify suggestions for improvements within the key themes of:

- community and leisure;
- shops and businesses;
- traffic and transport;
- the built environment;
- sustainability;
- housing;
- the natural environment; and
- other issues.

Attendees were asked to note their suggestions onto a post-it note, and then to display the post it note under the

appropriate heading on the A1 worksheets provided.

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

Attendees were asked to annotate an A1 plan of the village with any place specific issues or suggestions for improvement that they had.

Feedback forms

Attendees were asked to complete a feedback form which asked them to identify: London Colney's greatest assets; London Colney's future role in the District; and overall suggestions for improving London Colney as a place to live.



London Colney consultation

Drop-in event key findings

Themed suggestions for improvement

A range of suggestions and comments were received within each of the categories identified as set out below:

Community and leisure

- More allotments!
- Don't cover all our green fields with leisure facilities
- Very tolerant village and very international
- LC needs a nice family restaurant
- Good angling clubs in LC
- Playing fields and playground provision
- Need a swimming pool as lacking in water space to the South of district with Bricket Wood closing
- Strong sense of community with village events

Shops and businesses

- Need to encourage more businesses to set up in London Colney. High tech or light industry
- Business rent up by 25% this year - this is crippling
- Business has slowed in the area over the last 2 years
- LC village shops act as neighbourhood centre - very useful for older people
- Sava Centre provides a different role to LC shops

Traffic and transport

- 3 Bus links are good - Potters Bar, Hatfield, St Albans, Borehamwood and Savacentre
- 3 Traffic noise from the M25 is unacceptable, as are pollution levels
- 2 The local shops need more short term parking spaces to survive
 - 20mph in village - as in all district villages and policed with latest equipment
 - LC is well located, connections to M25 and wider network links
 - Walking routes and cycle tracks needed for access into St Albans
 - A train station would boost the area

Built environment

- 2 Protect two Conservation Areas Waterside and Napsbury
 - Protect the Pastoral Centre
 - The southern end of the village has a nicer character than the north
 - LC is a village and should not be used to improve wider traffic flows or to accommodate problem families - we would like it to retain the village character that remains

Sustainability

- Need to improve energy efficiency/ recycling business and built environment

Housing

- Need to limit any further building in LC
We need more family homes to accommodate local people.
- Housing development should be clearly matched to housing needs survey so we get social rented and private development to meet these needs, not just cash cows for the developers
- The housing market has picked up recently - small flats and houses are popular
- Napsbury Park has social issues and drug problems

Natural Environment

- Plant more woodland
- Waterside area is subject to flooding - see flood map
- Parish environmental action plan - 5 year programme
- The nature reserve is a great asset
- Willow Farm is good for families

- Coordinate with Herts orchard initiative - use the orchards by Napsbury Park
- This is where the glaciers stopped!
- Waterside and village green is a positive feature - significant part of the parish - Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are responsible

Other issues

- Travellers moved into Napsbury Park last weekend
- LC is a nice village but it is nothing special - has nothing to make it stand out
- Theft and petty crime a problem with young people in the area
- Protect remaining pubs in village
- Cross parish boundary coordination is an issue, for example with Ridge (in Hertsmere)

Summary of themed suggestions

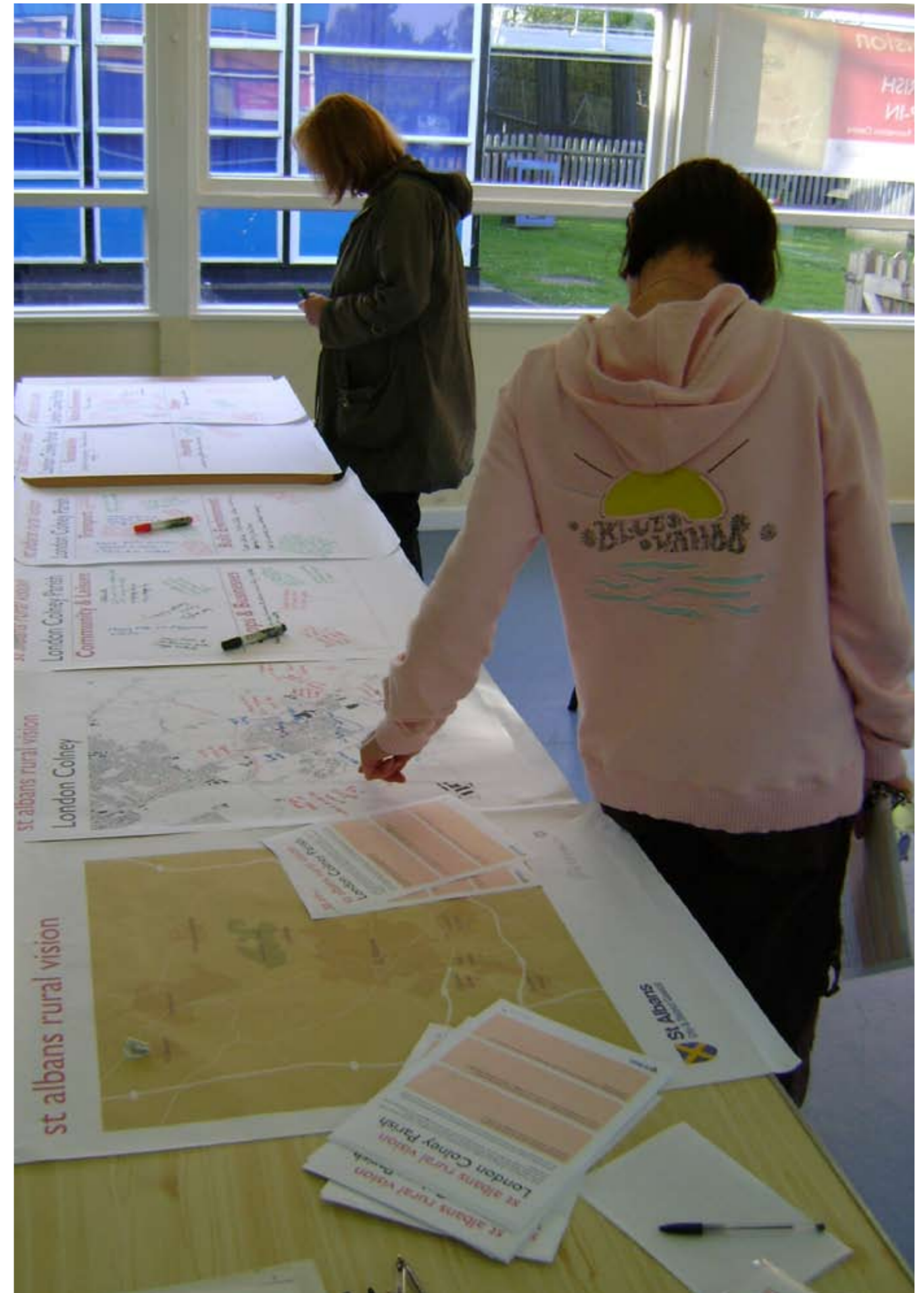
Participants from London Colney felt that the village benefitted from very good bus links to local towns and shopping centres.

The proximity of the M25 was considered to be responsible for high levels of air and noise pollution in the local area.

Many participants felt that London Colney had 'hidden gems' and areas of historic character, and were keen for these to be preserved. The Conservation Areas at Waterside and Napsbury were mentioned specifically in relation to this.

Local businesses felt that the last two trading years had been difficult, with significant rent hikes, and local residents suggested additional short term parking would help to support the local shops.

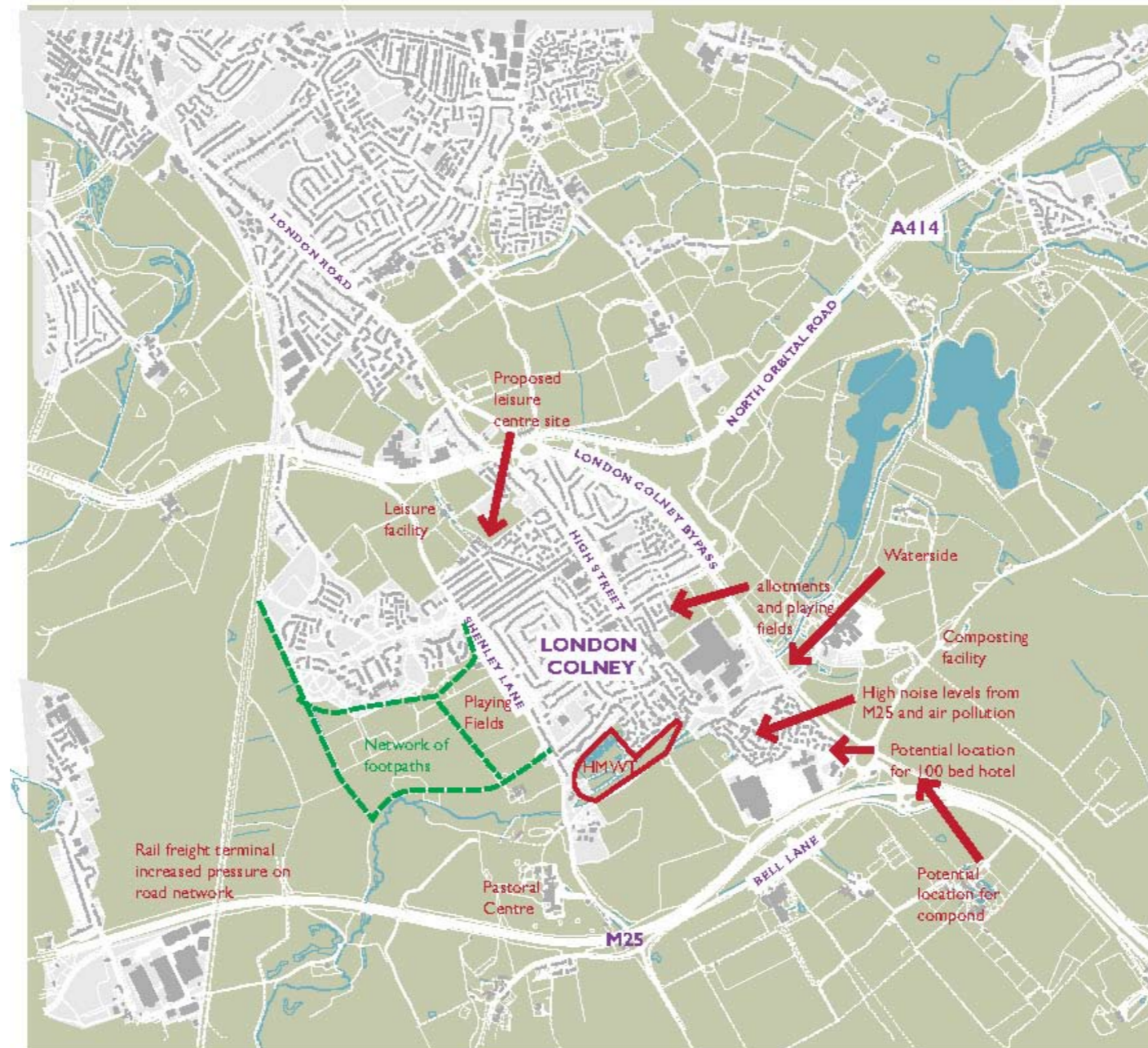
Participants identified a number of rural and landscape features in the local area, including the nature reserve, Willow Farm and Napsbury Park.



London Colney consultation

Identification of spatial issues or suggestions

The adjacent plan summarises the place specific comments annotated on the AI plan at the London Colney drop-in session. Several assets were identified in London Colney, including the allotments and playing fields, network of footpaths and Waterside areas. Additionally, key relevant proposals and areas of concern were highlighted, including the rail freight terminal (to be located in the adjacent St Stephen parish), a potential new hotel, and the problems of noise and air pollution for residents living in close proximity to the M25.



Feedback forms

London Colney's greatest assets

Respondents identified a range of assets for the Parish, including the Conservation Areas, the local community and the village character.

What are London Colney's greatest assets?

- 2 A diverse and strong community
- 2 Waterside Conservation Area
- 1 Good road access
- 1 Village feel
- 1 Outlook from the Green towards Shenley

London Colney's future role

Only a small number of comments were received in relation to the future role of the Parish. Suggestions included:

How do you see London Colney's future role:

- 1 A leader in renewable energy - all new buildings to be carbon neutral
- 1 Provision of new leisure centre to make LC a destination
- 1 As a local employer rather than a dormitory town - all local jobs have disappeared in recent years

Improving London Colney as a place to live

Varied suggestions were received for improving London Colney as a place to live, including improving open spaces and recreation, reducing deprivation and crime, and improving transportation.

How can London Colney be improved?

- 1 Keep open spaces
- 1 Plant more trees
- 1 Recreation and play areas for young people
- 1 Address deprivation in the local area
- 1 Manage congestion from commuters effectively
- 1 20mph speed limit through the village
- 1 Open the police station and encourage neighbourhood watch
- 1 Listen to local community organisations
- 1 Address environmental maintenance issues such as local littering and water pollution





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Local Produce
Home Delivery

St Albans
CITY & DISTRICT COUNCIL

Have your say!
ATHAMSTEAD FARMERS
MARKET CONSULTATION
Dates: 19th April 2008
10am - 1pm & 2pm - 4pm

Have a table
set up in the
market to allow
visitors to give
their views on
the market.

Financial / travel support
for small business to give
competition from large buyers

Quiet but to
the customer
specimens

Local farmers
and getting
worse / the council
is supporting - & it
will be on the
agenda

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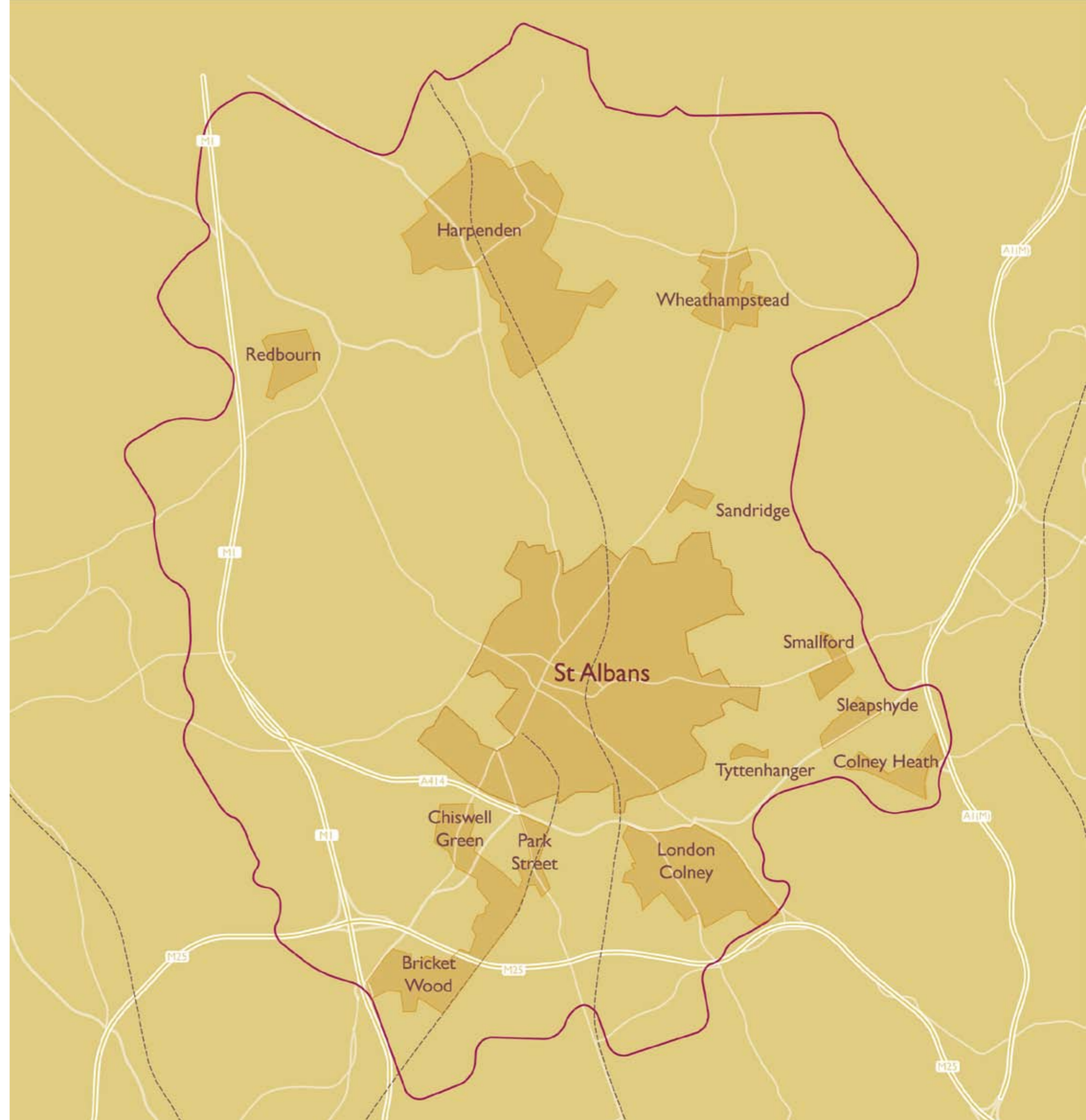
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