

# Wheathampstead Parish Council

## Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan

### 2020-2035



## REFERENDUM VERSION

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Appendices: All appendices are displayed as separate documents:

Appendix A	Profile of Wheathampstead
Appendix B	Local Green Spaces
Appendix C	Locally significant views
Appendix D	Conservation Area maps
Appendix E	Character Area maps and Buildings and structures of character
Appendix F	Archaeological Heritage of Wheathampstead
Appendix G	Design Statement: Signage in the Parish of Wheathampstead

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan (WNP), representing one part of the development plan for the parish for the period 2020 to 2035, the other part being the St Albans District Local Plan Review, 1994.
- 1.2 St Albans City & District Council (SADC), as the local planning authority, designated Wheathampstead parish as a Neighbourhood Area on 21 July 2015. The Plan has been prepared by the Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (WNPSG) in consultation with the community.
- 1.3 The WNP has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011, the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. The WNP establishes a vision for the future of the parish and sets out how that vision will be realised through planning land use and development change over the plan period 2020 to 2035.
- 1.4 The purpose of the WNP is to set out provide guidance to those wishing to submit planning applications for development within the parish. The process has involved the community as widely as possible and the topic areas covered reflect matters of importance to Wheathampstead, its residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.5 The policies are presented in the blue boxes along with a justification to provide the necessary understanding of what it is seeking to achieve. It is these policies against that planning applications will be assessed and it is advisable therefore that, individual policies are read in conjunction with the supporting text.
- 1.6 Figure 1.1 shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which shares the boundary of the civil parish of Wheathampstead.



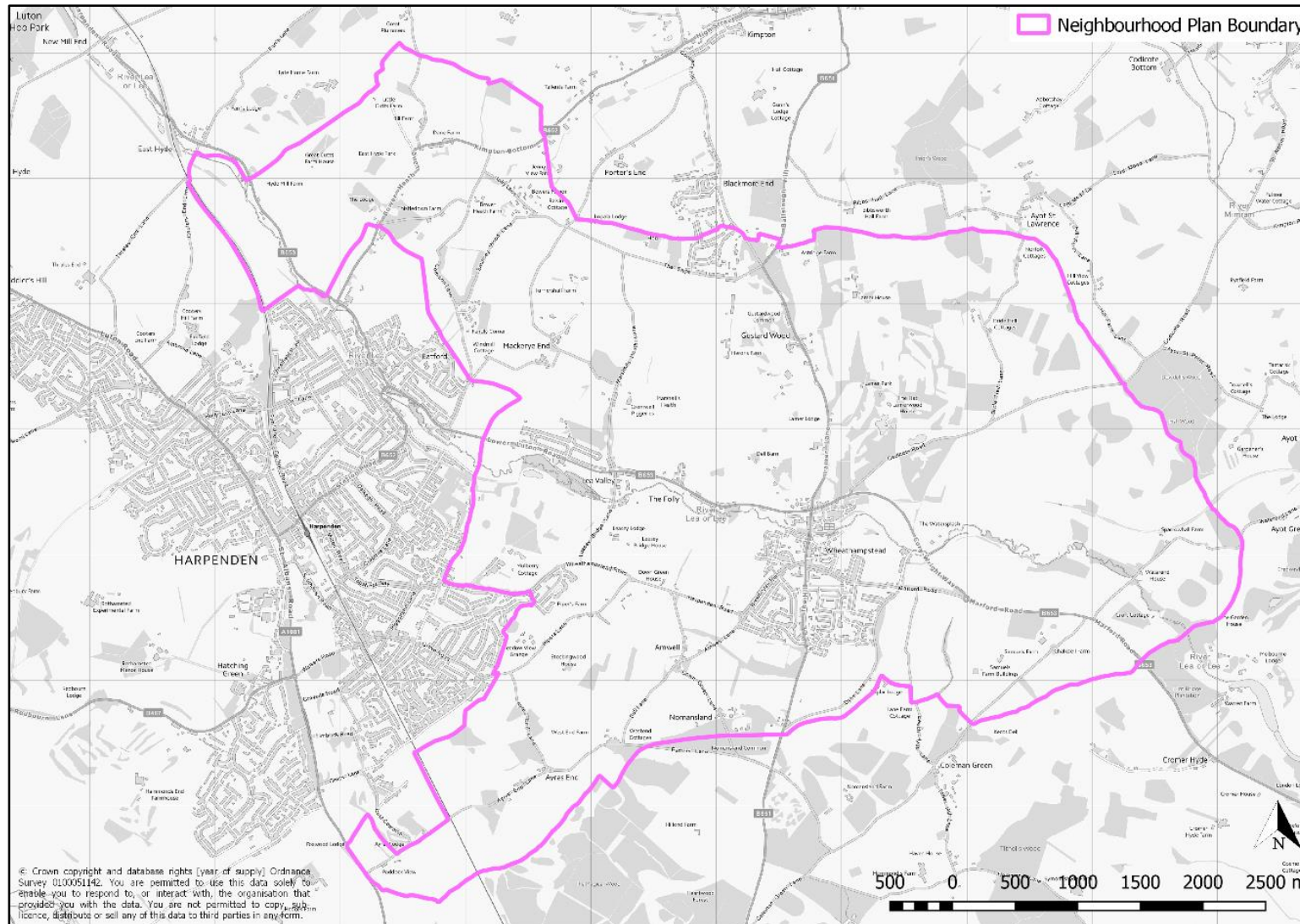


Figure 1.1. Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

## National policy

- 1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework states at paragraphs 29 and 30:

*“Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies<sup>1</sup>.*

*Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.”*

- 1.8 This Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared and submitted to St Albans District Council in accordance with the revised NPPF published in February 2019.

## Local policy

- 1.9 The current adopted Local Plan for SADC is the District Local Plan Review 1994. Local Plans “expired” after 27th September 2007 unless “saved”, in whole or in part. In 2007, a Direction was made saving specified policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994, i.e. they are still part of the development plan for SADC.
- 1.10 The policies listed in the List of Saved Policies are therefore the remaining operational policies within the District Local Plan Review 1994. Any policies not on the list have expired and are no longer part of the development plan.
- 1.11 A new Local Plan to 2026 was being prepared, however it was withdrawn on 23 November 2020, following its Examination. A timetable for the development of a new Local Plan is currently being established.
- 1.12 The Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan must therefore be in general conformity with the saved strategic policies of the adopted District Local Plan Review 1994.

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<sup>1</sup> Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area.

## **Community engagement**

1.13 The community has been extensively engaged throughout the process, including:

- public exhibitions and drop-in events
- face-to-face sessions with local organisations including schools, scouts and guides and other young people's groups, the business forum, and voluntary and interest groups;
- a questionnaire distributed to all households;
- a summary flier distributed to all households leading up to Regulation 14 consultation
- focused surveys and face-to-face sessions with local organisations including local community groups, young people's groups, local businesses, and voluntary and interest groups;
- regular newsletters and press articles;
- presentations at key stages of the plan;
- presence at parish events.

1.14 Meetings with SADC and Hertfordshire County Council Highways have taken place at various points about the topic areas covered by the Plan.

1.15 A detailed Consultation Statement accompanies the Submission Version Plan document.

## **Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan**

1.16 The WNP has been screened to ascertain whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/ or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required. The screening document was subject to consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency for five weeks from 3 April 2019.

1.17 The SEA and HRA Screening Opinion determined that the Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan does not require a full SEA or HRA and these findings were not disputed by the statutory consultation bodies. The Parish Council therefore concludes that the Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan does not require a full SEA or HRA.

1.18 A copy of the Screening Determination letter and statement was included within the Basic Conditions Statement, which accompanied the Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan.

## 2 ABOUT WHEATHAMPSTEAD

### History of Wheathampstead

#### Origins

- 2.1 Wheathampstead has a long history of settlement dating back to the Bronze Age (Appendix F, Archaeological Heritage of Wheathampstead). It has been speculated that in the late Iron Age it was the first tribal capital of the Catuvellauni before it was moved to Verlamion, the ancestor of modern St. Albans. During the Roman period Wheathampstead was a prosperous farming community. Recently an important villa and high-status burials were found at Turnershall Farm. A building that may be a Roman farmstead has been found to the north of Amwell.
- 2.2 The village as we know it today owes its site to the Saxons who established a settlement close to the ford across the River Lea. Early Saxon finds are rare in West Hertfordshire but Wheathampstead has two of them. A high-status 'pagan' burial was found in the 1850s near what is now the railway station; it may date to the early 7th century. Another cemetery has recently been found on the Wheathampstead side of Batford and is likely to date to the same period. In the early medieval period Wheathampstead evolved into an important manor with Royal connections. It was gifted by King Edward the Confessor to Westminster Abbey in 1060.
- 2.3 In 1086, at the time of the Domesday Book, the manor was geographically far larger than it is today. Its boundaries took in the modern parishes of Wheathampstead, Harpenden and Harpenden Rural. Despite the size of the medieval manor (nearly 12,000 acres) only 600 acres of land were under plough. While the lower land in the Lea valley was suitable for arable farming the upland areas posed serious challenges for the medieval farmer. The poor soil of the uplands was covered in scrubby woodland where 300 pigs were being raised in 1086. Later in the 11th and 12th century, Westminster Abbey leased out these woodland areas to 'free tenants' who cleared the trees and created new farms. These tenancies are still celebrated in local place-names such as Lamer, Mackerye, Herons, Piggots and Annables. The 'free tenants' made their money in the sheep and wool trade that came to dominate the economy of the Chilterns in the medieval period.
- 2.4 The power and influence of Westminster Abbey as the lord of the manor gradually decreased after the 15th century, though Westminster would continue to hold on to Wheathampsteadbury Farm until it sold up in 1945. However, the big estates on the uplands became far more important. Many were sold by their original families to a new class of wealthy merchants who wanted to move out of London into the country. Farmsteads were turned into up-market country residences for families such as the Garrards of Lamer Hall and the Wittewronges of Rothamsted.
- 2.5 Wheathampstead parish was a prosperous backwater in the 17th and 18th centuries but was eventually eclipsed by the growth of Harpenden after 1800. This led to the eventual split of the parish into two parts, Wheathampstead and Harpenden, in 1859. Even the arrival of a railway branch line in 1860 did not result in expected growth. The village slowly ticked over in the 19th century. Apart from watercress production for the London market, and some brewing and malting, few industries were established in the village



until the 20th century when Helmets and then Murphy Chemicals moved in during the 1920s. However, this decline did have one positive outcome. Many of the old houses in the High Street owe their survival to the poor local economy in the 19th and early 20th century. There was simply not enough money to replace old and outdated buildings.

- 2.6 The 1930s began the gradual transformation of Wheathampstead into the large village it is today. Much of this was because of dramatic growth in the Hertfordshire economy. Industry began to blossom in local towns such as Luton, St Albans and Hatfield, creating well-paid jobs in the locality. Wheathampstead was ideally placed to benefit from this growth. At first, in the 1930s, the new housing took the form of ribbon development. In the '50s and '60s large housing estates were built on farmland around the village core. With growth came the opening of the Wheathampstead Secondary School in 1965 and the redevelopment of the High Street that inevitably saw the loss of some historic buildings. By the end of the 20th century the population of Wheathampstead had grown from 2,000 to over 6,000 as the parish became a place to live rather than to work. Today, there are more than 200 small businesses in the village.



- 2.7 More than 225 historic sites in Wheathampstead are recorded on the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record. A selection of these sites is listed in Appendix F. Further information about the history of the village may be found in Appendix F and at <http://www.wheathampsteadheritage.org.uk/>

### Modern Wheathampstead

- 2.8 Modern Wheathampstead is a typical post-industrial and largely agricultural parish with a main village surrounded by Green Belt. The main industries that had developed in the village (brewing, helmet making and chemicals) have now been relocated and the former industrial sites developed for housing.
- 2.9 Despite the decline in manufacturing, the parish has seen a growth in smaller companies mainly in the services industries. There are now approximately 250 businesses registered with the local business group, WEB.
- 2.10 The railway serving the village was closed in 1965 as a result of the Beeching Report and the growth in private cars led to a bypass being built in the 1970s. However, the

village suffers from the continuing growth in the numbers of private cars and lorries and from its strategic position on key north-south and east-west routes.

- 2.11 The village has a fine Conservation Area centred on the High Street containing over 30 Grade II listed buildings and a Grade I listed church (St Helen's). The churchyard in the centre of the village has six Grade II listed tombs. Overall there are approximately 120 Grade listed buildings within the parish.
- 2.12 The wider parish has scattered communities located at Gustard Wood, The Folly, Lea Valley Estate, Hilldyke and Amwell. These communities and farms (though isolated) have a character of their own and vary in terms of which main settlement they associate themselves with, depending on their location. For instance, some of the communities to the west of the parish might consider themselves to have more in common with Harpenden because of their geography, while others might consider Wheathampstead to be their natural focal point.
- 2.13 Wheathampstead parish comprises in large part the valley of the River Lea from East Hyde to Brocket Hall, a distance of approximately six miles. Wheathampstead Parish Council owns over 170 acres of public land maintained for public access. The village centre has a large public area maintained and owned by the Parish Council. It is adjacent to the river and used for leisure, recreation and sport. Its convenient location makes it popular with both residents and visitors from outside the parish.
- 2.14 Nomansland Common is partly owned by Wheathampstead Parish Council and partly by the Althorp Estate. The common is managed by St Albans District Council through a management committee with representatives from Wheathampstead and neighbouring Sandridge parish councils.
- 2.15 There are many active organisations in the parish including a business group, community group, patient participation group, and preservation society. There are also many special interest groups including sports (tennis, football, archery, etc.), pastimes (history, horticultural, U3A, art, drama, etc.) and young people (scouts, guides, drama/stage arts group, nurseries, youth centre, etc.)



### Profile of the community today

2.16 A detailed profile is provided in Appendix A, the key aspects being<sup>2</sup>.

- Compared with the district as a whole, Wheathampstead has a **high percentage of residents aged 65+**, amounting to one fifth of the local population.
- In contrast, Wheathampstead's **the percentage population at working age, 25 to 64 year olds, is significantly lower than within the district** as a whole. Interestingly, however, the percentage of children living in the parish, as well as teenagers and young adults, is slightly higher than average for the wider area.
- Wheathampstead has **high levels of car ownership**, with 1.6 cars per household compared with 1.16 at the national level and 1.4 at the district level. This is not unexpected in a largely rural area, but perhaps points to missed opportunities to improve non-car linkages from within the settlement to the railway stations at St Albans and Harpenden.
- Wheathampstead does not have its own railway station, the closest being in Harpenden. It is however fairly well served by bus links during weekdays to several major employment centres. The weekend service is less frequent. However, the **vast majority of those in work use their car to travel** to their place of employment. An above average number of people work from home.
- Wheathampstead predominantly comprises **larger, detached and semi-detached homes**. 76% of homes are owned, which is slightly higher than across the district (73%), and substantially higher than across the south east (68%). The number of social rented properties in the parish is comparable to that at a district and regional level (15%), however there are relatively low numbers of properties available for private rental (7% compared with 12% in the district and 14% across the south-east).

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<sup>2</sup> Source: 2011 Census

### 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

#### Challenges for Wheathampstead

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Wheathampstead parish. These include:
- The need to build thousands of additional homes in an already over-populated area of the country places the Green Belt at risk and is potentially damaging to communities with their own identities such as the village and hamlets within the parish.
  - The high cost of property in the locality makes it increasingly difficult for first-time buyers to live in the area. Developers build larger houses, making it difficult for older people to downsize.
  - Wheathampstead has some areas of deprivation caused partly by poor post-war development. The quality of some property is poor and the location of our main council estate makes it more difficult to integrate that part of the community into village life.
  - There is an ever-increasing volume of traffic through the area caused not only by the demand on housing but also the expansion of Luton Airport. This puts increased pressure on the Lower Luton Road and village centre.
  - As with many rural communities, Wheathampstead suffers from limited public transport and inadequate safe cycle routes.
  - An increase in the elderly population, improvements in our High Street and a dramatic increase in small businesses based in the village, has resulted in an increased pressure on parking.
  - There are environmental threats to the parish that mainly stem from aircraft noise, increased traffic pollution, flooding and inappropriate development.

#### Vision for Wheathampstead

- 3.2 In consultation with the community, the established vision for Wheathampstead in 2035 is as shown below. It presents an idealised image of the parish seen from a resident's view in 2035 that may or may not be achievable in the intervening years. However, the Neighbourhood Plan is being developed with these goals in mind though there are many influences that will affect the outcome.

#### INTRODUCTION

The district of St Albans has a mix of settlements ranging in size and demography from St Albans city centre through to hamlets and scattered dwellings. The civil parish of Wheathampstead is located in and around the Lea Valley and occupies some 26 square kilometres with Wheathampstead village as the main settlement. The village is classed as a

“large village” and in 2015 had a population of approximately 6,400. Although a large village, Wheathampstead benefits from the look and feel of a smaller community which is reflected in its community spirit. Some of the more remote settlements probably associate themselves more with Harpenden, our nearest large town, because the parish boundary partially encircles it and includes part of the urban area. Some residents to the north may also feel an association with Kimpton.

In 2035 Wheathampstead has retained its identity as a rural parish with the village as the centre for social, commercial and service activity. Although there has been a relatively small increase in population the village has retained its description as a “village” and residents feel part of a small, close-knit community. We have maintained the village High Street as the commercial hub and the area around the Memorial Hall as the community hub.

The outlying communities of The Lea Valley Estate, The Folly and Gustard Wood have maintained their own identity within the parish but remain connected to the village hub. They are represented on all appropriate Parish Council committees and working groups, and in other community organisations.

### **SERVICES**

As in 2020 our services hub contains the Parish Council office, Library, Fire Station, Police Office, Doctors Surgery, dentist and sporting facilities all located within a 150m radius. These services are the main focus for community activities that are facilitated primarily by the Parish Council which continues to support local groups and works to improve the local environment and wellbeing of residents.

New amenities have been developed. These include a renovated Memorial Hall with state-of-the-art facilities and the availability of new activities such as a cinema, gym, dance and fitness studio and social space. There is also an area where small businesses can share facilities for hot-desking, photocopying, etc.

High speed broadband is available to even the most remote dwellings while telephone and TV reception has been enhanced in areas where it once was poor.

### **COMMERCE**

The commercial hub in the High Street contains a selection of shops and restaurants that complement each other and provide sufficient goods and services, including a Post Office, for the day-to-day needs of residents and businesses. Shops and other business premises have been protected from change of use from commercial to residential to ensure the High Street remains a thriving retail area. Adjacent to the High Street there is a flourishing and protected business area with a range of small and medium-sized, office-based businesses supporting employment, the High Street and community projects.

Businesses have been boosted by an increase in tourism to the area and the availability of visitor accommodation. Our public houses within the parish have been protected as valued community assets.

The street scene is in keeping with the historic nature of the village with well-designed street furniture, signage and seating.

### **TRANSPORT**

To help integrate the more remote parts of the community, to promote a healthier lifestyle, to connect our adjacent towns and to reduce pollution, we have a network of on-and off-road cycleways, bridle paths and footpaths. Road traffic has been contained and reduced where possible with attention having been paid to deterring heavy vehicles using unsuitable roads,

traffic passing through the village centre, and speeding. Vehicles that are less polluting are catered for. Public transport is more frequent, reliable and inexpensive with “park and ride” facilities for those wishing to commute or shop in adjacent towns.

### **HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT**

There is enough housing to meet the needs of first-time buyers (including affordable housing), elderly residents wishing to downsize, and families who wish to retain their historic link with Wheathampstead.

Some social housing built in the 1960s and of poor quality has been replaced with modern, energy-efficient accommodation with improved access for the elderly and disabled. The Hillydyke estate has been re-landscaped and leisure facilities improved.

New buildings (including extensions and rebuilds) in the parish, whether residential or commercial, are appropriate to their surroundings both in size and design, and those which are in or close to conservation areas are in keeping with the historic character of Wheathampstead. Developments have been small scale with minimal impact on the Green Belt. Beyond the village few new buildings have been constructed in open Green Belt. No buildings or extensions have resulted in over-development of their site.

New buildings are energy efficient and use the latest technologies to be carbon neutral. These include bio-digesters, solar panels, geo-thermal and other heat pumps. There is sufficient accommodation for elderly residents to downsize including for those who need additional care.

### **SCHOOLS**

There are sufficient nursery, primary and secondary places of good quality and within easy reach of the main pockets of population. Where publicly funded transportation is not available there are safe routes for walking and cycling.

### **YOUTH AND THE ELDERLY**

Both young and elderly residents benefit from a wide range of facilities. Young people can congregate in a purpose-built youth club and are able to develop their interests in topics such as music, fashion and dance. Groups for the increasing number of elderly residents can meet in a variety of venues around the parish including the Mead Hall and Memorial Hall. Outdoor facilities include football, netball, tennis, cricket, archery, running and a gym.

### **HERITAGE**

Wheathampstead is known for its rich history and attracts visitors to the area. There is a heritage centre, interpretation boards at strategic locations, walking maps and leaflets available to visitors.

Those of our buildings which are in keeping with the historic character of the parish, and particularly those in the Conservation Area, have been conserved and not threatened by unsuitable development, advertising signage and decoration.

The heritage sites in our open spaces (eg the restored station platform, the site of the 15th century fulling mill at Folly Fields, the scheduled monument at Devil's Dyke) are managed to protect their historic value.

### **OPEN SPACES AND PLAY AREAS**

Our open spaces have been treasured and maintained to balance the needs of wildlife, promoting biodiversity, public access and visual appeal.

Until its closure in the 1970s, the Blackbridge tip was a landfill site for London located close to the village. It has been returned to productive use as an amenity for residents.

There are enough play areas for younger residents with modern, safe and challenging equipment close to the centres of population.

### CONCLUSION

By 2035 there is an excitement around living in the parish, a pride in its history, facilities for all ages and incomes, while at the same time the parish continues to evolve and take advantage of new technologies and business opportunities.

Wheathampstead continues to be thriving and socially cohesive, with a mixed age population and ethnic and religious groups living in harmony.

## Wheathampstead: a SAFE Community

- 3.11 As a 'golden thread' running through the vision, Wheathampstead aspires to become a "Sustainable Accessible Fair and Ecological (SAFE) Community" where the policies and associated actions contained in the WNP should contribute as follows.

We have a thread running through our plan



- 3.12 Examples of SAFE outcomes include a commitment to recycling and reuse, procedures to reduce our carbon footprint and the causes of climate change, provision of access for wheelchair users, large fonts for signage and symbols for those with sight impairment, sale or use of Fairtrade products, contributions to related charities, use of CCTV to ensure safety, enrolment of businesses to ShopWatch or PubWatch, promotion of electric charging points, etc. Becoming the first SAFE by Design Community will provide a niche marketing opportunity for local businesses and attract like-minded residents.
- 3.13 As part of the SAFE aspiration to be an accessible parish, Wheathampstead is becoming a dementia-friendly parish. The Parish Council plays a key role in the health and wellbeing of communities, for instance through the provision of open space, allotments, meeting places and leisure provision. According to Hertswise, there are over 14,000 people in Hertfordshire living with dementia<sup>3</sup>. The Alzheimer's Society suggests that one

<sup>3</sup> <https://hertswise.org.uk/about-us/>

person will develop dementia every three minutes in the UK in 2019<sup>4</sup>; it is therefore increasingly important for communities and organisations to come together to create a supportive network for those affected.

- 3.14 Already, the parish has a Dementia Wellbeing Group<sup>5</sup>, which has applied for Wheathampstead to be a dementia-friendly village. Projects that encourage inclusion, activity, sharing of memories and friendship – such as the Coffee Club and Herts Musical Memories – are already making a difference locally. Activities aimed at older people are also important and there are many examples of these in the parish.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/news-and-media/facts-media>

<sup>5</sup> <http://wheathampstead-pc.gov.uk/directory/dementia-wellbeing-group/>




## Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Objectives

3.15 The following strategic objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan have been identified through engagement with the community.

- **SO1:** To retain and enhance a sense of belonging and participation in the community as a whole and in local neighbourhoods that have their own identity. The village should not be perceived as a town.
- **SO2:** To have sufficient and affordable accommodation of the right kind so that second generation residents can settle in the community, first generation residents can downsize when appropriate and there is reasonably priced housing for first time buyers. At the same time recognising the needs of incomers.
- **SO3:** To ensure that new buildings are in keeping both in design and size with the current architecture and are of such design as not to detract from the rural setting. The rural landscape in the parish and along the Lea Valley will be maintained and any development that scars the scenery or causes coalescence with adjacent urban areas will not be allowed.
- **SO4:** Signage in the parish will be controlled to prevent clutter and inappropriate use of lighting, materials and design.
- **SO5:** To preserve and enhance Wheathampstead's historic buildings, conservation areas and heritage sites for future generations and to help draw visitors into the area for the benefit of retailers.
- **SO6:** To promote and support business in all forms, including a thriving, vibrant and prosperous High Street, to deliver employment opportunities, make contributions to parish activities and encourage visitors into the village and open spaces. Selected areas and services will be designated for business use only.
- **SO7:** To minimise our carbon footprint, improve personal health and encourage sustainable transport by providing local services, improved public transport, bridleways and cycleways to adjacent settlements both within and outside the parish.
- **SO8:** To provide a wide range of educational, leisure and support services for young and old alike with a modernised and enhanced Memorial Hall acting as the services hub.
- **SO9:** To maintain our open spaces so that they provide a balance of biodiversity, visual appearance and public access and to encourage other landowners to adopt a similar approach to the use of their land.

## 4 SPATIAL STRATEGY AND HOUSING

- 4.1 Meeting housing needs, particularly for affordable housing, is a strategic priority of SADC. Key drivers for these policies are the demographic trends in the district, the evidence of need for affordable housing set out in the strategic housing market assessment, and the needs of individual communities for additional housing with a range of costs and tenures as part of their development as communities and more sustainable places.
- 4.2 For Wheathampstead, these needs apply but must be balanced against the significant constraints that are imposed by the Green Belt designation and the sensitive nature of the Neighbourhood Plan area in respect of flooding and biodiversity.
- 4.3 It is therefore considered that housing development within the Neighbourhood Plan area will be relatively limited. The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is therefore on ensuring that the right type of housing development is brought forward.

	<p>Wheathampstead is a thriving parish with many local facilities and amenities; it will be important to sustain this in the future. The policies in this section of the Plan seek to ensure that housing is affordable, particularly for families and first-time buyers, and in locations that are sustainable and well-connected to the village centre. Planning applications are encouraged to explain how they contribute to the SAFE aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
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### Policy W1: Location of development

- 4.4 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should ‘*establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period.*’
- 4.5 A Local Housing Needs Assessment for South West Hertfordshire for the period 2020-2030 was published in September 2020<sup>6</sup>. It identifies a need for 893 new dwellings per annum across St Albans; the delivery strategy will be set in the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.6 At the parish level, it is worth bearing in mind the historical trend in housing in Wheathampstead when considering future requirements. Figure 4.1 shows how the population of the parish has increased exponentially since 1801 while average occupancy has decreased linearly. If projected out to 2036 it suggests a population of approximately 7,600 with an average occupancy of close to two per household. Very crudely, this suggests the need to build an additional 480 to 600 dwellings between 2011 and 2031. This assumes, of course, that the current trend continues.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/HOU%20September%202020%20-%20South%20West%20Hertfordshire%20Local%20Housing%20Need%20Assessment.pdf>

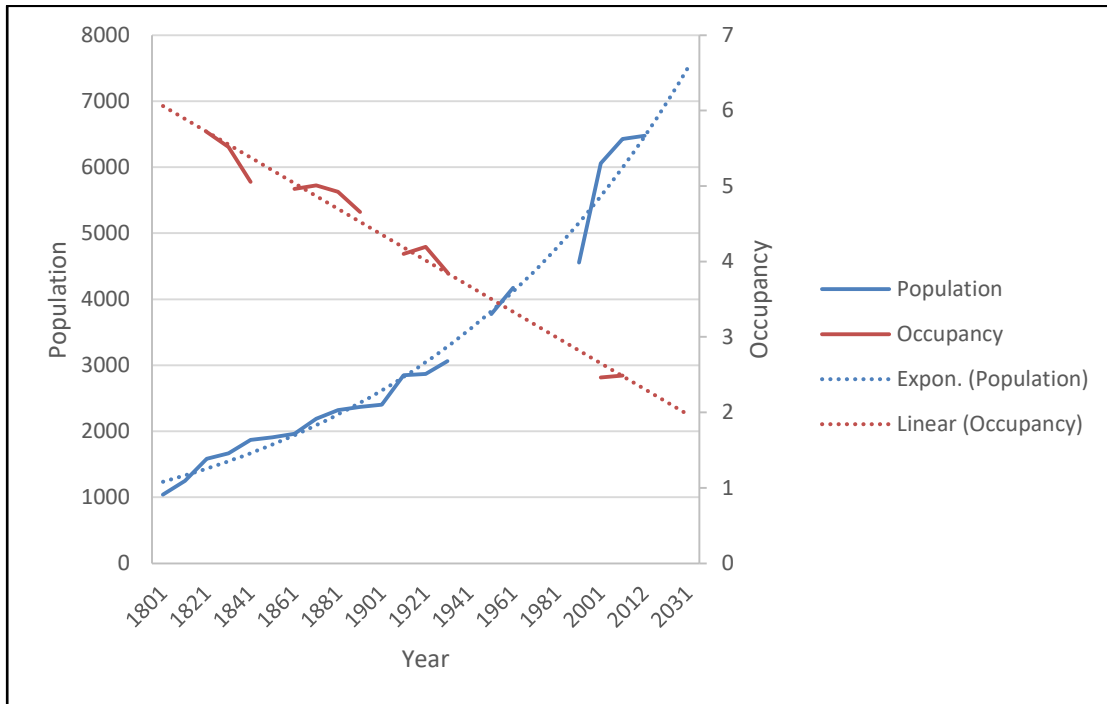


Figure 4.1 Growth of parish, in housing numbers, since 1801

- 4.7 In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, the Steering Group undertook a great deal of work to understand whether there are opportunities locally to deliver housing that would address local need while contributing to the wider district need. A local Call for Sites was issued, at which 16 sites were submitted for consideration. Each site was assessed against criteria to understand potential impacts: The Green Belt, Heritage and Archaeology, Environment, Landscape, Community Facilities, Transport and Deliverability. A detailed analysis of the Site Assessment findings is included in the Evidence Base and conclusions are set out in the Housing Report.
- 4.8 All 16 sites are located within the Green Belt. While the NPPF enables Neighbourhood Plans to modify Green Belt boundaries, this can only be achieved where a need has been established through strategic policies. The Local Plan Review 1994 does not establish this strategic need, therefore the Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate additional sites for development. Instead, an early review of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken to take into account the policies of the new Local Plan as it emerges and its implications for future housing need in the area. This will provide greater clarity about the amount of growth that the Neighbourhood Plan area will be expected to accommodate over the new SADC Local Plan period.
- 4.9 Policy W1 provides a spatial strategy for development in the parish, reinforcing the distinction between the main village and the surrounding countryside and smaller hamlets. It seeks to concentrate new development within the settlement boundary, as the most sustainable location in the parish, unless it otherwise relates to development in the countryside supported either by national or local policies.

**POLICY W1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT**

**A. Development in the Neighbourhood area will be focused within the settlement boundary as defined on the Policies Map (Section 13).**

**B. Development proposals outside the settlement boundaries will not be supported unless:**

- i. the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area; and**
- ii. it is in accordance with the St Albans District Local Plan Review and National Planning Policy Framework in respect of appropriate uses in the Green Belt; or**
- iii. where relevant, the development brings redundant or vacant historic buildings back into beneficial optimum viable re-use, which is consistent with the conservation of their significance but may require a change of use; or**
- iv. it relates to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available.**

**C. Inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt will not be approved unless the applicant is able to demonstrate the existence of very special circumstances.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO2; District Review saved policies: 1, 2; NPPF: 20, 72, 117, 118, 196

## Policy W2: Dwelling mix

- 4.10 Housing mix in terms of dwelling size is an important issue in Wheathampstead. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020) considers that much of the housing evidence has not changed since the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016), which identified dwelling size as a district-wide issue and it is no different here. As the earlier analysis has shown, Wheathampstead parish has a high proportion of older people, with 20% of the population aged 65 or older and just short of 50% aged 45 years and over. Over the Plan period, this cohort will at least have reached retirement age.
- 4.11 The current housing mix predominantly comprises detached and semi-detached homes. There is a higher than district average of four- and five-bedroom properties but a lower than average number of small dwellings, particularly one bedroom. 76% of homes are owned while the percentage of social and, in particular, private rented properties available is low.
- 4.12 As the people who raised families in these large houses continue to age, their needs will change. More detail is contained in the Wheathampstead Housing Needs Analysis document. The Wheathampstead Housing Needs Analysis document<sup>7</sup> also highlights that 57% of residents wishing to move in the next 15 years would prefer to buy on the open market while 43% would opt for renting or shared ownership.
- 4.13 Engagement with the community on these matters revealed two main requirements – firstly, housing for young people and secondly, housing for older downsizers. It is anticipated that a significant proportion of one-bedroom accommodation is likely to be for social housing. There is a higher than district average number of children living in the parish and the local community are concerned that the right sort of housing should be available locally so that they have the opportunity to live in Wheathampstead should they so wish. Equally the significant ageing population in Wheathampstead means it is vital that the needs of those of retirement age are addressed.
- 4.14 Demand for residential property to buy is high. According to Rightmove<sup>8</sup>, in 2018 most sales in Wheathampstead involved detached properties which sold for, on average, £898,871. Semi-detached properties sold for an average price of £632,809, while terraced properties fetched £390,767. This is shown in Figure 4.2. Wheathampstead, with an overall average price of £659,961 was more expensive than nearby Sandridge (£478,778) and Kimpton (£561,050), but was cheaper than Harpenden (£809,827), as shown in Figure 4.3. Between 2018 and 2019, sold prices in Wheathampstead were 18% up on the previous year and 21% up on 2015 when the average house price was £544,847.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://wheathampsteadpc.egnyte.com/fl/Lyf8GJWM9k#folder-link/NP%20docs%20-%20Feb%202020/Evidence%20Base%20Documents/Housing%20Survey>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/wheathampstead.html?soldIn=2&page=1>

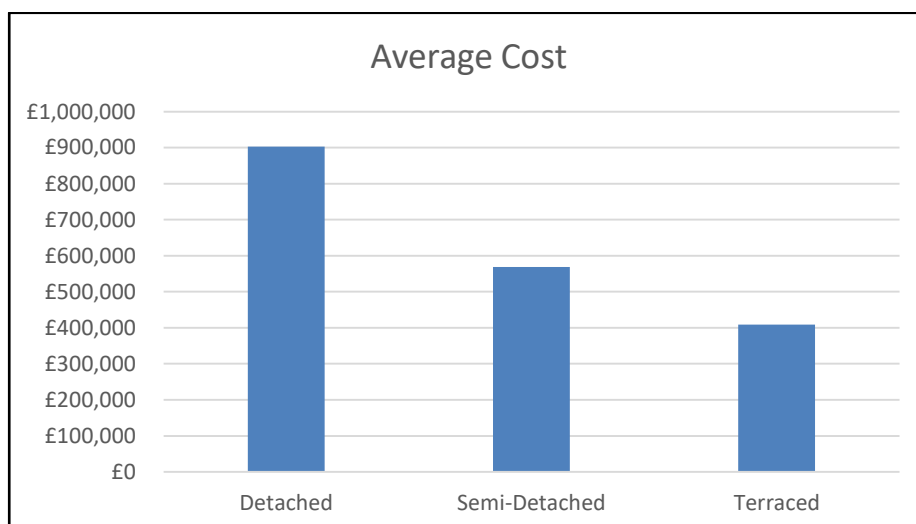


Figure 4.2: Average cost of housing in Wheathampstead parish, 2017 - 2018

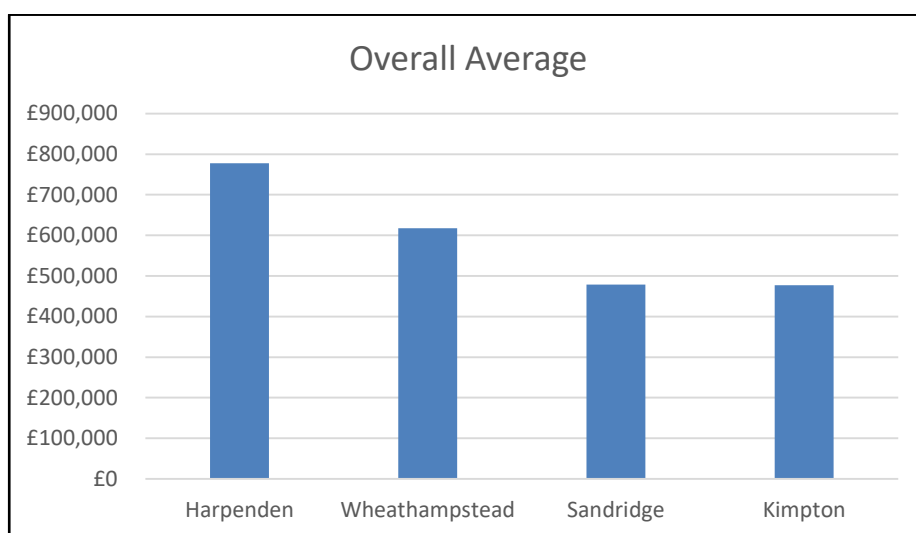


Figure 4.3: Average cost of housing in Wheathampstead compared to nearby parishes

- 4.15 The price difference between detached and semi-detached properties makes the latter significantly more affordable. Given the need to make housing more affordable, the WNP will strongly support developments comprising semi-detached and terraced housing; currently Wheathampstead has 22% detached, 30% semi-detached and 25% terraced housing in the housing stock.
- 4.16 Local estate agents reported that there was a lack of properties for sale in the area (compared with demand). Estate agents agreed with the community, noting the main demand is for smaller properties for both first-time buyers and older downsizers. The effect of the latter being unable to find smaller properties is that they remain in larger houses which would otherwise be released for purchase by families.
- 4.17 This reinforces the wider evidence from the SHMA, set out in Figure 4.4, which projects a need for 51% of all housing stock to be of 3-bedrooms, 21% 1-bedroom, 20% 2-bedrooms and just 7% 4-bedrooms or more.

Tenure	Sector	Shared	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total No.	Total %
Affordable	Social Rent	0	1,432	1,324	3,420	486	6,662	56.82
	Affordable Rent	0	208	193	498	71	970	8.27
Intermediate	Shared Ownership	0	95	87	226	32	440	3.75
Market	Private Rent	0	384	355	918	130	1,787	15.24
	Owner Occupier	0	401	371	958	136	1,865	15.91
Total no.	All sectors	0	2,520	2,329	6,020	855	11,724	100.0
Total %	All sectors		21.49	19.87	51.34	7.30	100.00	

Figure 4.4: Projected net housing needs for St Albans City & District, 2011-2031, November 2013

- 4.18 Policy W2 sets the expected housing mix for Wheathampstead, based on the premise of securing a greater number of small to medium sized homes. All new residential development should provide a quantity of affordable housing in line with the requirements contained within the St Albans District Local Plan Review or its successor. Affordable homes should be well integrated with market housing. The provision and mix of affordable units for new development must comply with the National Planning Practice Guidance on First Home, which requires 25% of all affordable housing units to comprise First Homes.


**POLICY W2: DWELLING MIX**

- A. The housing mix for development proposals must contribute to meeting the identified housing needs of Wheathampstead parish.**
- B. Developments of 10 dwellings or more should seek to provide a mix of dwelling sizes based on the following distributions:**
- 1-bed dwellings: 15-20% of all dwellings
  - 2-bed dwellings: 40-45% of all dwellings
  - 3-bed dwellings: 25-35% of all dwellings
  - 4+-bed dwellings: 5-10% of all dwellings
- C. An alternative mix of housing will only be supported where this is in line with up-to-date housing need and market demand as evidenced through the South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment, September 2020.**
- D. All affordable housing shall be first occupied by households with a local connection (see Glossary). In the event that there are no applicants satisfying this requirement, the housing shall be occupied in accordance with the City and District Council's standard allocation procedures. At least 25% of the affordable housing units must be delivered as First Homes (see Glossary definition of Affordable Housing).**
- E. Where a site is too small to secure the full required mix, development will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling sizes which maximises the potential number of dwellings on the plot, having regard to the character and design policies of this Neighbourhood Plan.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO; District Review saved policies: 5, 7A; NPPF para: 61

## 5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 5.1 The natural environment is one of the parish's greatest assets, but is potentially under threat from many directions, such as the need for additional homes, increasing traffic volumes and pollution.
- 5.2 Development should sustain and enhance the historic rural quality of the parish's landscape and make areas of rural character and historic parkland accessible to residents for their health and enjoyment.

	<p>Protecting and improving the natural environment is an important part of delivering Wheathampstead's SAFE objectives, including Accessibility and dementia-friendly aspirations.</p> <p>Fresh air and access to green space has a positive impact on physical and mental health. Protecting the natural features that are distinctive to the parish will help to encourage a sense of place among locals, helping them to feel safe and secure in their community.</p> <p>There are many well-used and cherished green spaces in the parish. Safeguarding these and delivering improved accessibility will provide spaces for people to relax, socialise or simply be with nature.</p>
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### **Policy W3: Minimising the environmental impact of development**

- 5.3 With the exception of the village itself, the parish of Wheathampstead is designated as Green Belt, as shown in Figure 5.1.
- 5.4 The South Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment<sup>9</sup> describes the different landscapes that exist in the parish. Features include mature trees, commons, parkland, hedgerows and ponds. While Wheathampstead itself sits in a valley, the wider geographic area tends to have a rather flat topography, hence landscape features are particularly visible in the wider landscape and should be retained as part of any development.
- 5.5 For Wheathampstead, the four key landscape areas are described as follows.

#### Symondshyde Ridge

- 5.6 Key features: The landscape running from the Lea Valley east of Wheathampstead and southwards to St Albans consists of extensive woodland areas on eastern slopes, small settlements and individual properties well assimilated into the landscape, large arable fields with relic hedgerows, narrow lanes (some sunken) with hedge banks and distant views to south-east, west and north. An important feature of the landscape in Wheathampstead is the massive Iron Age ditch, Devil's Dyke and the Slad. This is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, affording it protected status.
- 5.7 When managing change, it is important to:
- promote the expansion of woodland beyond ancient woodland boundaries, especially where this will help to create habitat links but not where it adversely impacts on historical assets such as Devil's Dyke;
  - maintain the peaceful qualities of the area and protect it from recreation activities that may lead to damage, over-development and anti-social activity such as fly-tipping; and
  - promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas.



<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/landscape/landscape-character-assessments/area033.pdf>

*Devil's Dyke*

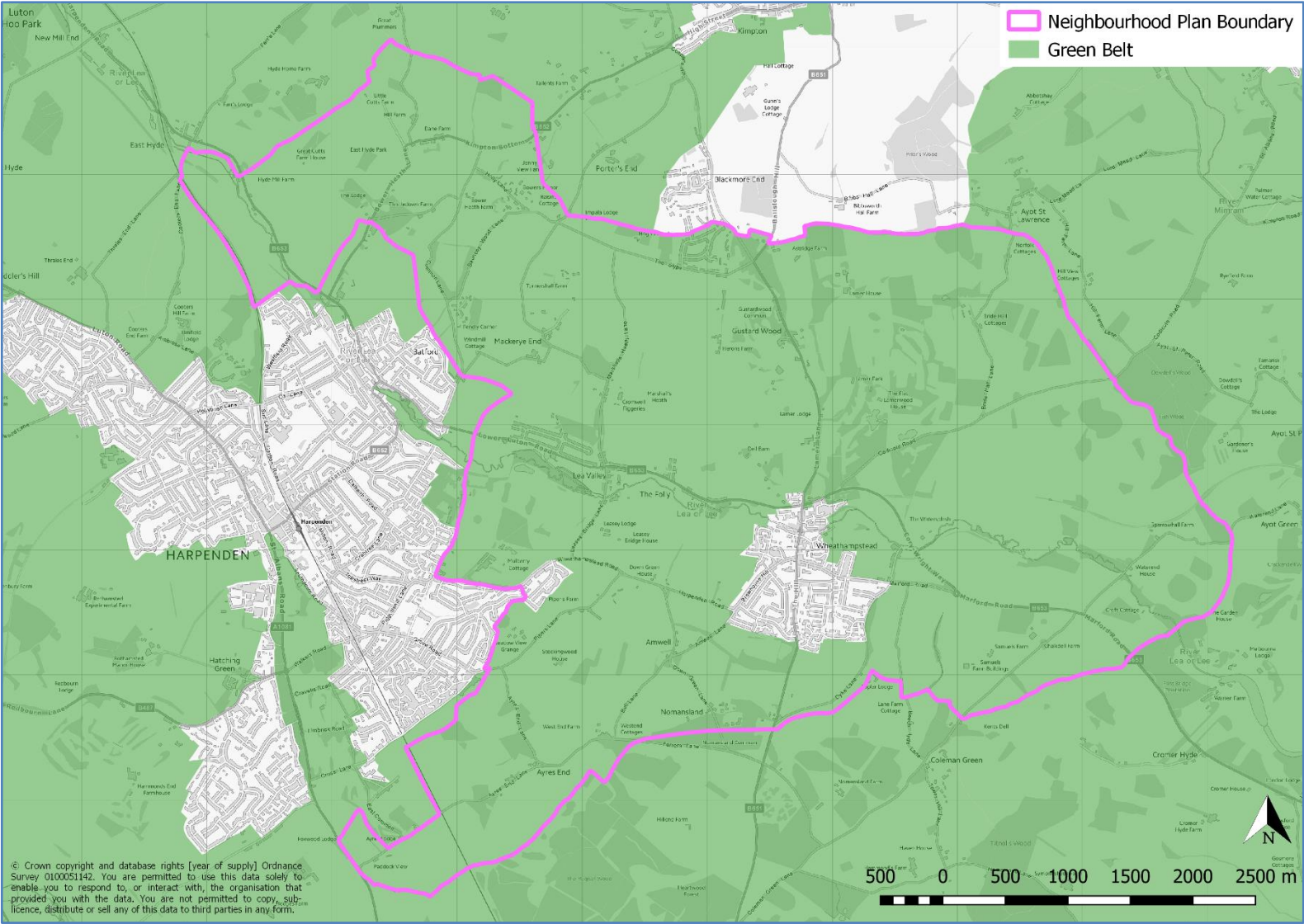


Figure 5.1. Extent of Green Belt in Wheathampstead parish

### Upper Lea Valley

5.8 Key features: This area follows the course of the River Lea between Luton Hoo in the west and Lemsford in the east. It is characterised by strong slopes to north and south, particularly west of Wheathampstead. A distinctive feature is the former Blackbridge Tip on Codicote Road. There has been both loss and dereliction of hedgerows, particularly on the slopes north west of Wheathampstead. Much of the Upper Lea Valley, north-east of Harpenden together with land around Wheathampstead and a tract between St Albans and Harpenden through to Welwyn Garden City, is currently defined as a Landscape Conservation Area.

5.9 When managing change, it is important to:

- improve the network of woods within the open arable landscape between Wheathampstead and Harpenden;
- provide a strategy for the enhanced restoration of Blackbridge Tip;
- encourage the creation of wetland landscape features such as reed beds, ponds, scrapes, alders and pollarded willows;
- promote the creation of buffer strips along watercourses, including the River Lea, to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertiliser run-off and to provide habitat for wildlife.



*Blackbridge Tip*

### Blackmore End Plateau

5.10 Key features: This area lies between Harpenden in the west, Welwyn in the east and is north of the valley of the River Lea. It encompasses the northern part of Wheathampstead parish and is characterised by linear and discrete woodlands, many ancient and scattered throughout the area, villages with strong vernacular architecture, historic houses and modest areas of parkland plus areas of regenerated common. This area contains landscapes that are very highly regarded for their distinctiveness and historical and literary associations, including the woods, fields and commons. Notables are Gustard Wood, Bower Heath, Mackerye End and Marshalls Heath.

5.11 When managing change, it is important to:

- support the continued management of Gustard Wood Common as both a golf course and an important acidic grassland.
- support the preparation of a restoration and management plan for the parkland landscapes at Mackerye End.
- protect the traditional pattern of local lanes and associated features, including hedgebanks, verges and hedges.
- promote the management of areas of acidic heath that have reverted to secondary woodland, e.g. Bower Heath.
- maintain a balance between wildlife and public access and promote local initiatives for traditional management.



*Gustard Wood Common (golf course)*

Nomansland Common

5.12 Key features: This is off the B651 between Sandridge and Wheathampstead, falling partially in the parish, popular for informal recreation, notably dog walkers, horse riders and model aircraft flyers. It is also used by Wheathampstead Cricket Club. This site is singularly distinctive and is one of the most remarked upon locations in the county. A further notable feature in this area is Heartwood Forest, which lies on either side of the B651, sandwiched between Harpenden, Wheathampstead and Sandridge. Heartwood Forest's 347-hectare (858-acre) site was once mainly agricultural land. It is the largest continuous new native forest in England, owned and managed by the Woodland Trust.



5.13 When managing change, it is important to:

- prevent the spread of and seek to remove invasive non-native species.
- improve public access and safety within existing woodlands and explore opportunities for a cycle route to connect to St Albans.
- promote the development of a strategy for recreation and associated parking on the common.
- restrict building development on or adjacent to the common.

**POLICY W3: MINIMISING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT**

**A. Development proposals should respect, maintain and, where practicable, enhance, restore or contribute to the landscape character of Wheathampstead Parish and its natural and manmade features, as described in the South Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment<sup>10</sup>.**

**B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, new development should, in the context of the landscape area:**

- i. maintain hedgerows, trees and woodland and encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows of native, disease resistant species.**
- ii. maintain wetland features including ponds and reed beds.**
- iii. promote the reintroduction and management of heathland.**
- iv. support management plans for parkland.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO9; District Review saved policies: 104, 106; NPPF para: 170, 174

**Policy W4: Conservation and enhancement of natural habitats and delivering biodiversity net gain**

5.14 The parish is home to a rich variety of natural habitats and species, many of which are of regional and national significance. This includes Hertfordshire's few remaining lowland heathlands and acid grasslands, irreplaceable ancient woodland, several veteran and mature trees and the River Lea, which has historical significance as one of the main reasons why Wheathampstead has developed where it is.

5.15 While there are no designated sites of national or international importance in the parish, there are two Local Nature Reserves, designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, (as amended)<sup>11</sup> and over fifty Local Wildlife Sites covering more than 500 acres in total. Wheathampstead Parish Council owns and/or maintains a number of open spaces including heathland, nature reserves and also part of Nomansland Common.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/landscape/landscape-character-assessments/area033.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97>

5.16 Biodiversity is not just located on the designated sites mentioned above, indeed most biodiversity is located and dependent upon non-designated sites. As a rural community, the people of Wheathampstead would not wish to see any loss of habitat or species as a result of development. The planning system should contribute to their conservation and enhancement, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that the development of all greenfield sites must demonstrate a net gain to biodiversity. If this is not possible then, as required by the NPPF, the harm caused should be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

5.17 The Open Spaces within the parish are mapped in Figure 5.2 and include:

- Wheathampstead Local Nature Reserve (Site 2 on Figure 5.2). Located just south of the village, the Parish Council leases the 27 acre site (including playing field) from Herts County Council. The open habitats include 5 acres of rough unimproved neutral grassland (which contains the notable Grass Vetchling plant), an area of ruderal habitat on imported chalky substrate and a pond/scrape area. A wide variety of plants can be found, including Bee and Spotted Orchids, Ox-eye Daisies, Black Knapweed, Heath Bedstraw, Cowslips and Ragged Robin to name a few. The flowers attract many insects including butterflies such as Small Heath, Marbled White and Common Blue, and day-flying Burnet moths with their vivid red on black spots. In turn birds are attracted to the site. Yellowhammers, Whitethroats and Long-tailed Tits can often be heard calling from the scrub, Green Woodpeckers can be seen feeding on ants and Goldfinches can be seen feeding on the teasels in winter.



- Marshalls Heath Local Nature Reserve (Site 7 on Figure 5.2). The heathland reserve has a very high biodiversity with more than 1,300 species of plants and animals having been recorded there in recent years, including more than 40 species now on national lists of threatened species. It is listed as one of only five key sites in Hertfordshire for butterflies and moths in Butterfly Conservation's Regional Action Plan for the Thames region. It is also known for its network of large anthills, habitat of the Yellow Hill Ant (*Lasius flavus*). The anthills can be seen in the image here.



- Bower Heath Local Wildlife Site (Site 3 on Figure 5.2). One of over 50 Local Wildlife Sites in the parish, the heath is a 19-acre green space owned and managed by the Parish Council. In the wooded areas, oaks and hazel predominate with some bluebells showing in the spring. The scrub consists mostly of hawthorn and bramble. There are records of healthy vegetation, bedstraws, bents and harebells in the grass, but rabbit grazing and scrub encroachment is threatening this rare habitat.





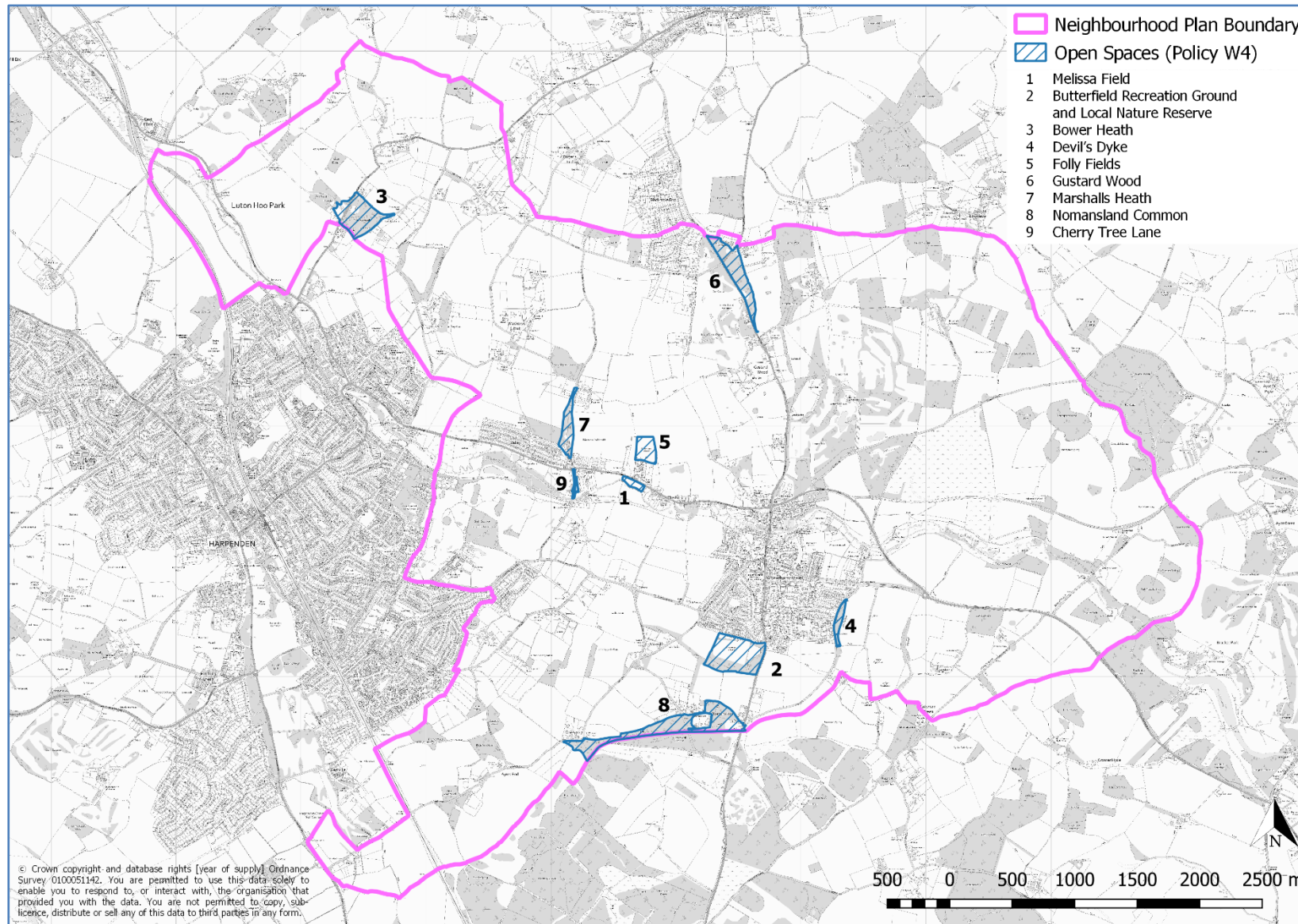


Figure 5.2: Open spaces owned and/or managed by Wheathampstead Parish Council (see, in addition: Local Green Spaces, Policy W6)

- 5.18 Policy W4 seeks to ensure that development is well-designed and fully establishes the location of habitats and the movement patterns of animals and wildlife, so that it does not negatively impact these. The creation of any habitat or species translocation should only be undertaken as a last resort when it is proven that a scheme cannot be designed to accommodate them in their existing location (including consideration of whether a reduced quantum of development would provide a solution). In order to reduce the impact of any such habitat creation or species translocation, this should be at an appropriate location as close to the existing site as possible, but not in a location that would damage existing habitats or species of value. Such locations should be identified in partnership with any appropriate wildlife body operating in the area.
- 5.19 The Defra biodiversity metric has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value, in terms of habitats, and the consequent measures required to ensure measurable net gain. Net gain involves a post-development increase in biodiversity units of 10%. Natural England and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust consider this to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering biodiversity net gain. Policy W4 sets out that ecological assessments on all habitats should be carried out by suitably qualified people using this metric to determine net gain. Ecological reports must be consistent with BS 42020 Biodiversity – code of practice for planning development.
- 5.20 If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 5.21 Planning permission should also be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, veteran trees or trees of a high conservation value located outside ancient woodland or ancient grassland, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. In this instance substantial compensation as quantified by the Defra biodiversity metric will be appropriate.

**POLICY W4: CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF NATURAL HABITATS AND DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN**

- A. Proposals for development and other land use changes are required to demonstrate that, where significant harm would result from such a development or other change, reasonable efforts have been made to avoid harm supported by a biodiversity appraisal.**
- B. This applies to harm to sites designated for their biodiversity value, e.g. Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site or Open Space (Figure 5.2), protected priority habitats and species (defined under the NERC Act 2006).**
- C. The biodiversity appraisal should demonstrate how negative impacts would be minimised and biodiversity net gain achieved, e.g. by redesigning or locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts.**
- D. The appraisal should demonstrate that where significant harm cannot be avoided, proposed development or other changes should adequately mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the harm. The appraisal must demonstrate a measurable biodiversity net gain by utilising the DEFRA biodiversity metric. Where this is not demonstrated, permission for planning or for the change should be refused, where appropriate.**
- E. The appraisal should also demonstrate that development and other changes should result in a clear and significant net gain to biodiversity of 10%. Where appropriate, net biodiversity impact should be determined by applying the DEFRA biodiversity metric (or as amended)<sup>12</sup>. Ecological compensation may be delivered on or off site.**
- F. Measures to achieve biodiversity net gain, mitigation or compensation involving the creation of habitat and/or relocation of species, must be agreed by the Local Planning Authority and must last for at least 30 years. It must include sufficient funding to support at least 10 years of post-development habitat management or land use change.**

Conformity: NP Objective SO9; District Review saved policies: 104, 106; NPPF para: 170, 171, 174, 175

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<sup>12</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>

## Policy W5: The River Lea Corridor

- 5.22 The River Lea is an important natural feature in Wheathampstead; its source is a natural spring that rises from the chalk aquifer at Leagrave in the Chiltern Hills north of Luton. It flows some 42 miles through Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and north-east London, where it becomes renamed as the Lee<sup>13</sup> Navigation, and discharges into the Thames at Bow Creek. Tributaries downstream are officially classified as chalk streams - naturally shallow, fast-flowing and high in nutrients. There are only about 200 such streams/ivers in the world, 85% of which are in England. Chalk streams support a wide range of wildlife including species such as otters, water voles, mink and kingfishers, and many species of coarse fish.
- 5.23 The River Lea enters the parish of Wheathampstead near Hyde Mill Farm on the Lower Luton Road, but the main section starts about 200 metres east of Batford Mill on the Lower Luton Road and leaves at Flint Bridge, which is also the boundary between the Ayot and Brocket estates. Riparian landowners in this stretch include private house-owners, farmers, livery stables, the Parish Council, the Verulam Angling Club and the Ayot estate.



- 5.24 The river has been managed, diverted, dredged, and controlled for hundreds of years, often with the aim of draining the surrounding marshes to create dry land for grazing and for growing crops.
- 5.25 Despite their unique characteristics, many chalk rivers are in poor condition. In fact St Albans has listed the River Lea Corridor as a feature that should be protected, bearing in mind Natural England's guidance on managing chalk rivers<sup>14</sup>. In 2014, the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, supported by the Environment Agency, launched the River Lea Catchment Partnership to work with local people, landowners, water companies, statutory bodies and others, to return the Lea where possible to a more natural form and quality to benefit wildlife. Wheathampstead Parish Council is a member of the Partnership and is working with the River Lea Catchment Partnership and local volunteers on a number of projects in the Wheathampstead area.
- 5.26 Local consultation has revealed that public access to the river corridor is very important to the community, but this must be balanced against the potential negative impacts this can bring. Policy W5 seeks to provide that balance.

<sup>13</sup> <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network/lee-navigation>

<sup>14</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5981928>

**POLICY W5: THE RIVER LEA CORRIDOR**

**Otherwise acceptable planning applications that are closely related to the River Lea Corridor environment and approaches to it<sup>15</sup> will be supported where they take advantage of opportunities to improve the River Corridor environment, including access to it, subject to suitable ecological assessment and flood risk.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO9; Core Strategy saved policies: 84, 104, 106; NPPF para: 174, 175

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<sup>15</sup> The definition of the corridor mirrors that of the Landscape Conservation Area 33 described in the South Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/landscape/landscape-character-assessments/area033.pdf>

## Policy W6: Local Green Spaces

5.27 Neighbourhood plans can designate Local Green Spaces, which are of particular importance to the local community, affording them protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF says that Local Green Spaces should only be designated:

*‘where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*

*where the green area is demonstrably special to the local community and holds particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*

*where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.’*

5.28 Wheathampstead has a deficit of 10 acres of amenity green space according to the Green Space report published by SADC<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, it is important to safeguard existing spaces, while seeking opportunities for new ones.

5.29 Policy W6 proposes the designation of the following 7 areas, mapped on Figure 5.3, considered to fulfil all the criteria of the NPPF and are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Bury Green Garden      | 5. Railway Sidings  |
| 2. Caesars Road           | 6. Station Platform |
| 3. Crinkle-Crankle Garden | 7. Long Buftlers    |
| 4. Maltings Drive         |                     |

5.30 Information about how each one meets the specific NPPF criteria is contained in Appendix B.

5.31 These Local Green Spaces are in addition to Wheathampstead’s open spaces (Figure 5.2) which do not have the same level of local designation, but which may be significant in their own right as, for example, being a Local Nature Reserve, a Local Wildlife Site or Common Land.

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<sup>16</sup> [https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP\\_GreenSpacesTechnicalReportPublicationDraft111016\\_tcm15-56020.pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP_GreenSpacesTechnicalReportPublicationDraft111016_tcm15-56020.pdf)

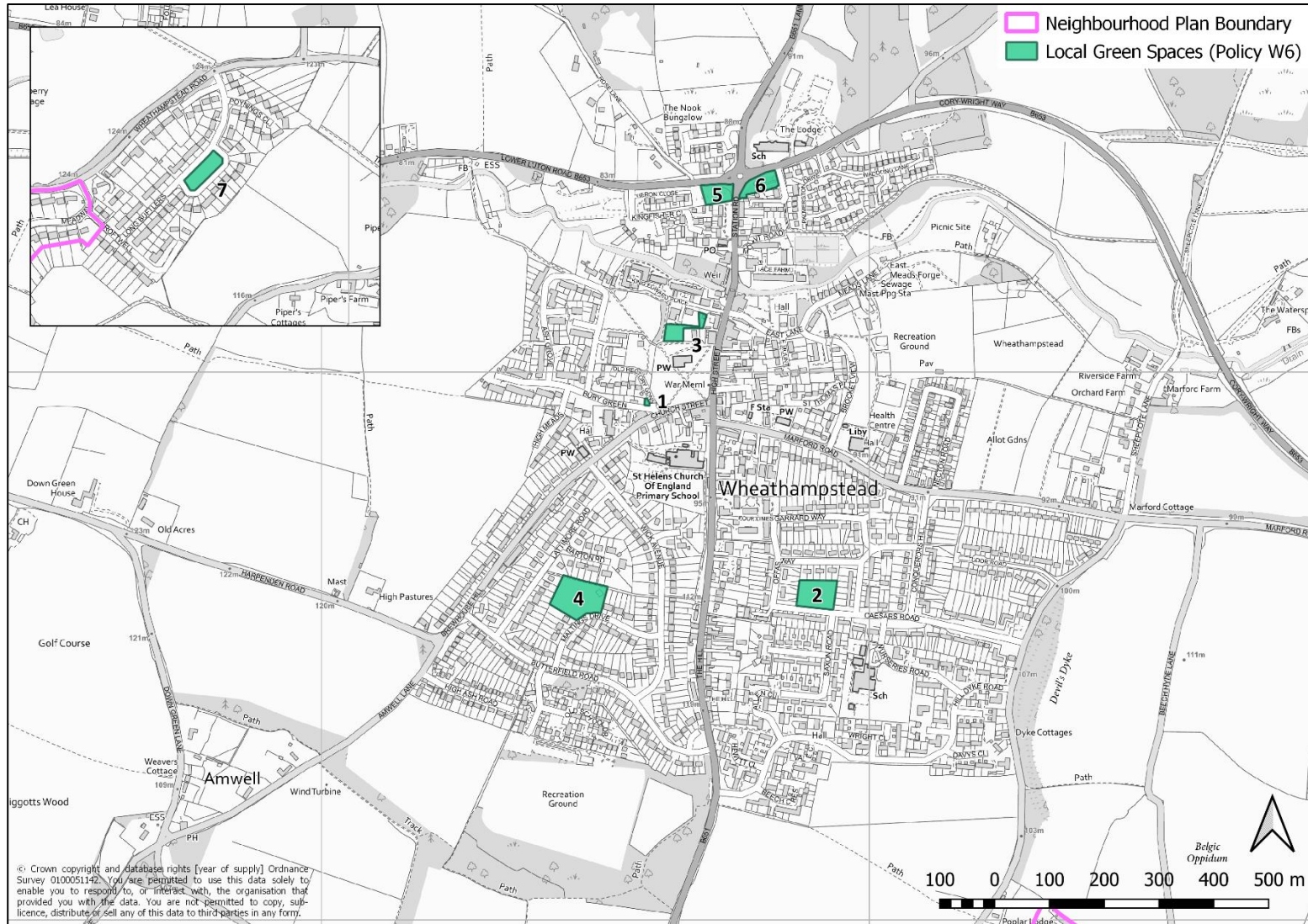


Figure 5.3. Map of Local Green Spaces

**POLICY W6: PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

**A. The following areas, as shown on the Policies Maps, are designated as Local Green Spaces.**

- 1. Bury Green Garden**
- 2. Caesars Road**
- 3. Crinkle-Crankle Garden**
- 4. Maltings Drive**
- 5. Railway Sidings**
- 6. Station Platform**
- 7. Long Buftlers**

**B. Local policy for managing development on a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts (NPPF 101); proposals for development on Local Green Spaces will not be supported unless they conform to with national policy guidelines.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO9; Core Strategy saved policies: 104; L28; NPPF para: 99, 100



## Policy W7: Locally significant views

- 5.32 As a rural parish with an historic village centre dating back to Roman times, views within the village are considered to contribute to Wheathampstead's character. Additionally, the topography of the surrounding area means that there are some significant long-distance views which define Wheathampstead and make it popular with residents and tourists alike. The River Lea and Lea Valley in particular are attractive features, which epitomise the character of the countryside in and around Wheathampstead.
- 5.33 Policy W7 seeks to ensure that proposals retain and, where possible, enhance the views considered particularly important, both from outside and within a development site.
- 5.34 The following categories of view, with specific distinctive viewpoints associated with them, have been carefully identified through the WNP engagement process. They are mapped in Figure 5.4 and further information and justification can be found in Appendix C.

St Helen's Church / Wheathampstead Conservation Area: Many of the buildings located along the High Street are Grade II listed. Views of these and St Helen's Church reflect the history of the village, show the quality of the buildings and establish the character of the village.

- View 1: South south-west from Station Platform
- View 2: North-east from Brewhouse Hill
- View 3: North-east from Lattimore Road

Village setting within the Lea Valley: Nestling in the Lea Valley, Wheathampstead village can be readily identified from outside the village by views of St Helen's Church and its steeple. Views that include the church are important as they identify Wheathampstead uniquely in this environment adding to the sense of its containment as a unique settlement.

- View 4: South-west from footpath 63
- View 5: South from footpath 57
- View 6: South south-east from top of Rose Lane

Lea Valley Landscape Character Area: Most of the Upper Lea Valley area between Hatfield and the county boundary with Bedfordshire lies in the parish and is worthy of protection.

- Views 7 and 8: North and north-east from footpath 16;
- View 9: South-east from The Folly (footpath 56);
- View 10: From Sparrowhall Farm on footpath 89 looking West South-West

5.35 Appendix C contains maps, photographs and text explaining why they are special. The *Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment*<sup>17</sup> describes the character of the views across the Upper Lea Valley.



#### **Policy W7: LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS**

**The Plan identifies ten significant local views, set out in para 5.34. As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals within the shaded arcs of the various views as shown in Appendix C, should be designed in a way that safeguards the locally-significant view or views concerned. Where an impact is unavoidable, its effects should be minimised, and mitigated where appropriate by high quality landscape design.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO9; District Review saved policies: 104; NPPF para: 124, 125, 127

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/landscape/landscape-character-assessment.aspx>

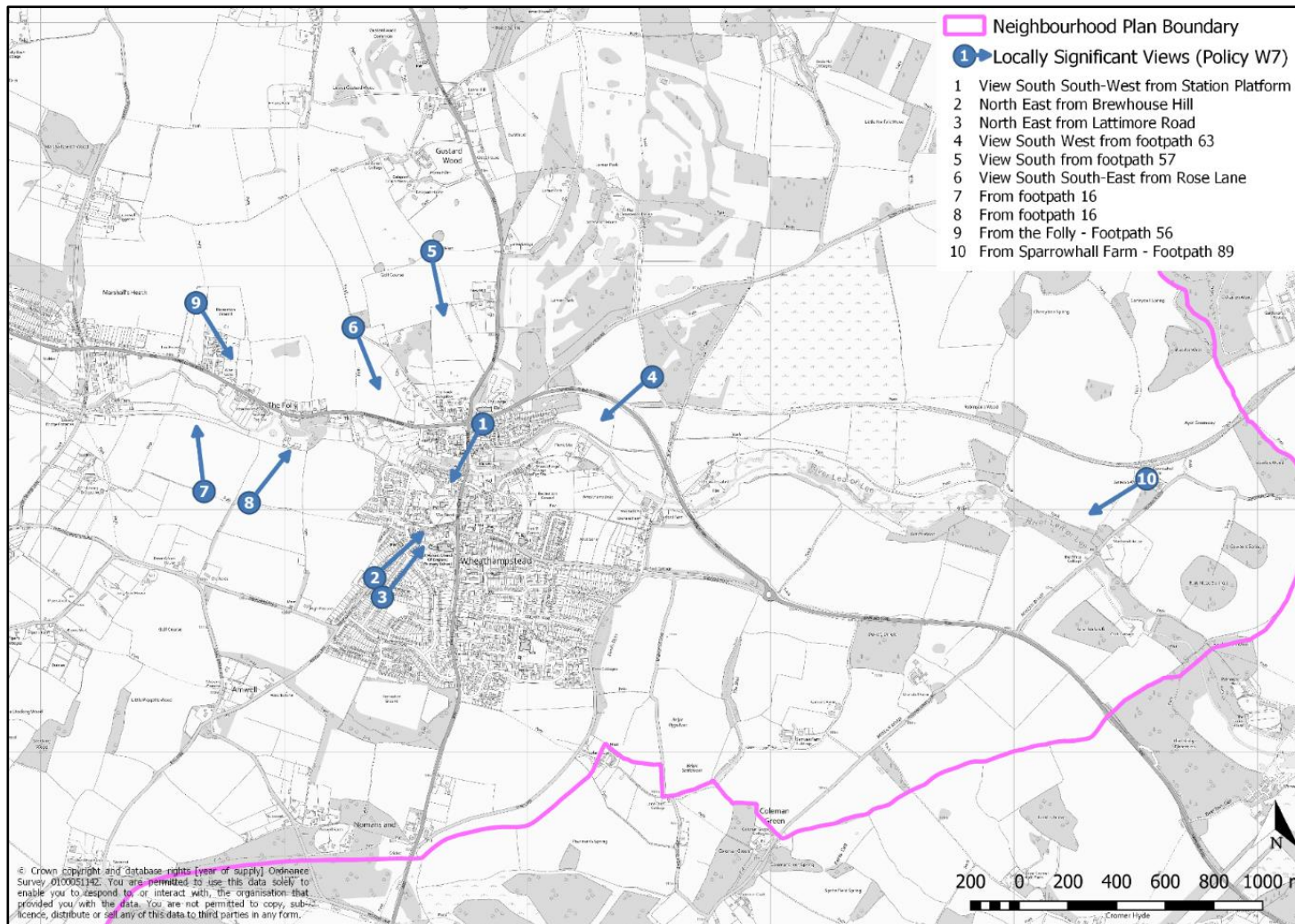


Figure 5.4. Important views in the neighbourhood area.

Additional mapping is shown in Appendix C.

## 6 CHARACTER AND CONSERVATION

6.1 Wheathampstead has a distinctive character which makes it an attractive place to live in and to visit. Much of the parish's character derives from its location in the Lea Valley, which is narrow and its sides are steep in places as it runs through the parish, The river, the focal point of village life in previous times, remains one of the principal attractions – for families, for people who want to relax by the water, for wildlife, for fishermen and for those who only have time to sneak a glance as they hurry by. The purpose of the policies in this section is to safeguard and preserve the essence of what makes Wheathampstead so special.

	<p>Visiting heritage sites is one of the activities that people with dementia most enjoy. The importance of heritage sites increases as we get older, as a place to relax, recover and engage with the environment around us.</p> <p>The policies in this section will help to protect the existing heritage features of the parish and the associated actions provide improved ways for people to access them – especially those living with dementia, wheelchairs and/or mobility aids.</p> <p>The way developments are designed impacts greatly on the way people live their lives. The Plan seeks to maximise opportunities to provide sustainable design features and encourage development to connect with walking and cycling routes. This includes encouraging charging points for electric vehicles (including mobility scooters) and incorporating recycling facilities and storage into new build.</p>
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### Policy W8: Character of development

6.2 There are many heritage assets, including archaeological remains, in the parish, which collectively contribute greatly to the character of the village and wider area. The majority of the oldest buildings are in the valley but, over the years, development has slowly crept up the valley sides and Wheathampstead now has buildings that represent several centuries of development.




6.3 There are five Conservation Areas in the parish, described in Figure 6.1, with mapping included in Appendix D:

- Wheathampstead Village Centre
- the hilltop village of Gustard Wood, including Lower Gustard Wood
- the hamlet of Amwell
- the hamlet of Mackerye End, which includes the Grade 1 listed Mackerye End House

- Waterend, a small rural hamlet, which lies to the north-east of St Albans and 1¾ miles east of Wheathampstead

**Figure 6.1. Detail of designated Conservation Areas**

Location and description	Photographs
<p><b>Wheathampstead village centre Conservation Area</b></p> <p>The centre contains examples of buildings dating from various periods. Apart from infills constructed in the last 100 years, a variety of traditional building materials have been used. The cohesive appearance of the centre derives mainly from its location stretching up the northern and more especially the southern side of the Lea valley. With its prominent church, a variety of small businesses and the Old Mill over the river, it retains its strong village atmosphere.</p>	
<p><b>Gustard Wood Conservation Area</b></p> <p>Cottages are arranged around a large open green space.</p>	
<p><b>Lower Gustard Wood (part of Gustard Wood Conservation area)</b></p> <p>Traditional cottages line the road as it rises up the hill, creating a distinct community.</p>	

<p><b>Amwell Conservation Area</b></p> <p>The hamlet of Amwell is characterised by several traditional cottages, some of which are shielded from the road by tall hedges.</p>	
<p><b>Mackerye End Conservation Area</b></p> <p>A hamlet that grew around and served the Grade 1 listed Mackerye End House.</p>	
<p><b>Waterend Conservation Area</b></p> <p>A small rural hamlet situated in a low hollow at a crossing point of the River Lea, including the Jacobean Waterend House.</p>	

6.4 In addition to the designated Conservation Areas, the parish includes five other areas that have a distinctive appearance and are considered Local Character Areas, making a significant contribution to the heritage of the parish. Described in Figure 6.2 and with maps in Appendix D, these are:

- the historic areas known as (1) The Folly; and (2) Leasey Bridge;
- individual streets and clusters of streets with their own distinctive characters: as (3) Conquerors Hill and Caesar’s Road; (4) New Marford (Necton Road); and (5) Old Marford (Sheepcote Lane)

6.5 New Marford (Necton Road), Old Marford (Sheepcote Lane), and Conquerors Hill and Caesar’s Road are considered to meet the criteria for non-designated heritage assets as “places having a degree of heritage significance, meriting considerations in planning decisions because they are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations<sup>18</sup>”. The other two Local Character Areas, whilst not considered non-designated heritage assets in themselves, do contain numerous such assets, as set out in Appendix E.

Location and description	Photographs
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<sup>18</sup> in accordance with para 197 of the NPPF

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)) and Planning Guidance (039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>)

**(1) The Folly**

A visitor standing in the car park at the top of Folly Fields could be forgiven for imagining that the narrow road between the cottages leads down to the sea, for this delightful hamlet outside Wheathampstead is reminiscent of a fishing village. Small communities like Folly Fields, with its intriguing history, are rapidly disappearing but this community retains a positive identity and includes residents of all ages in a network of friendliness and mutual support.



**(2) Leasey Bridge**

Small settlement around cross roads of Cherry Tree Lane/Marshalls Heath Lane with Lower Luton Road, centred on The former “Cherry Tree”, public house, currently a restaurant. Also a small group of buildings around the C19th level crossing of the former railway.



**(3) Conquerors Hill and Caesar’s Road**

A post-war development designed on “Garden Suburb” principles, comprising linked pairs of houses with low eaves and upper rooms within the roof. They are generously set back along the road with wide grass verges and trees.



<p><b>(4) New Marford (Necton Road)</b></p> <p>This late Victorian development close to the village centre has, despite more recent infills, retained its feel and scale. The original buildings are a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses of cream Gault and Luton Grey brickwork with slate roofs and a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses which would seem to point to an unusual mix of different social classes represented by the original occupants.</p>	
<p><b>(5) Old Marford (Sheepcote Lane)</b></p> <p>A distinct hamlet some 500m from the centre of Wheathampstead, strung out along Sheepcote Lane down into the valley and fording the river, where it becomes a track which rises from the other side. Marford Farm, just South of the ford, is a small farmstead. Although the buildings have been much altered in the C20th, the courtyard form remains roughly the same as in the 1897 OS map and would date further back, although only the timber-framed “barn” at the roadside shows definite evidence of pre-1800 form.</p>	

Figure 6.2. Detail of Local Character Areas

6.6 In addition to the Conservation and Local Character Areas, there are 119 individually listed buildings in the parish of Wheathampstead, many of which are within the Wheathampstead Village Centre Conservation Area. Listed buildings are buildings or structures which are of national ‘special architectural or historic interest’. Listed buildings are designated nationally and are protected under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It is important that development preserves or enhances the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area where appropriate.





- 6.7 There are also buildings or structures of character that are of importance to the local historic context but may not be of such significance that they meet the strict criteria for inclusion in the statutory “List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest” compiled by Government. Such buildings and structures could be included in a Local List<sup>19</sup> held by St Albans District Council. The demolition of buildings that contribute to the heritage of the parish should be avoided wherever possible. If such buildings are accidentally damaged or destroyed, for example by fire, they should so far as is practicable be repaired or rebuilt to the same design and using the same materials as before. An example of this in Wheathampstead was the fire at The Swan; the Grade II building was rebuilt to the same design as before the fire.
- 6.8 Policy W8 seeks to ensure that development proposals take account of the particulars of the various Conservation and Local Character Areas, which will assist significantly in delivering the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. It also highlights three specific matters which development proposals should address. This includes extending protection to heritage assets of local importance that are not currently listed, either nationally or locally, by identifying them as non-designated heritage assets, details of which are included in Appendix E. The lists have been compiled using local knowledge and with reference to the Historic Environment Record for Wheathampstead. There will be a strong presumption against the loss of the buildings and monuments appearing on the list and developments which result in this will be refused. Finally, it supports the principles set out in The Building in Context Toolkit<sup>20</sup>, to encourage high quality design in historically sensitive locations.

#### **POLICY W8: CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT**

- A. Development should preserve or enhance the Conservation Area or Local Character Area (as shown on the Policies Map) in which it is located. The design of new development should take account of the local context and reflect the character and vernacular of the area, using architectural variety in form and materials, to avoid building design that is inappropriate to the area. Innovation in design will be supported where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form in a Conservation or Local Character Area.**
- B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should address the following criteria:**
- i. They should make a positive contribution to the visual impact of the main**

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/locally-listed-buildings>

<sup>20</sup> [Introduction to Building in Context | Building In Context \(building-in-context.org\)](#)

**highway approaches into the village and Conservation and Local Character Areas.**

- ii. **Proposals and/or applications for development in a Conservation or Character Area should include a Heritage Statement, including reference to the local history and archaeology, showing how heritage assets (including the identified non-designated heritage assets set out in Appendices D and E) will be respected and protected. Proposals should demonstrate how they will preserve or enhance any affected heritage assets including historic sites and landscapes.**
- iii. **There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation of any structure listed in Appendix E and/or Hertfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER)<sup>21</sup>.**

**C. Development proposals should illustrate how the development complies with the eight Building in Context principles as developed by Historic England, CABE and the Kent Architecture Centre ([www.building-in-context.org](http://www.building-in-context.org)).**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO4; District Review saved policies: 85, 86, 87; NPPF: 125, 127, 185, 190

## **Policy W9: High quality design of development**

- 6.9 Throughout the engagement on the Plan, the community has stressed the need for new development – housing or commercial, including extensions to existing properties – to be of a high quality that respects the character and rural feel of the parish and is in keeping with its immediate surroundings.
- 6.10 The guide Building for a Healthy Life 2020<sup>22</sup> is the Government-endorsed industry standard for the design of new housing developments. Building for a Healthy Life is a tool for assessing the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods. Its criteria also link to other standards for housing design, including the Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) standards<sup>23</sup> and Secured by Design<sup>24</sup>. It provides a framework that stakeholders should use for development along with other policies contained within this plan for the neighbourhood area to achieve the industry standard's 'Building for a Healthy Life' commendation.
- 6.11 In particular, the engagement revealed a series of factors felt to be important to incorporate into any future design. The following principles were specifically felt to be important to incorporate into any future housing design:
- **Sympathetic to the rural character** - The rural character of the parish should be protected and any new build should be in keeping with its surroundings
  - **Sympathetic to the built heritage** - New developments within, or located in the setting of, designated heritage assets, should be compatible with existing

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=95&id=4762>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.designforhomes.org/project/building-for-life/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-quality-indicators>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.securedbydesign.com/>

architectural styles and materials ensuring that new build sits comfortably alongside existing developments. Some of these styles are illustrated in Figure 6.3.

- **Use of typical local materials** - Materials used in construction should reflect the existing built environment. The historic houses and cottages of the parish are built predominantly from local materials. The use of local building material has given a distinctive character to many of the buildings across the parish. Figure 6.3 shows examples of the use of local materials located within the Wheathampstead village core.
- **Use of green space within developments** – It is important to create a greener, softer look and feel to new housing developments and create habitats for local wildlife while providing a natural and sustainable drainage system. This can be achieved, for example, through front gardens, green spaces between developments, trees and shrubs in roadside verges.
- **Car parking** - Sufficient off-road car, small vehicle and cycle parking of permeable construction should be provided for residents, visitors and service vehicles. Roads should be sufficiently wide to allow free access of HGVs and emergency vehicles alongside roadside parking. Car parking should comply with Hertfordshire County Council's design standards, except where there is conflict with the preservation/enhancement of the historic environment, where a balance would be appropriate.
- **Well-connected developments** - Developments should include linkages to existing footpath and cycleway networks where available. They should not create such additional traffic as to impact negatively on road safety and where any significant impacts arise from the development in terms of capacity and congestion, these are mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Exposed timber framed construction (with brick or plaster infill)

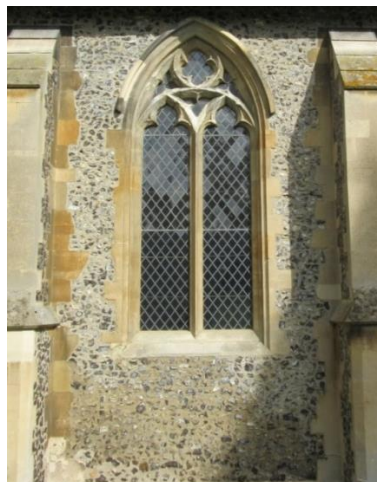


e.g. Wheathampstead Place



e.g. 8 – 10 High Street

Flint



e.g. St Helen's Church

Local red brick



e.g. 1, Church Street

Yellow gault brick



e.g. 20, Lower Luton Road

Yellow stock brick



e.g. houses in Station Road

Luton grey brick



e.g. Wheathampstead Mill

*Figure 6.3 Examples of the use of local building materials*

- 6.12 Policy W9 sets out a comprehensive approach to design, setting out specific guidelines for new development proposals, and will assist significantly in bringing forward well-designed and positive development.
- 6.13 In general development should have regard to the government's best practice advice for road and street design, Manual for Streets 1 and 2<sup>25</sup> and Historic England's 'Streets for All'<sup>26</sup>. Exceptions may be within conservation areas and Local Character Areas, where off-street parking can contribute to reduce enclosure and result in paving over existing frontages to the detriment of the street picture.
- 6.14 The policy has a close relationship with both Policies W8 (Character of Development) and W10 (Incorporating Sustainable Design Features) of this Plan. Where it is appropriate to do so developments should take account of each of the policies.

**POLICY W9: HIGH QUALITY DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT**

<sup>25</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/>

**Development should incorporate a high quality of design, which responds to and integrates well with its surroundings, meets the changing needs of residents and minimises the impact on the local environment. Development proposals should demonstrate how they have sought to address the following matters, subject to their scale, nature and location:**

- i. How the development is guided by the principles of Building for a Healthy Life<sup>27</sup> unless alternative principles would result in a higher quality of design. Development proposals are encouraged to achieve the Building for a Healthy Life commendation.**
- ii. How the development is in keeping with the scale and existing character of buildings and layout in the area.**
- iii. How the development incorporates/responds to the local distinctiveness of its immediate surroundings, including the use of traditional building materials which are used in nearby existing buildings.**
- iv. Where the development provides landscaping, this complements and enhances the characteristics of the surrounding area using locally distinctive species rather than ornamentals.**
- v. The provision of adequate off-street car parking for residents and visitors, in accordance with those parking standards applied by the Local Planning Authority at the time of application - except where there is conflict with the preservation/enhancement of the historic environment, where a balanced approach should be taken - and that it is of permeable construction so as to minimise run off during heavy rain.**
- vi. Avoiding an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring uses through the loss of privacy or loss of light.**
- vii. Ensuring that the development does not, because of traffic generation and parking, adversely affect road and pedestrian safety.**
- viii. Providing pedestrian and cycle connections to:**
  - a. the main services and transport nodes within the Parish;**
  - b. the surrounding countryside.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO3, SO4, SO5; District Review saved policies: 69 – 73; NPPF: 124, 125, 126, 127, 149

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.designforhomes.org/project/building-for-life/>

## **Policy W10: Incorporating sustainable design features**

- 6.15 The local engagement revealed strong support for development that incorporates sustainable design features that serve a practical purpose. This is also an important factor of the ambition of being a SAFE community. Particular support was extended to energy efficiency in building design and materials. In addition, there should be sufficient storage, appropriately placed, for waste-recycling containers.
- 6.16 Policy W10 encourages high standards of energy efficiency and design. The use of renewable energy in developments is important. Energy will be considered renewable if it is generated from ground or air source heat pumps, hydro-electricity, fuel cells, solar photovoltaic cells or solar water heating. Energy from sources that consume or combust fossil fuels, including but not limited to biofuel, biomass burning, combined heat and power plants (other than those using fuel cells), diesel generators and gas boilers, will not be considered to be renewable energy because of their contribution to air pollution. On-site diesel generators will be permitted for use only in genuine and exceptional emergency situations. The incorporation of sustainable design features requires a sensitive approach in relation to heritage assets and in the case of change of use in any building or structure referred to in Policy W8 paragraph (iii).
- 6.17 Support will be given to developments that use renewable energy and are led by or meet the needs of local communities. When considering such proposals, regard will be given to the wider benefits of providing energy from renewable sources as well as the potential benefits for the environment or public health.

### **POLICY W10: INCORPORATING SUSTAINABLE DESIGN FEATURES**

**A. Proposals which incorporate design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption and climate effects will be supported. In particular, proposals which incorporate the following sustainable design features as appropriate to their scale, nature and location will be particularly supported:**

- i. deliver high energy efficiency and low running costs;**
- ii. use energy from renewable, low-carbon resources;**
- iii. incorporate solar panels, provided that this can be done in a way that is respectful of the character and appearance of the surrounding area;**
- iv. facilitate the efficient use of water (e.g. through collecting rainwater for domestic use, and grey water usage);**
- v. meet sustainable drainage system requirements to address surface water and run-off issues and identify clear arrangements for long term maintenance to secure effective protection from flooding;**
- vi. provide adequate storage for bins and recycling without detriment to the appearance of the development and the surrounding area;**



- vii. **provide adequate covered storage for bicycles and other small vehicles such as mobility scooters, powered 2-wheelers, etc. without detriment to the appearance of the development and the surrounding area; and**
  - viii. **provide, or is easily capable of providing, charging points for electric vehicles including cars, bikes and mobility scooters.**
- B. Alterations to existing buildings, including the sensitive retrofitting of historic buildings, should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with current sustainable design and construction standards<sup>28</sup>.**
- C. To preserve the energy invested in existing structures, their demolition should be avoided unless there are arguments preventing their incorporation into any new design or redevelopment.**
- D. Development proposals must address the environmental impact of removing and disposal of demolition and other materials through a Site Waste Management Plan.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO5, SO7; District Review saved policies: 70, 75; NPPF: 149, 150, 151

## **Policy W11: Attractive village street scene**

6.18 Alongside its residential properties, Wheathampstead provides a thriving village centre comprising shops, restaurants, public houses and offices. This attracts a range of users and it is important that the street scene complements the character of the village while providing sufficient space to accommodate its users. A number of factors were raised in the local engagement that were felt to detract from the aim of providing an attractive street scene.

- The fascias on shops and similar premises (such as offices operating from premises with shop-fronts, restaurants and public houses) are a very noticeable and often memorable feature of a village such as Wheathampstead. It is

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<sup>28</sup> For Residential developments:

- i. Energy efficiency: 19% carbon dioxide reduction improvement against Part L (2013)<sup>1</sup> through the energy efficiency of the building and;
- ii. Water: Total mains consumption of no more than 110 litres per person per day<sup>2</sup>.

For Non-residential and Multi-residential<sup>3</sup>:

Major: Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This standard is equivalent to CO2 emissions allowed under Ene 1 of the former Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4

<sup>2</sup>The optional enhanced national standard is defined within the 2015 Approved Document G, Building Regulations 'Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency', March 2015, pp.15 G2(3)

<sup>3</sup> Multi-Residential as defined by the Building Research Establishment (BRE). These developments can include: student halls of residence; key worker accommodation; care homes; sheltered housing; and other multiresidential

buildings that have communal areas making up more than 10% of the total net internal floor area

<sup>4</sup> Major non-residential development is defined as Development over 1,000 sq/m; or development on a site of 0.5ha or more. Major residential is defined as Development of 10 houses or more; or development on a site of 0.5ha or more

imperative that they convey a look and feel in keeping with a village, and they should be distinctive in a way that makes Wheathampstead feel unique and the kind of place that residents will choose to shop in and that visitors will want to return to.

- Pavements and roads are an integral feature of the street scene. Wherever possible they should be constructed using durable materials and have an appearance that enhances the character of the area. If a pavement or road that enhances the character of the area is necessarily or accidentally damaged as a result of any works to the fabric of the street, or to utilities below the street, or to property nearby, the damage must be made good using the same materials as before. This does not always happen at present – see Figure 6.4.
- Bins can be unsightly, and some High Street premises have inadequate space for bin/waste storage – see Figure 6.5.
- Inadequate off-street parking clutters streets, can be unsightly and creates obstruction, unnecessary congestion and dangers for road users.



*Figure 6.4. Examples in Wheathampstead High Street of poor repairs following works involving the pavement*



*Figure 6.5. Examples of bins spoiling an otherwise attractive street scene in the centre of Wheathampstead*

6.19 Policy W11 support for proposals which would enhance public realm and pedestrian movement in the village centre. It specifies that any such proposals should not have a detrimental impact on heritage assets.

**POLICY W11: ATTRACTIVE VILLAGE STREET SCENE**

- A. Signage:** Development proposals for new shopfronts, signage and/or lighting to commercial premises should be of a high-quality design and demonstrate that they would preserve or enhance the character of the shopping frontage and, where relevant, the Conservation Area within which located. In order to achieve this, proposals will only be supported where they are compliant with the guidelines contained in the SADC Guide to Shopfront and Advertisement Design<sup>29</sup> and the more locally specific Design Statement: Signage in the Parish of Wheathampstead (sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3) included in Appendix G.
- B. Roads and pavements:** Development proposals that use enduring and sustainable materials in the construction of roads and pavements, and incorporate an attractive finish will be strongly supported. Where appropriate, development should follow Historic England's Streets for All<sup>30</sup> advice.
- C. Waste collection:** Development proposals that provide dedicated non-recyclable and recyclable waste collection solutions to serve multiple commercial premises and residential households will be strongly supported. Such provision should ensure that it does not reduce pedestrian amenity or space on pavements and should be of a design, colour, material and scale that is in keeping with the character of the local area.
- D. Off-street parking:** Development proposals that provide adequate off-street car parking for residents and visitors, in accordance with those parking standards applied by the Local Planning Authority at the time of application will be supported.

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO6, SO7; District Review saved policies: 39, 78; NPPF: 124, 125, 126, 127

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<sup>29</sup>

<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Shopfronts%20and%20Advertisements%20Leaflet.pdf>


<sup>30</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/>

## 7 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

7.1 Traffic and transport concerns were raised consistently during local engagement. Movement that take place in the parish can be classed as ‘strategic’ and ‘local’.

- **Strategic movement:** Wheathampstead is situated roughly halfway between the A1 and the M1, and any traffic travelling between the two, including to and from Harpenden, must cross the village centre via the B653 or Marford Road. The north-south routes also converge at the High Street, the B651, adding to traffic here. Strategic developments in the parishes and settlements surrounding Wheathampstead will inevitably add to the volume of traffic passing through the village centre. Local people have raised concerns about this including traffic congestion, speeding, and larger vehicles and HGVs travelling through the historic core of the village resulting in noise, dust and damage to pavements and buildings.
- **Local movement:** This is principally movement within the village and parish itself, for instance to key locations within the parish such as the school, the station platform, the village hall, local shops and recreational spaces. It includes people accessing community infrastructure and leisure activities – including dog walking. As well as accessing facilities within the parish, this includes locals accessing facilities just beyond the parish.

7.2 Most of the strategic movement, and proposals to address it, lie outside the remit of a Neighbourhood Plan and it is difficult to influence it using planning policies. Nevertheless there are potentially ways to tackle the problems, but this would require both further research – for instance on traffic origins and flows – as well as liaison with both Hertfordshire County Council and Highways England. Section 12 of this report includes such actions. Local movement however is an issue that the Neighbourhood Plan can certainly address and is the focus of the policies in this section.

	<p>The Plan seeks to encourage sustainable methods of transport where possible, for journeys within the parish and to neighbouring towns and villages. This will have a beneficial impact on the environment and wellbeing of the community.</p> <p>There is a desire locally to ensure that routes are accessible to all users. In particular, Wheathampstead’s ambition of being a dementia-friendly parish will include developing a set of key routes within the parish that are appropriately waymarked.</p> <p>It will be important to work with public transport providers to encourage them to improve their accessibility for all users.</p>
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### Planning for sustainable travel

7.3 Being a largely rural parish inevitably impacts on the mode of transport that people choose to use. Recent trends in motoring have seen a move towards the use of large

4x4 vehicles and with increased road usage this leads to congestion, delays and sometimes gridlock. Add to this the high percentage of single-occupancy vehicles means that these problems are likely to become much worse in future. Our choices of transport can and do affect the environment and the list illustrates a simple hierarchy of choices:

- Walking is better than...
- Cycling is better than...
- Electric bicycle (pedelec) is better than...
- Minibus is better than...
- Bus is better than...
- Motorcycle is better than...
- Small EV/Hybrid is better than...
- Large EV/Hybrid is better than...
- Small car is better than...
- Large car is better than...
- Large 4x4.

7.4 Clearly walking is not appropriate in all cases. However, if each journey can be nudged up this hierarchy then this will bring many benefits to the community and the individual. Incentives are needed to encourage people further up this list and the policies and associated actions in the Neighbourhood Plan are aimed at providing these incentives.

## **Policy W12: Improving walking and cycling in the parish**

- 7.5 The NPPF (para 102) states that “*Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that...opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.*”
- 7.6 For Wheathampstead, the benefits of investing in walking and cycling include:
- providing genuine alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing key shops and services, such as the GP surgery and local schools;
  - providing health benefits through increased walking and cycling;
  - facilitating less congestion at busy times by promoting local journeys to be taken by means other than the car, for instance encouraging children to walk to and from school and local people to walk to the shops or recreational facilities;
  - providing a safer environment for the community, including for vulnerable users.
- 7.7 For local journeys, many residents reported that they would be prepared to move to an alternative form of transport (walking, cycling or bus) if there were safe routes and more options available. Horse riding is also popular locally. The development and upkeep of safe pedestrian and cycle routes is therefore an important factor for the future of Wheathampstead, as well as providing and promoting routes that are fully accessible, for instance to mobility scooters.
- 7.8 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has analysed the main footpaths and cycleways within the parish, to understand where these are in relation to the key facilities and amenities both within the parish and beyond, and also their relative quality. From this, a series of “Primary Local Access Routes” have been identified that enable access on foot, and where possible bicycle, to these key areas. These are shown in Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3, and described in more detail below. It is vital that these Primary Local Access Routes are improved and that access to them from any new housing developments is provided. This will encourage more intra-parish, local trips to be taken using non-car, sustainable methods. Further action on the walkway routes is included in the table of Non-Policy Actions in Section 12.

### Primary Local Access Routes

- 7.9 Figure 7.1 shows primary local walking routes to and from major settlements around the village. Routes make use of open footpaths rather than footways (i.e. pavements) and are less suitable for use in the winter when the ground is soft. Upgrading these footpaths to keep them more accessible in the winter months is desirable.

### Routes Accessible to Wheelchairs and Mobility Scooters

- 7.10 Upgrading walking routes so they are readily accessible by wheelchair users is desirable. Figure 7.2 shows two routes:
- *Route A* illustrates a now largely completed, accessible route suitable for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. It is typical of those we need to start from the village centre.

- *Route B* illustrates a longer route for wheelchairs and mobility scooters that requires additional work to make it useable. They will allow users to have access to open countryside. Loop B is approximately 3.7 miles in length and could be extended to Ayot Green providing access to a pub and restaurant providing a slightly longer route of 3.8 miles one way.

### Proposed Cycleway Linkages

7.11 Wheathampstead has been neglected in terms of connections with cycle routes as can be clearly seen in Figure 7.3 where existing routes are highlighted in orange and, apart from two, terminate well short of the village. Section 106 and/or CIL funding will be sought to improve off-road cycle routes linking up with the existing Hertfordshire network.

#### **Key to Figure 7.1 overleaf:**

- 1 Gustard Wood to Batford
- 2 Wheathampstead to Gustard Wood via Rose Lane
- 3 Wheathampstead to Gustard Wood via New Mill
- 4 Wheathampstead to Ayot St Lawrence
- 5 Wheathampstead to Welwyn Garden via Ayot Greenway
- 6 Wheathampstead to Welwyn Garden via Brocket Hall
- 7 Wheathampstead to Coleman Green
- 8 Wheathampstead to St Albans via Sandridge
- 9 Wheathampstead to Nomansland Common
- 10 Wheathampstead to Harpenden via Amwell
- 11 Wheathampstead to Harpenden via Leasey Bridge
- 12 Wheathampstead to Lea Valley Estate via B653 and Newbridge

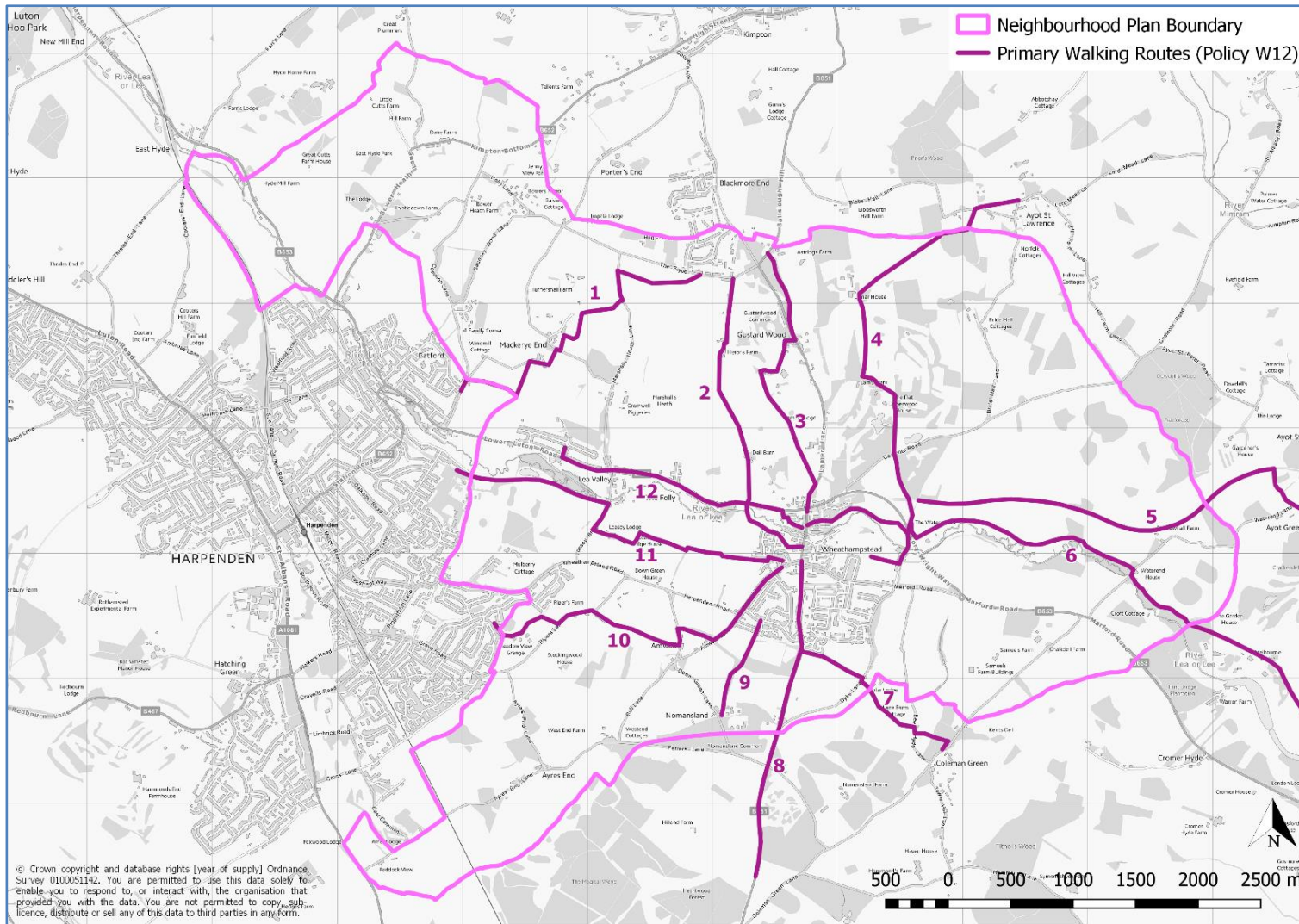


Figure 7.1: Primary Walking Routes



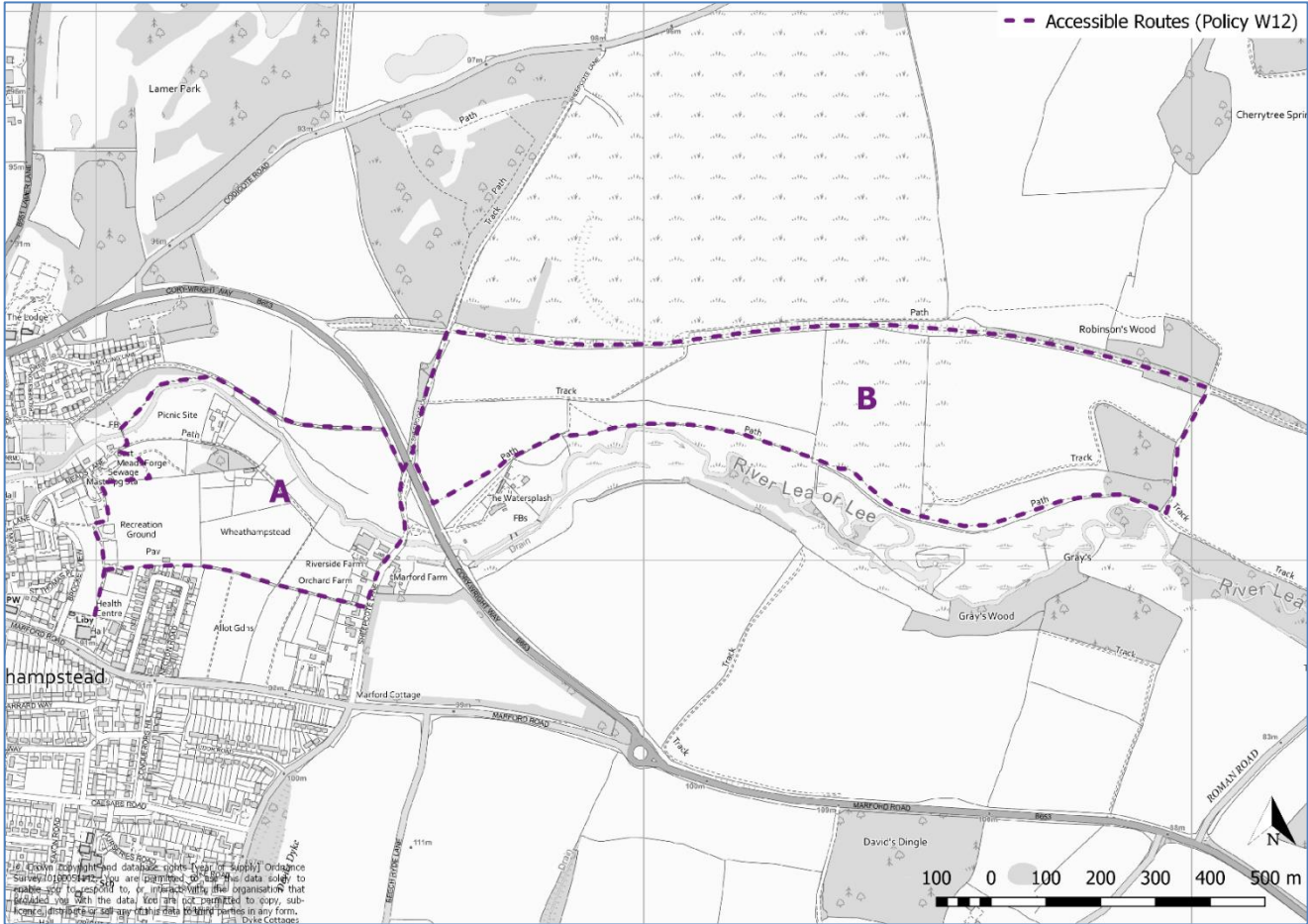


Figure 7.2. Accessible routes

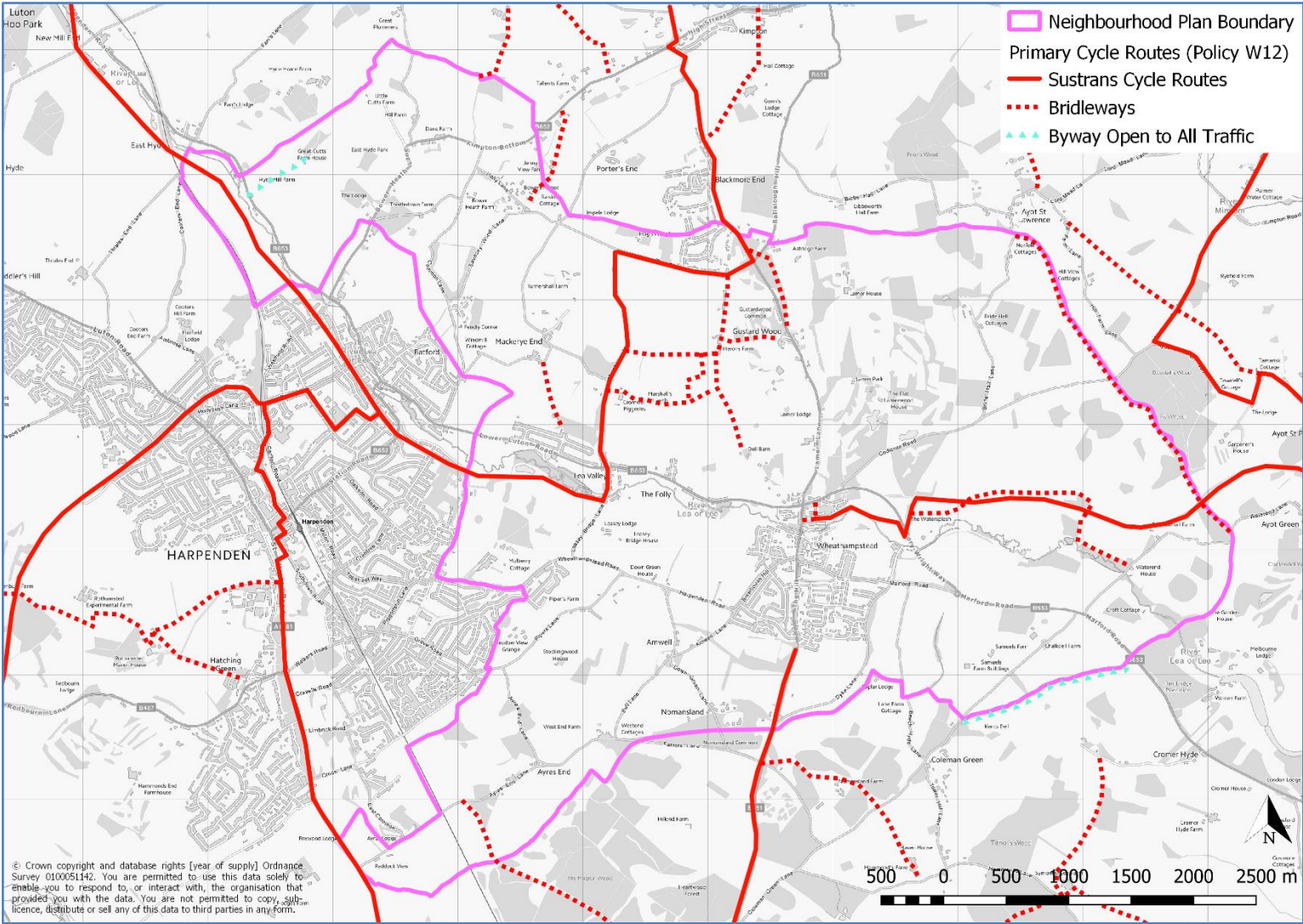


Figure 7.3. Primary cycle routes

- 7.12 Policy W12 supports development which would secure sustainable movement within the parish. For any development that does come forward, safe footpath access will need to be provided to link in with these access routes. Without this, any new developments will be isolated from the foot/cycleway network and will become car-dependent estates.
- 7.13 Where improvements are needed, contributions will be sought through section 106 and CIL agreements and will be used to part-fund these and lever in match-funding from other sources.

**POLICY W12: PRIMARY LOCAL ACCESS ROUTES**

- A. To ensure that residents can walk and/or cycle safely to the village centre, public transport hubs, schools, GPs, shops and other important facilities serving Wheathampstead, new development should ensure safe pedestrian and cycle access to link up with an adopted footway or a public right of way that, in turn, directly serve the Primary Local Access Routes shown on the Proposals Map or any other Primary Local Access Routes subsequently identified. The dedication of new routes as public rights of way will be encouraged.**
- B. Proposals to enhance the identified Primary Local Access Routes and any that are subsequently identified will be strongly supported. Development should not have an unacceptable impact on Primary Local Access Routes and provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian access.**
- C. Where possible, developments should include footpaths and cycleways segregated from vehicle traffic.**
- D. Implementation of measures in the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan<sup>31</sup> will be supported.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO7; District Review saved policies: 97; NPPF : 8, 91, 98, 102, 103, 104, 110, 127

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-in-hertfordshire/ltp-rights-of-way-improvement-plan-2017.pdf>

### **Policy W13: Improving cycle connections beyond the parish**

7.14 The Plan also seeks to encourage people to make longer journeys, beyond the parish boundaries, by methods other than car, notably by bike, including electric bikes (pedelecs). This will help to tackle some of the strategic traffic problems identified in paragraph 7.1. It would also encourage more cyclists to come into the village and use local cafes and shops. To support this, appropriate bicycle parking facilities (including electric charging points) need to be provided in the village centre.

7.15 Seven longer distance cycle routes have been identified. It is proposed that further discussions are held with Hertfordshire County Council and the neighbouring parishes to ascertain how these can be installed. Associated actions required to bring the routes into being are detailed in Section 12 of this report. Figure 7.4 illustrates the linkages required to bring the seven routes into fruition:

- Cycle Route 1: Gustard Wood via Rose Lane – this is largely a route used by locals for leisure purposes and could support a safer off road cycle route to Kimpton.
- Cycle Route 2: Gustard Wood via Lamer Lane – this is used by cyclists going to/from Kimpton however Lamer Lane is a busy and narrow road not ideal for safe cycling.
- Cycle Route 3: Welwyn Garden via B653 – this is an existing route used by those working in Welwyn Garden City / Hatfield or commuting into London. There have been a high number of cycle-related incidents and the route therefore requires some additional work, such as creating a separate surface on the road verges for cyclists.
- Cycle Route 4: St Albans via Nomansland – this is an existing route which enables access to those working in St Albans, people using St Albans City Station and to Sandringham School. The route has a history of safety issues involving cyclists and would require some additional work to improve both the connectivity and quality of the path and to take cyclists off the road surface.
- Cycle Route 5: Harpenden via Amwell – this is largely a route used by locals for leisure purposes.
- Cycle Route 6: Harpenden via Harpenden Road – this route is frequently used as a way for commuters to London to reach the station in Harpenden however Harpenden Road is a busy and narrow road, not ideal for safe cycling that causes delays for motorists during rush hour. The route therefore requires some additional work, such as creating a separate surface on the road verges for cyclists.
- Cycle Route 7: Luton via the East Hyde – this proposed route would be used for those commuting from Wheathampstead to Luton and vice versa.

7.16 All seven routes could serve both bicycles and electric bicycles, plus they would enable mobility scooter users to access neighbouring settlements for shopping or leisure purposes.

#### **POLICY W13: LONGER DISTANCE CYCLE ROUTES**

- A. Proposals to extend and improve the cycle route network, as shown in Figure 7.4 and on the Policies Map (Section 13), will be supported.**
- B. The provision of cycle parking – including with facilities for charging electric bicycles - in the village centre will be supported.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO7, SO8; District Review saved policies: 97; NPPF: 8, 91, 98, 102, 103, 104, 127

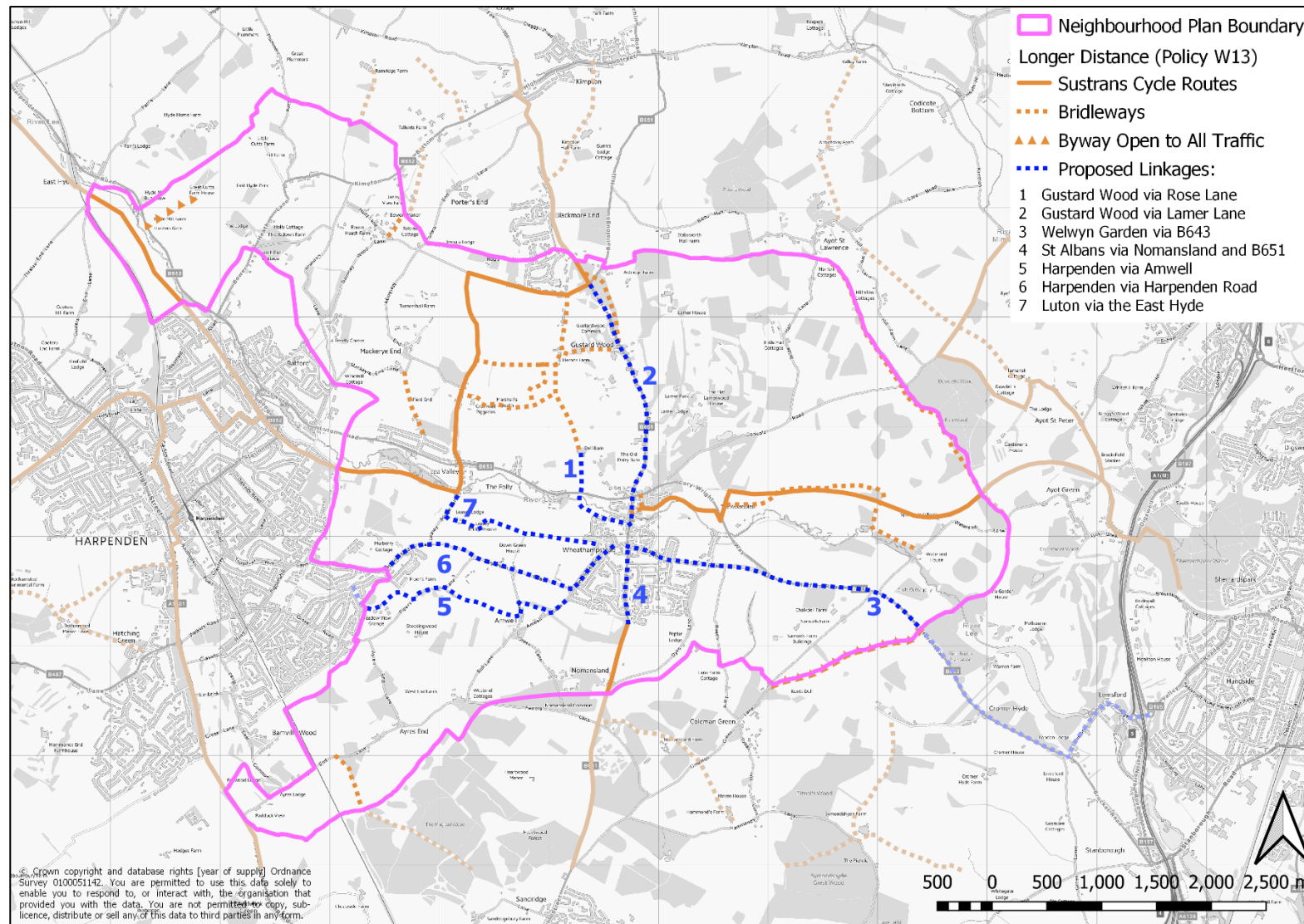


Figure 7.4. Proposed linkages to enable longer distance cycle routes to connect into the village (linkages beyond the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary are shown for completion although the policy would only be relevant within the Plan area)

### **Policy W14: Car parking**

- 7.17 While the priority is to encourage people to use sustainable methods of transport, it is inevitable that car usage is higher in a largely rural area than in more urban settings. For those accessing local facilities and amenities by car, there needs to be sufficient parking spaces. These should ideally be off-road and minimise their visual impact on the Conservation Area; off road parking, if poorly considered, can have a harmful impact on a Conservation Area.
- 7.18 East Lane Car Park is the main car park in Wheathampstead village and has 90 spaces available for long stay. There are also parking spaces along the High Street, which serve the local shops. Comments received during the consultation revealed that the car parking spaces on the High Street are often filled for many hours, reducing the ability for people wishing to 'drop into' a shop from doing so. Some people stated that this leads them to shop elsewhere because it is more convenient, for instance at Darby Stores, Sandridge, which has parking available more often. A solution to this would be to place a time restriction on the spaces in the High Street, to encourage quick shopping. All other vehicles would then be directed to East Lane. This action is detailed in Section 12.
- 7.19 For East Lane Car Park itself, there is little or no option for additional spaces serving the village centre due to lack of available land. Policy W14 therefore seeks to retain, manage and improve the quality of the existing car parking areas that are available in the village centre, adjusting for the anticipated increase in electric and smaller vehicles, and cycles. This is important for the continued economic prosperity of the village centre as well as the convenience of residents. With the planned increase in housing, demand for parking is expected to increase, even allowing for more journeys to the town centre being made on foot or by bicycle.

#### **POLICY W14: OFF-STREET CAR PARKING IN WHEATHAMPSTEAD**

- A. Subject to consideration of opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions, development proposals that would result in an unacceptable loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces will not be supported. Any proposals that would result in the loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces should provide at least an equivalent number of spaces in an equally accessible location.**
- B. Proposals for new development that provides additional public off-road car parking spaces, in particular next to businesses and at local facilities, will be supported in accordance with the City and District's car parking standards. Alongside any new public car parking provision, appropriate levels of bicycle parking facilities and electric vehicle charging points will be required.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO7; District Review saved policies: 39; NPPF para: 105, 106

### **Policy W15: Public transport**

- 7.20 Improvements to public transport provision – principally bus services – was identified as a key priority for the community. A reliable bus service with extended hours, accessing in particular St Albans and Harpenden, is seen as important. It would also help to reduce the sense of isolation for older people who otherwise find it difficult to get around.

- 7.21 Funding from development that goes towards improving public bus services comes through the Community Infrastructure Levy and section 106 mechanisms. Policy W15 seeks to support the direct provision from development will be on the supporting infrastructure, e.g. bus priority measures, real-time passenger information and bus shelters. These activities are detailed in Section 12 of the report, in particular a focus on working with bus providers to make sure services are accessible to those with dementia.
- 7.22 In addition to commercial services, community transport services are often seen as effective alternatives where there are gaps in public bus services. These could also be provided or contributions, in the form of the Community Infrastructure Levy (particularly the proportion that would come to the Parish Council), could be used to support these services.

**POLICY W15: BUS AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PROVISION**

**New development proposals that contribute towards physical improvements in the quality of public and community transport services and/or supporting infrastructure serving the Neighbourhood Plan area will be strongly supported.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO7; District Review saved policies: 36A; NPPF para: 34, 102, 103, 104, 108, 110



## 8 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

	<p>Creating a sense of community is central to the Plan. We want to reduce isolation and encourage interactions by providing a range of free or low-cost amenities, facilities and activities that are accessible to and appeal to residents.</p> <p>The village hub is a core part of this aspiration as it already provides so many activities. Supporting its expansion will be beneficial to people's wellbeing.</p> <p>Making sure that we have adequate education and health services locally, particularly in the light of the ageing and growing population is important.</p> <p>Having access to allotments and growing spaces offers the community the opportunity to become more self-sufficient and less reliant on food being transported from elsewhere. It also has health and wellbeing benefits.</p> <p>The Plan also seeks to ensure that a good range of sports and recreational activities are offered.</p>
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### Policy W16: Creating a village hub

8.1 The Memorial Hall and its surrounds are a focus for village life, providing a range of facilities and activities, including:

- a police office
- Citizens Advice drop-in centre
- library (now moved to Fire Station)
- hall with 170 seat capacity – provides a meeting space for village societies, as well as a suitable space for the local Drama Society, Youth Connections and toddler group. It also provides a space for numerous groups aimed at older residents.
- doctors' surgery
- sports facilities and play areas.



8.2 Feedback from the community has revealed a desire to expand the facilities on offer, for instance by adding an additional storey to the existing building, with ideas including additional meeting rooms, sporting facilities, a large hall space, a business hot spot and a dedicated youth space. These are currently under discussion.

8.3 There is scope to reconfigure, refurbish or rebuild the Memorial Hall to develop its role as a community hub, which could also offer a facility for local business.

8.4 Its location, within walking distance of the village centre and wider sporting facilities, makes it an ideal, central hub. Policy W16 supports proposals for its upgrade, which

would enable more and better use of space to provide some of the facilities cited by the community. In addition, it would provide space for vital community services in the event of changes in provision within the village, for instance health or banking services.

**POLICY W16: CREATING A VILLAGE HUB**

**Proposals that would enable the upgrade expansion or rebuild of the Memorial Hall shall be supported, in accordance with the other policies in the Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO8; District Review saved policies: 67; NPPF para: 85, 91, 92

## Policy W17: Educational facilities

- 8.5 Wheathampstead has a fairly high percentage of children compared with the wider district. The parish itself is home to the following state education provision.
- 8.6 Primary schools: The majority of primary aged children living in Wheathampstead attend school within the parish. There is a concern however that, as the population continues to grow, so provision must grow too.
- St Helen's Church of England Primary School – 293 pupils aged 4 to 11
  - Beech Hyde Primary and Nursery School – 280 pupils aged 3 to 11
  - St Albans High School for Girls Prep – approx. 175 pupils aged 4 to 11
- 8.7 Secondary Schools: There are no secondary schools located in the parish itself, therefore children typically travel to Harpenden or St Albans. In recent years, parents have found it increasingly difficult to secure a place for their child at their chosen nearest school. This is partially due to an oversubscription to those schools from a wide geographic area. To tackle this, a new school, the Katherine Warrington School, opened in September 2019 and is sited just beyond the border of Wheathampstead on land adjacent to Lower Luton Road and Common Lane in Batford. While this additional provision is good news for local Wheathampstead children, there is concern about the lack of safe pedestrian and cycle links between the proposed site and the centre of Wheathampstead village. This issue is explored further in the Transport and Movement section of this Plan (Section 7).



- 8.8 Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient state school places to serve the needs of Wheathampstead. Current forecasts<sup>32</sup> suggest the following:

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/school-planning/school-planning.aspx#DynamicJumpMenuManager\\_1\\_Anchor\\_1](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/school-planning/school-planning.aspx#DynamicJumpMenuManager_1_Anchor_1)

School Data Forecast	St Helen's Church of England Primary Beech Hyde Primary and Nursery
Spaces available 2020/2021	60 (30 at each site)
	90 spaces available in 2017 reduced to 60 in 2020
Current: 2020/21	Demand for 49 spaces 18.3% surplus
Forecast: 2021/22	Demand for 50 spaces 16.7% surplus
Forecast: 2022/23	Demand for 47 spaces 21.7% surplus
Forecast: 2023/24	Demand for 37 spaces 38.3% surplus

- 8.9 The figures reveal that primary provision in the short to medium term is sufficient. The Neighbourhood Plan, however, is seeking to provide additional smaller homes that might help to attract couples and families to the parish. Additionally, St Helen's School is currently two-form entry and there is a question as to whether this will continue.
- 8.10 In the longer term therefore, consideration should be given to whether there is a need to extend the existing provision or provide additional resource, in the context of the emerging Local Plan and housing allocations that may be contained within that".
- 8.11 Policy W17 provides general support for the provision of new education facilities, should they be necessary and stresses the importance of ensuring that there is sufficient education provision to serve the needs of the Wheathampstead community.

#### **POLICY W17: EDUCATION PROVISION**

- A. Proposals which provide, enhance and facilitate the continued delivery of educational provision on existing state education land, including associated playing fields, as defined on the Policies Map (Section 13), will be supported.**
- B. Proposals for the expansion of existing schools in the Plan area will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:**
- i. expansion would not exacerbate existing access related or traffic circulation problems, or suitable mitigation measures are being brought forward as part of the proposal;**
  - ii. the development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent users; and**
  - iii. the development does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.**

- C. Where expansion of an existing school is not possible, and/or a proposal for a new school is brought forward, the proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:**
- i. the development would be safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists and is well related to bus routes and/or there is adequate provision for waiting school buses to park;**
  - ii. the development has appropriate vehicular access and does not adversely impact upon traffic circulation;**
  - iii. the development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent uses;**
  - iv. the development does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO7, SO8; District Review saved policies: 65; NPPF para: 91, 92, 94, 96, 97

## **Policy W18: Health and well being**

- 8.12 The need to ensure that adequate primary care facilities – including GP surgery, dentists and a pharmacy – are provided to support growth in Wheathampstead has been identified by the community. This links to Wheathampstead’s aspiration to become a dementia-friendly parish.
- 8.13 The village has one surgery – The Village Surgery - located next to the Memorial Hall. It has a sister surgery in Harpenden and collectively the two have 15,811 registered patients. The St Albans Infrastructure Delivery Plan suggested an overall clinical space deficit for current patient registrations in the area east and north-east of Hemel Hempstead, including Wheathampstead. This deficiency is supported by the findings of the neighbourhood plan: many people reported that it was difficult to get appointments locally with some stating that they have had to register at surgeries outside the parish, such as Davenport House in Harpenden.
- 8.14 Until there is the need for a second surgery – which is unlikely with the levels of growth proposed in Wheathampstead – then only general support can be provided through the Neighbourhood Plan either for new provision or for the delivery of additional consulting rooms if this is deemed to be feasible. It will be important that this position is monitored over time and a dialogue maintained between Wheathampstead Parish Council and The Village Surgery.
- 8.15 Policy W18 supports proposals that would enable the continued provision of health facilities in the village, either on the existing and/or a new site. This might be facilitated through the development of a community hub at the Wheathampstead Memorial Hall, as expressed in Policy W16.

### **POLICY W18: HEALTH AND WELL BEING**

**A. Proposals which provide, enhance and facilitate the continued delivery of health facilities at the Village Surgery will be supported.**

**B. Proposals for the expansion, including relocation locally if required, of these services will be supported subject to the following criteria.**

- i. The proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment.**
- ii. The proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network.**
- iii. The proposal is located within or immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary as defined in Policy W1.**
- iv. Any proposed site should be accessible by walking and cycling.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO8; District Review saved policies: none; NPPF para: 91, 92

## **Policy W19: Community growing spaces**

- 8.16 The Parish Council owns two allotment sites and rents two more, one from Herts County Council and one from St Albans Diocese. There are 198 allotments in total made up of 79 x 5 pole, 8 x 2½ pole and 111 x 10 pole plots. The allotments are located at The Folly (Folly), Gustard Wood (Baxendale) and Marford Road (Glebe and Hitchens).

- 8.17 Across the district, there is a waiting list of over 140 people for the Council-operated allotments. It is therefore important to safeguard these sites. The St Albans Green Spaces report<sup>33</sup> suggests that there is a slight deficit of space in Wheathampstead. It goes on to suggest that, rather than find new allotment space, existing plots could be subdivided to increase overall plot numbers.
- 8.18 While allotments are an important source of space for growing food – which increases self-sufficiency, thereby reducing reliance on importing food and the associated higher energy costs of doing so – they are often not in the most convenient location for all users and plots are often too large for users’ needs. An alternative solution is community growing spaces which can be designed into new developments, meaning they are close to residents’ homes and involve collective growing by residents and help to ensure that what is grown is of the right quantity for those residents. More specific guidance can be found at [www.verdantearth.co.uk/community-growing-spaces/](http://www.verdantearth.co.uk/community-growing-spaces/).



*Example of a community growing space*

- 8.19 Policy W19 supports the provision of community growing spaces, particularly as part of any residential site allocations.

**POLICY W19: COMMUNITY GROWING SPACES**

- A. Proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of existing allotment spaces will not be supported unless alternative and equivalent allotment space is provided.**
- B. Alternative allotment provision proposed as part of such proposals will be required to meet the following criteria.**
- i. The scale of the alternative site must be of an equivalent size to the existing allotment provision.**

<sup>33</sup> Detailed Local Plan Technical Report, Green Spaces, St Albans, 2016  
([https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP\\_GreenSpacesTechnicalReportPublicationDraft111016\\_tcm15-56020.pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP_GreenSpacesTechnicalReportPublicationDraft111016_tcm15-56020.pdf))

- ii. The quality of the alternative site must be of equivalent standard in terms of layout and soil character to the existing allotment provision.**
  - iii. The location of the alternative site must be generally accessible by foot and within or adjacent to the defined settlement area of Wheathampstead, as shown on the Policies Map (Section 13).**
  - iv. Any proposed site should be accessible by walking or cycling.**
- C. As part of any pre-submission for all development proposals, developers are encouraged to explore with the community the potential for inclusion of a community growing space of a size appropriate to the local community it would serve.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO8; District Review saved policies: 95; NPPF para: 91, 92



## Policy W20: Sports and recreation

8.20 The parish benefits from a range of open spaces and recreational facilities. Marford Playing Fields, adjacent to the Village Hub, has tennis courts and an ATP. An outdoor gym and table tennis table has recently been installed. There are football, cricket and tennis clubs in the village as well as a running club and numerous exercise classes. The river itself provides a recreational resource for angling and paddling etc.



- 8.21 There is an appetite to develop new recreational facilities as well as improving existing ones. The engagement process for the Neighbourhood Plan revealed, for instance, a call for a short mat bowls facility and walking football.
- 8.22 In terms of children's play facilities, 72% of properties in the parish are within the accessibility threshold for younger and older children play areas<sup>34</sup>. The vast majority of the village has access to play areas, but some properties not within the village itself do not. There is a keenness to update the equipment in some of the play areas.
- 8.23 The picture for teenagers is less promising with a deficit of 0.07 hectares of teenage space, although 75% of properties are within cycling distance of this<sup>35</sup>.
- 8.24 While the amount of sports pitches in the area is adequate, potential improvements have been cited, including the provision of additional shared space, a new pavilion on Butterfield Playing Field and upgrading the small pavilion on Marford Playing Field. These are set out in Section 12, along with the non-policy actions and spending priorities for the Plan.

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<sup>34</sup> [St Albans Green Space Strategy, 2011](#)

<sup>35</sup> [St Albans Green Space Strategy, 2011](#)

**POLICY W20: SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

- A. Development proposals that deliver new and improved facilities – including shared space for multiple activities and new and upgraded playing field facilities - will be supported, subject to the other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.**
- B. Development that results in the loss of a sport, recreation or play facility will only be supported where it conforms fully to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance including the Five Exceptions<sup>36</sup>.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO8; District Review saved policies: 91; NPPF para: 83, 91, 92

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<sup>36</sup> [Sport England, Playing Fields Policy and Guidance, March 2018](#)

## **Policy W21: Celebrating Wheathampstead's heritage**

- 8.25 With a rich history dating back 10,000 years, the Verulamium Museum in St Albans describes Wheathampstead as "The First Capital". The parish has a very active history society which has developed seven marked heritage trails operating in both the village and in the wider countryside.
- 8.26 While there is an online virtual museum about the parish, however, there is no physical presence to celebrate Wheathampstead's history. Instead residents and visitors must travel to the museum in St Albans to learn about this. Feedback locally has indicated strong support for the creation of a Heritage Centre and it is considered that development of the Old Mill on the High Street could provide this.
- 8.27 At the time of writing, the landowner is willing to use part of the building for this purpose, which is centrally located and would assist in the creation of a walking route leading from the High Street to Tithe Barn Yard, the Crinkle-Crankle Garden and beyond to the land south of Mount Pleasant. Funding for ongoing support of a heritage centre and further exploration, both archaeological and academic, of our rich heritage will be sought through CIL and section 106 contributions.



### **POLICY W21: CELEBRATING WHEATHAMPSTEAD'S HERITAGE**

**Proposals for a museum facility (Use Class F) at a suitable site, such as the Old Mill, will be supported in principle subject to the following criteria:**

- i. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment; and**
- ii. the proposal would not have significant unacceptable impacts upon the local road network; and**
- iii. the proposal would respect the historic importance and integrity of the Old Mill site, including its setting in relation to the village and to the river.**


Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO8; District Review saved policies: 88; NPPF para: 91, 92

## 9 LOCAL ECONOMY

9.1 Wheathampstead parish is home to over 250 businesses, including retailers, agriculture, light industry and a host of home-based businesses. In 2004, Wheathampstead for Enterprising Business (WEB, but now known as The Wheathampstead Business Group) was founded as a focus group in which local businesses could share ideas and services in order to collaborate for the general good of the village. It initially focused on the High Street but it has evolved and expanded and now constitutes a very broad collective of businesses, residents and various activities. The fundamental purpose of WEB is to contribute to the survival of the village as a socially vibrant and prosperous place to live and work, its vision statement being:

*"The Wheathampstead Business Group aims to proactively enhance and secure the long-term future of Wheathampstead as a dynamic trading area for the benefit of the whole community. Local businesses and residents are encouraged to get involved, support businesses locally and help make Wheathampstead a better place to live."*

9.2 WEB's core objective is to maintain the local business base and employment in order to maximise the village's potential as an active focus of the local economy and avoid the fate of many small communities. Some larger businesses had previously closed including Polaroid, Murphy's Chemicals and Helmets. New legislation will make it easier to convert precious business buildings into residential sites. While this can be a positive step, for instance in addressing local housing needs and creating more footfall for the village centre, there is a need to balance this against protecting local business premises if the village is to prosper. The strategy for WEB, which is supported through the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, is designed to advance both the social and the economic welfare of the village. WEB organises events and involves residents in activities and projects that foster participation, group action and collective pride in all aspects of village life. WEB works closely with other groups in the village for the same objectives, in particular the Parish Council.

	<p>The Plan is committed to encouraging a sustainable local economy with a village centre that attracts retailers and other service providers.</p> <p>Shopkeepers and other providers are encouraged to undertake dementia-friendly training and where possible source local produce and goods and Fair-Trade products.</p> <p>Shops and non-high street premises should be accessible.</p>
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### **Policy W22: Protection of existing employment premises or land**

9.3 The 2011 census reveals that approximately 83% of the economically active population in Wheathampstead commute out of the parish. A further 6.8% of the workforce work mainly at or from home. The availability of work in London is clearly a key factor in determining the proportion of commuters, but so too is the reduction in local employment opportunities that has taken place in past decades. The proportion of those who work outside Wheathampstead is very high and, if the character of the village is to be maintained, it is vital that the proportion does not rise further.

- 9.4 The Plan therefore seeks to make sure that the parish does not become a dormitory settlement. Protecting existing employment opportunities and encouraging new ones are objectives of the St Albans City and District Strategic Local Plan. In a survey of local businesses (WEB members) 76% of those who responded support change of use from residential to commercial and 100% supported change of use from one business/commercial use to another business/commercial use.
- 9.5 This will be achieved by protecting existing employment premises from change of use or redevelopment where the existing businesses are of demonstrable benefit to the community and by encouraging the development of new, small-scale employment opportunities.
- 9.6 Policy W22 therefore seeks to ensure that existing employment sites cannot be used for any other purpose unless it has been clearly demonstrated that there is no demand for business use.

**POLICY W22: PROTECTION OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT PREMISES OR LAND**

**Subject to permitted development rights, existing business premises (Use Class E), whether currently in use or not, should be retained as business premises unless they are genuinely unsuitable and unviable for employment-generating use, or they are directly replaced by new sites within the parish of Wheathampstead.**

**Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be supported if it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the premises are no longer suitable for business use and evidence has been submitted that demonstrates that the property has been actively marketed for at least 6 months on realistic market terms and it is shown that there is no prospect of new business occupiers being found.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO6; District Review saved policies: 19; NPPF para: 80, 84, 118

**Policy W23: Encouraging businesses to come to Wheathampstead**

- 9.7 Should new sites become available for employment uses, we would wish to encourage their development because it will contribute to the parish's future prosperity. Policy W23 therefore encourages new employment sites to come forward, but ensures that any new employment development is aligned with the principles and vision of this Plan.
- 9.8 In a survey of local businesses (WEB members), 65% of respondents rated the need for some form of Business Park or business centre as 5 or higher, this on a scale of 0 to 10. Policy W23 supports the provision of small-scale businesses premises, ideally on flexible rental terms. This could range from the development of a small business park to an industrial unit or a barn conversion, and could take place alongside a new housing development or separately.

**POLICY W23: ENCOURAGING BUSINESSES TO COME TO WHEATHAMPSTEAD**

**A. Proposals for new business development, especially small-scale flexible office units and affordable workshops and a business park, will be approved in appropriate locations subject to compliance with other relevant policies in this Plan and the St Albans Local District Review.**

**B. This could be through either of the following:**

- i. conversion of existing buildings across the Neighbourhood Plan area, subject to it being an appropriate use within the Green Belt (where applicable); or**
- ii. provision of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings within the settlement boundary.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO6; District Review saved policies: 19; NPPF para: 80, 81, 83, 145

## **Policy W24: Supporting a vibrant High Street**

- 9.9 The WNP supports the protection commercial uses, such as local shops (especially food) and public houses, in villages like Wheathampstead because of their value to the community. Wheathampstead village itself serves a range of users including:
- local residents for daily needs such as newspapers, bread, milk, essential groceries, chemist etc.;
  - local businesses for coffee/lunch/snacks and for essential postal services;
  - through traffic, such as tradesmen, for instance to pick up breakfast/lunch/snacks when passing through.
- 9.10 Notably, the local engagement process revealed the importance of free car parking at the village centre, which attracts people to the local shops and services. It was felt strongly that free parking should be retained. This is addressed in Policy W14 and in the associated actions detailed in Section 12.
- 9.11 It will therefore be important to retain existing and encourage new retail and service providers in the village centre, which is defined in Figure 9.1. Notable examples in Wheathampstead include the Post Office (an essential service for local businesses) and the ATM (an important asset to support cash-based businesses).

### **POLICY W24: SUPPORTING A VIBRANT HIGH STREET**

- A. There will be a presumption in favour of proposals for additional retail floor space (use class E) within the village centre boundary area, as defined in Figure 9.1, providing that it is of a scale that complements local provision of a mix of retail outlets and is compatible with the size and scale of the village centre.**
- B. Subject to permitted development rights, there will be a presumption against the loss of retail uses at ground floor level within the defined village centre area with evidence required to demonstrate that the loss of a unit would not detrimentally impact the character of the Conservation Area.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO6; District Review saved policies: 51, 54; NPPF para: 85

## **Policy W25: Temporary Shops**

9.12 Pop-up stores have become more prevalent in recent years and continue to grow in popularity. They are felt to be an important way of retaining a retail presence in a vacant unit, to support the feel and viability of the High Street.

### **POLICY W25: TEMPORARY SHOPS**

**The temporary change of use of vacant premises to pop-up shops (see Glossary) will be encouraged in the village centre, as defined in Figure 9.1.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: SO6; District Review saved policies: 51, 54; NPPF para: 85



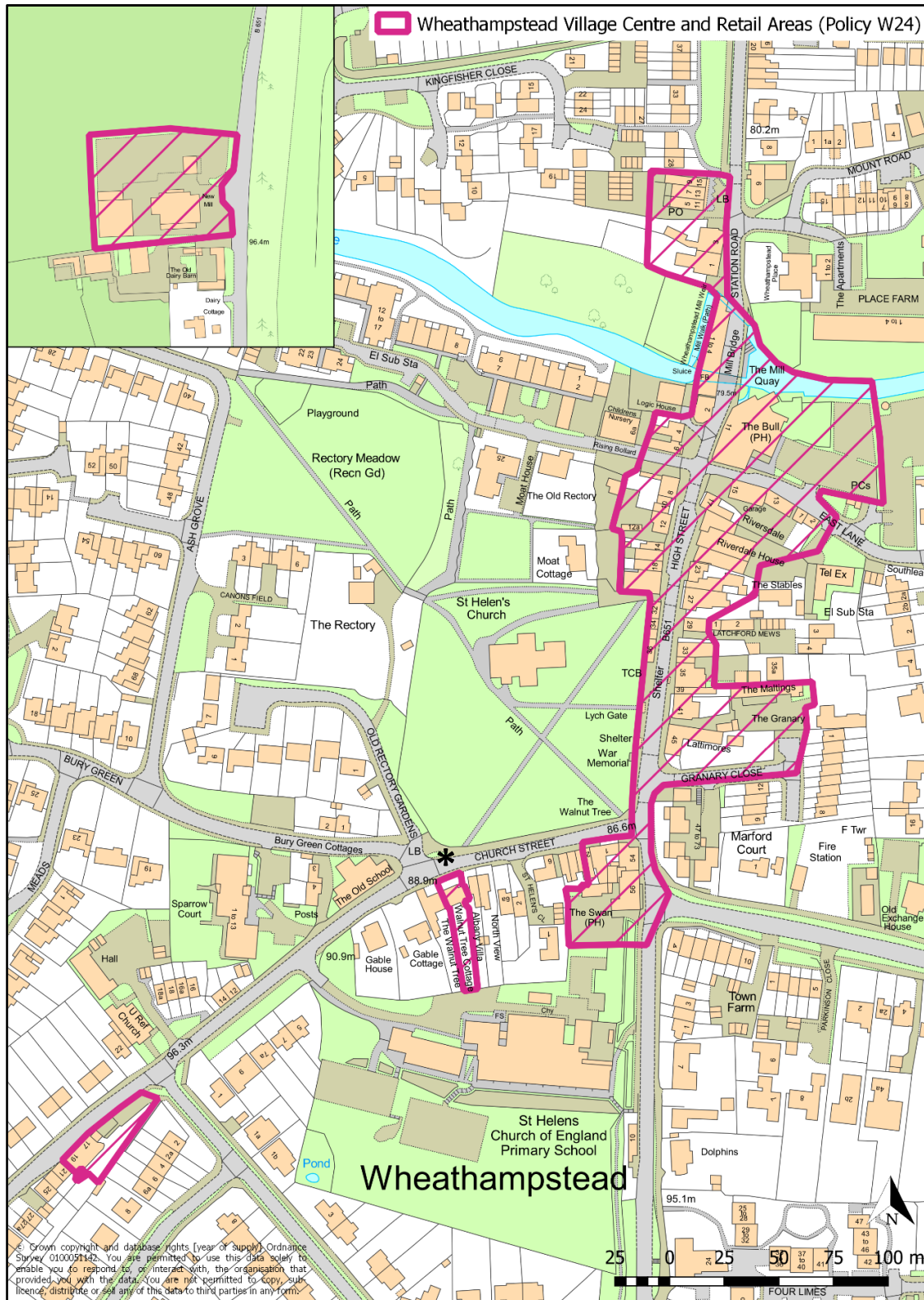


Figure 9.1. Wheathampstead Village Centre Retail Areas<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Note: \* This refers to only the shop front, since the house behind and garden is residential.

## 10 IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

10.1. The Parish Council is the official body responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan. It established a Steering Group – comprising councillors and residents – to lead on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Once the Plan has been ‘made’, the work of the Steering Group effectively comes to an end. There are, however, a series of actions that will need to be undertaken, not least the early review of the Neighbourhood Plan, in light of the emerging Local Plan. For this reason, the Parish Council might consider extending the role of the Steering Group, which could include the same members or provide an opportunity for new members to join.

10.2. Specific actions that will need to be undertaken are as follows:

- pursuing the Non-Policy Actions detailed in Section 12 of this document;
- periodically updating the Housing Needs Survey to reveal local demand;
- commenting on planning applications or consultations relating to the Neighbourhood Plan area;
- monitoring the application of the Neighbourhood Plan policies to ensure they have been applied consistently and interpreted correctly in response to planning applications;
- maintaining a dialogue with St Albans District Council regarding the timing and content of the emerging Local Plan;
- undertaking an early review of the Wheathampstead Neighbourhood Plan and its policies to take into account the emerging Local Plan.

## 11 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

- 11.1. Going forward, the Parish Council is keen to influence the way in which developer contributions are spent in the neighbourhood area to the full extent of its powers under national legislation and planning guidance.
- 11.2. There are different types of contributions arising from section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- A section 106 agreement (based on that section of The 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) or planning obligation is a private agreement made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.
  - A section 278 agreement refers to a section of the Highways Act 1980 that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the local authority to make alterations or improvements to a public highway as part of a planning application.
  - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site and is levied by the District Council. Different charge rates apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its Local Plan.
- 11.3. The District Council is currently intending to introduce CIL following the new Local Plan. Once in place, a parish with a Neighbourhood Plan would attract 25% of the monies. This portion could be spent on infrastructure or 'anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area'. For instance, it could be allocated to new roads and transport, local amenities such as parks, community centres, schools and health facilities. Affordable housing is explicitly excluded from the list of things on which CIL can be spent.
- 11.4. Following the publication of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council will set out a Spending Priority Schedule for developer contributions to be spent on. This will apply to monies raised from development by any successor mechanism to CIL or other developer funding e.g. section 106 agreements/other planning obligations.
- 11.5. The Parish Council intends to regularly review these spending priorities. Any proposed changes to spending principles or priorities will be published for comment by the community and other interested parties. Once finalised, any updated list will be published on the Neighbourhood Plan website and in relevant literature.

## 12 NON-POLICY ACTIONS AND SPENDING PRIORITIES

Acronyms used in the following table: WPC (Wheathampstead Parish Council), SADC (St Albans and District Council), Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), Public Rights of Way Team, HCC (PROW team)

Issue	Possible action	Lead agencies /partners
<p><b>Transport and Movement</b></p> <p><u>Car parking</u> Insufficient short-stay spaces on High Street and Station Road.</p> <p>Lack of public electric charging points.</p> <p>Public car parks could be designed for better efficiency and to provide for a wider range of vehicle types.</p> <p>Kerbs are too high and with very sharp edges. This causes cars that are legally parked to project into the High Street causing congestion and delays.</p> <p><u>Footpaths</u> Improvements required for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists. Increase the separation</p>	<p>Explore options to deliver short-term (e.g. 30 minute) car parking on the High Street and Station Road, to encourage those wishing to park for longer to use East Lane car park.</p> <p>Lobby for and support the installation of charging points suitable for cars, taxis, bikes and mobility scooters, both within local car parks and along streets where off-street parking is not possible.</p> <p>Undertake a regular assessment of the use of local car parks and car parking spaces to monitor supply and demand. Address this, for instance through the re-balancing of spaces for electric charging points, smaller parking spaces for smart vehicles, space for motorcycles etc.</p> <p>Consider addressing as part of any resurfacing work along the High Street.</p> <p>Undertake an assessment of paths – prioritising Primary Access Routes – to identify those which could be widened to improve accessibility and enable shared use for pedestrians and cyclists. Where possible, paths should be accessible to all, including those with limited mobility, limited eyesight and/or dementia, wheelchair users and those with pushchairs.</p>	<p>WPC, HCC, Highways England</p> <p>WPC, HCC, Highways England</p> <p>WPC, HCC, Highways England</p> <p>WPC, HCC, Highways England</p> <p>WPC, PROW team at HCC</p>

<p>of cars and pedestrians where possible and make navigation easier for all users.</p>	<p>Improve signage and surfacing on footpaths, with a focus on ensuring that routes, and where they lead to, are easily recognisable. In addition, clearly marking where livestock may be present and to respect the Countryside Code<sup>38</sup> (for instance keeping dogs on leads).</p>	<p>HCC</p>
<p><u>Safe cycle routes</u> Additional high quality, safe, paths required to improve opportunities for cycling. A further benefit of shared safe cycle routes would be to enable mobility scooters to reach neighbouring parishes (e.g. for shopping).</p>	<p>Undertake a campaign locally to promote the village as accessible to all – this could include encouraging home owners to keep dropped kerbs clear of vehicles, incorporating signage to aid less mobile users of the best routes etc.</p>	<p>WPC</p>
<p><u>Public transport</u> Can be a challenge for those living with dementia.</p>	<p>Provide additional benches along Primary Walking Routes.</p>	<p>WPC</p>
<p><u>Safe cycle routes</u> Additional high quality, safe, paths required to improve opportunities for cycling. A further benefit of shared safe cycle routes would be to enable mobility scooters to reach neighbouring parishes (e.g. for shopping).</p>	<p>Work with adjoining parishes and others to implement the five longer-distance cycle routes between Wheathampstead and the neighbouring towns and villages.</p>	<p>WPC, HCC, neighbouring parishes, Schools,</p>
<p><u>Safe cycle routes</u> Additional high quality, safe, paths required to improve opportunities for cycling. A further benefit of shared safe cycle routes would be to enable mobility scooters to reach neighbouring parishes (e.g. for shopping).</p>	<p>Promote cycling (both pedal and electric) as a sustainable form of transport for work, school and leisure.</p>	<p>WPC</p>
<p><u>Safe cycle routes</u> Additional high quality, safe, paths required to improve opportunities for cycling. A further benefit of shared safe cycle routes would be to enable mobility scooters to reach neighbouring parishes (e.g. for shopping).</p>	<p>Undertake an assessment of cycle usage to identify to the best places to install cycle racks and, ideally, electric charging points.</p>	<p>WPC</p>
<p><u>Safe cycle routes</u> Additional high quality, safe, paths required to improve opportunities for cycling. A further benefit of shared safe cycle routes would be to enable mobility scooters to reach neighbouring parishes (e.g. for shopping).</p>	<p>Explore demand for the provision of electric bikes for community and visitor use.</p>	<p>WPC, HCC</p>
<p><u>Public transport</u> Can be a challenge for those living with dementia.</p>	<p>Explore options for improvements including a point to point bus route/timetable specifically for Wheathampstead to St Albans (and similarly Harpenden,</p>	<p>Bus companies, WPC, community organisations</p>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>

<p>Lack of community shuttle bus.</p> <p>Issues related to strategic traffic movements (inc. HGVs, congestions and through traffic)</p>	<p>Hatfield etc.) with photographs of the bus stop and points along the route making it easy to follow.</p> <p>Explore potential changes to existing road layouts with a first step being to undertake further research into traffic flows, trip origins and destinations, and the impact of these on the roads in the parish, to understand what solutions there might be to tackle congestion and the cost implications.</p> <p>Work with partners to identify whether there is a demand for a community shuttle bus and potential funding sources, drawing on existing examples of good practice.</p> <p>Gather additional data on the cause and extent of the problem, e.g. a study into traffic flows and origins. Work with HCC and others to explore potential longer term solutions.</p>	<p>HCC, WPC</p> <p>WPC, local bus companies, local community, SADC</p> <p>HCC, Highways England</p>
<p><b>Character and Conservation</b></p> <p>Incidences of unsympathetic alterations in the Conservation Areas.</p> <p>Heritage Trail can be challenging for those living with dementia.</p> <p>Erosion of character in Conservation Area.</p> <p>Signage to contribute to local character</p>	<p>Explore, in consultation with the community, the option of introducing an Article 4 direction to restrict specific alterations that erode the character of the Conservation Areas or Local Character Areas.</p> <p>Improve the existing Heritage Trail to ensure it is accessible to those with dementia.</p> <p>Explore, in consultation with the community, the option of introducing an Article 4 direction to restrict specific alterations that erode the character of the Conservation Areas or Local Character Areas.</p> <p>Consider serving discontinuous notices to those not applying the design guidance on signage.</p>	<p>WPC, SADC</p> <p>WPC, Alzheimer’s Society, Local Heritage Group</p> <p>WPC, SADC, Historic England, local community</p> <p>WPC, SADC</p>

<p><b>Community</b> Need to devolve activities aimed at local residents from being held in St Albans.</p> <p>Improvements required to various sports pitches.</p>	<p>Encourage St Albans Enterprise Agency (STANTA), WENTA (Formerly the Watford Enterprise Agency), Herts Growth Hub and DIT to run courses in the Memorial Hall for local businesses rather than being centred in St Albans, Hatfield, Hertford.</p> <p>Promote dementia-friendly householder scheme, supported by training.</p> <p>Provide a new pavilion on Butterfield Playing Fields. Upgrade the small pavilion on Marford Playing Fields.</p>	<p>WPC, WEB</p> <p>WPC, Alzheimer's Society</p> <p>WPC</p>
<p><b>Town/Village Centre and Economy</b> Prevalence of long-term empty shops.</p> <p>Ambition to make the High Street more accessible to those living with dementia.</p> <p>Lack of on-street short-stay car parking spaces in the High Street.</p>	<p>Work with landlords to identify reduced/waived rents to encourage temporary shops where gaps exist in the High Street. Lobby SADC regarding reduced rates for pop-up shops.</p> <p>Work with local retailers and service providers to expand the uptake of Dementia Friendly courses.</p> <p>Prioritise still the need to provide High Street parking provision for those needing to travel without encouraging additional vehicle journeys. Businesses along the High Street see a high value in passing motor trade and it is not desirous to disrupt trade. The focus should be on ensuring that the right sort of users are catered for via appropriate bays, access points, and restrictions – such as time limitation or disabled parking.</p>	<p>WPC, landlords, WEB</p> <p>Alzheimer's Society, SADC</p> <p>WPC, HCC, local businesses</p>
<p>Environment</p>	<p>Preserve and maintain public open spaces and floral displays on publicly owned land. Every opportunity should be taken to create new public open spaces and displays, whether at the time of new development or otherwise.</p> <p>Develop the Crinkle-Crankle Garden into a sensory, dementia friendly area.</p>	<p>WPC, local community groups, Alzheimer's Society.</p>

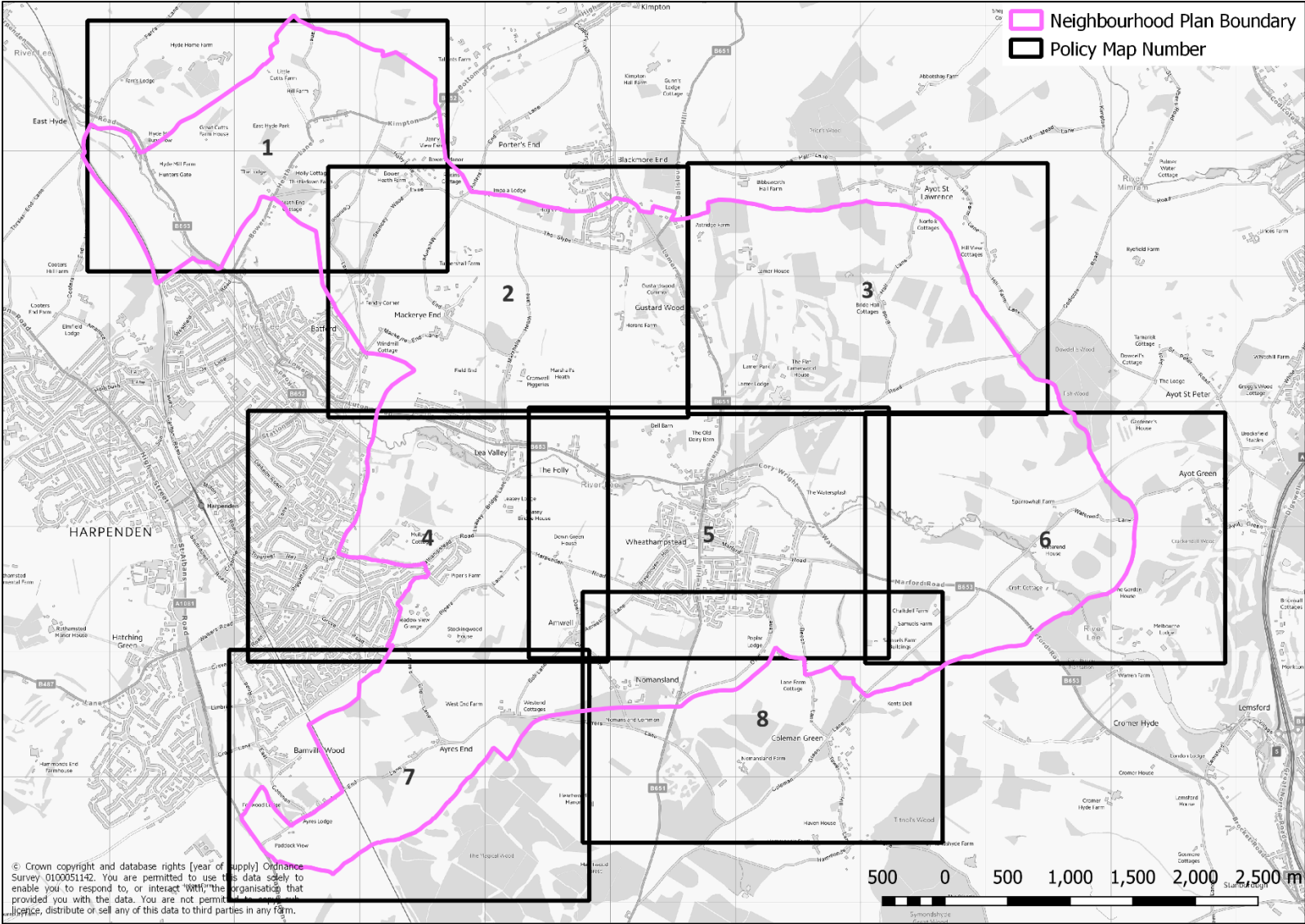
## **13 POLICIES MAPS**

The maps in this section illustrate the 25 Policies of this Neighbourhood Plan.

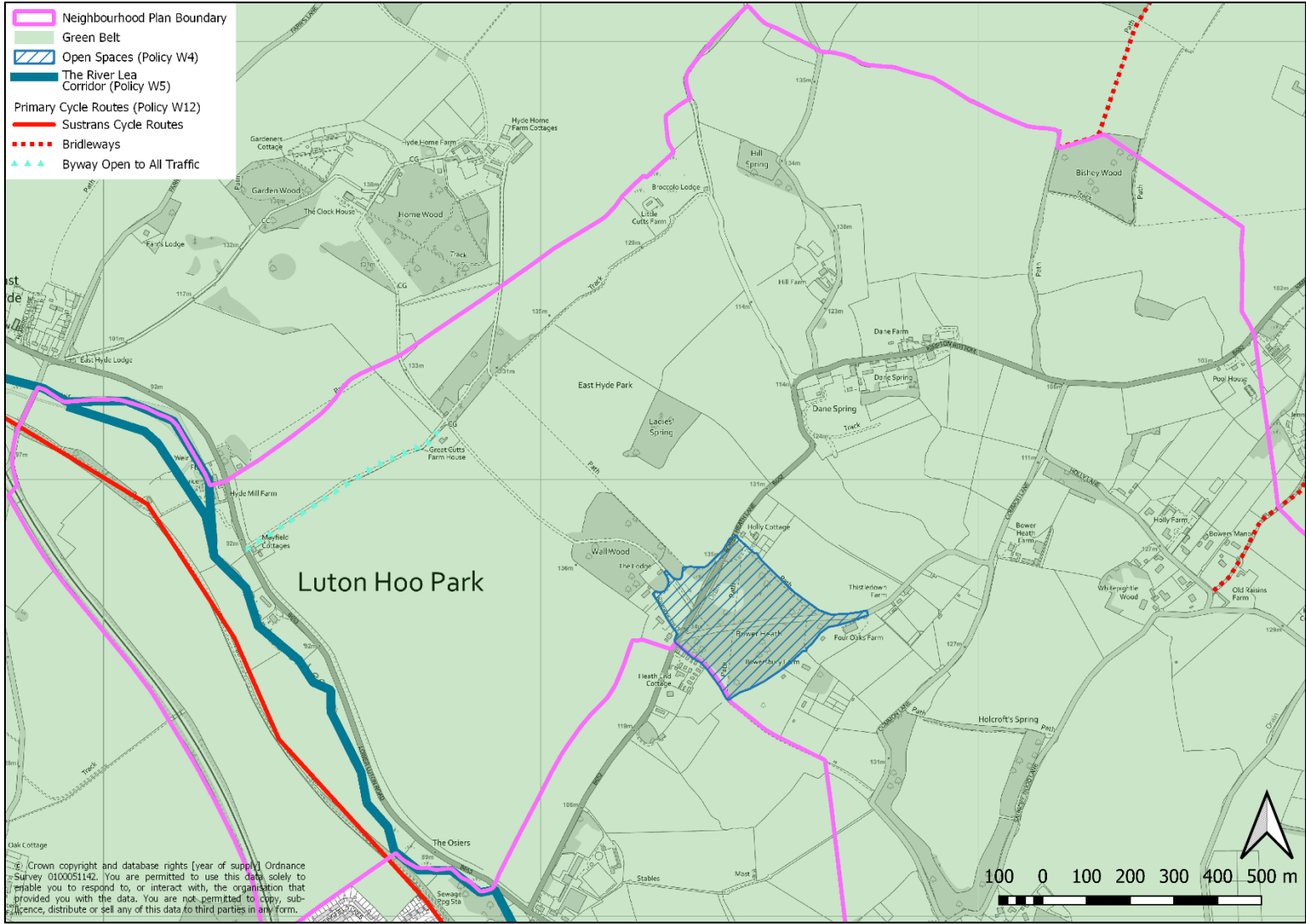
Where features, for example footpaths and other existing designation, are shown outside the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary, this is for clarity and continuity purposes. The policies in the WNP are only relevant to within the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary.

Proposed linkages (Policy W13) are indicative and further work will be required to determine exact routing.

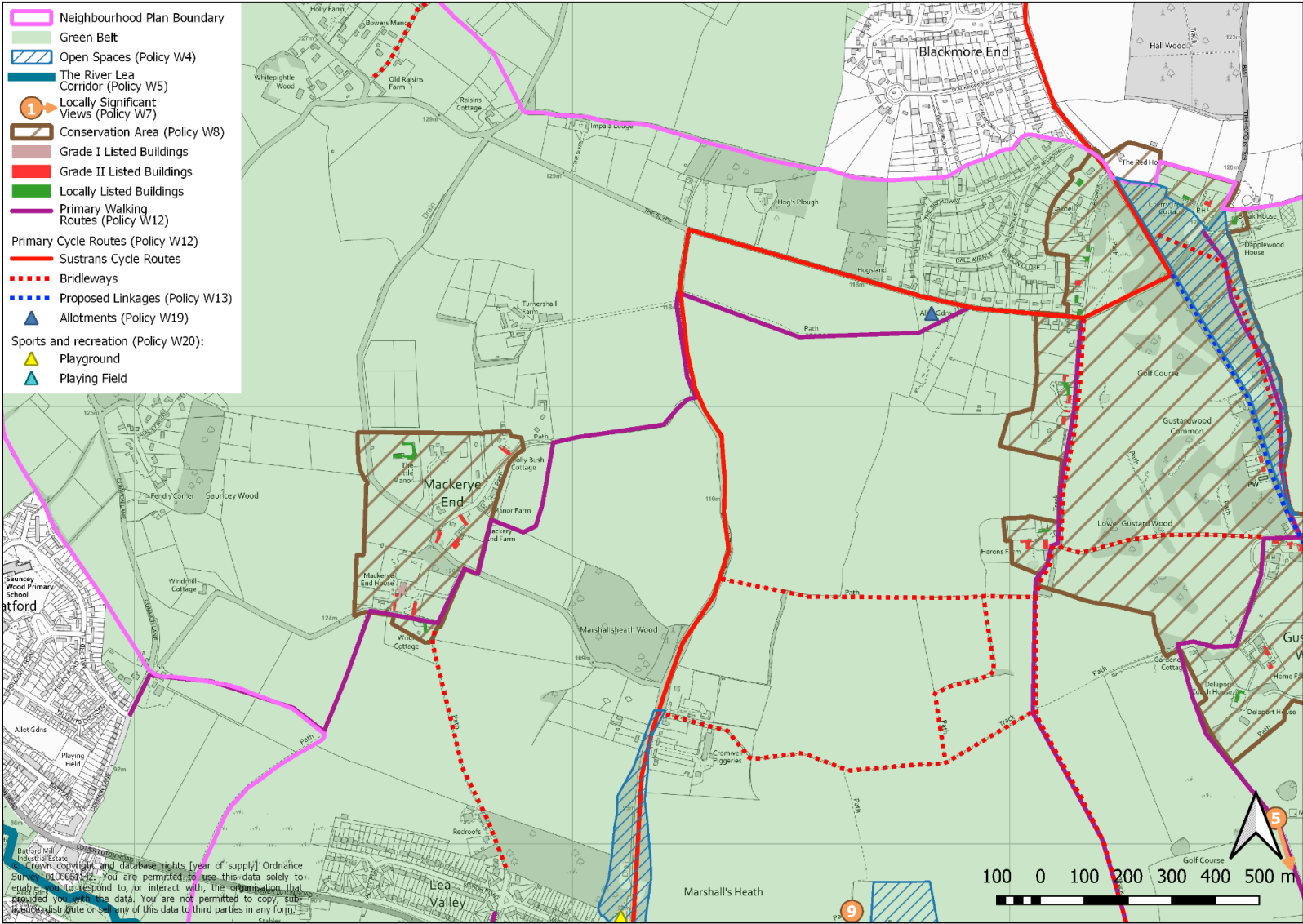




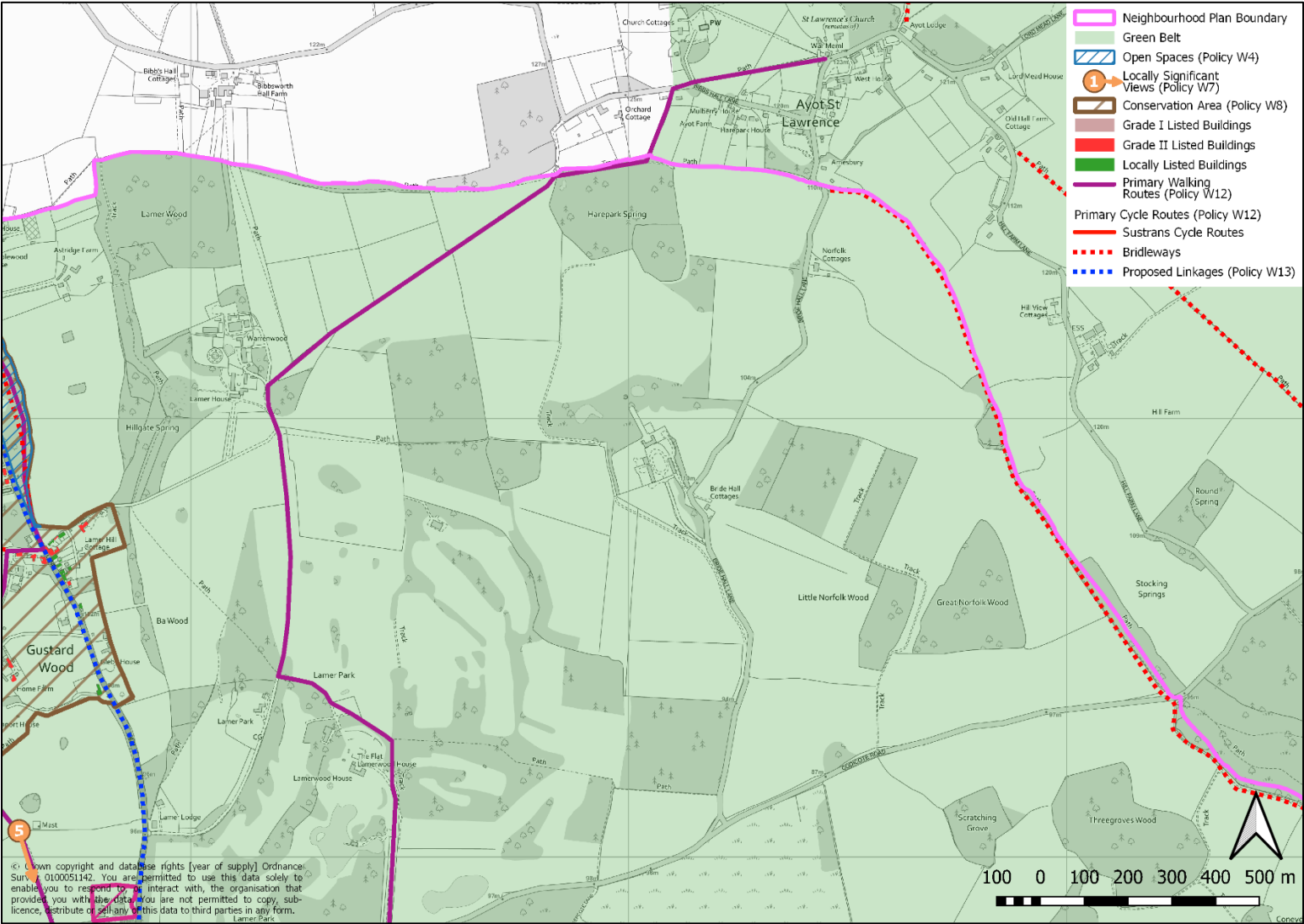
Key to Policies Maps (note that Policies Map 5 is further divided into north and south for clarity)



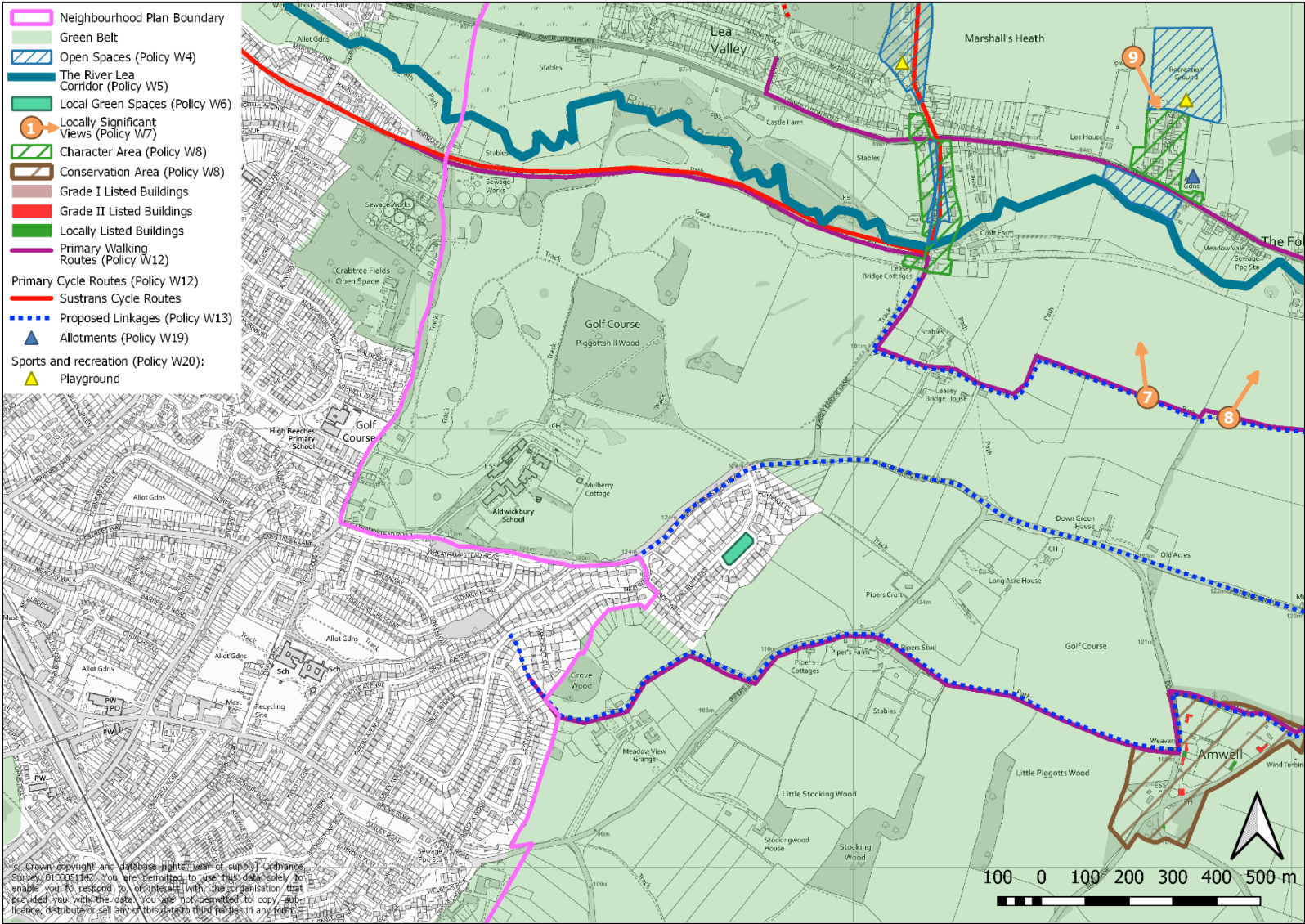
Policies Map 1



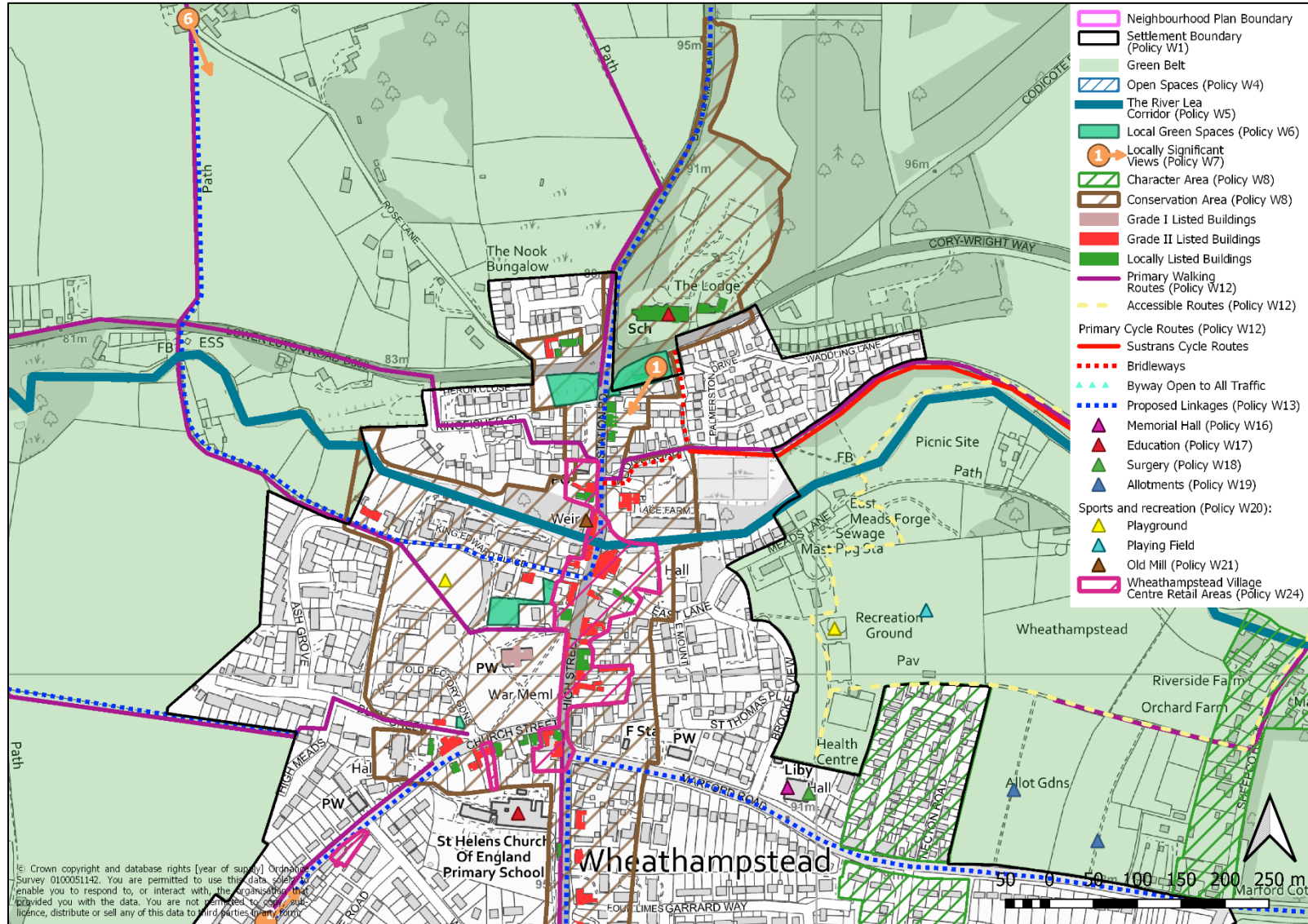
Policies Map 2



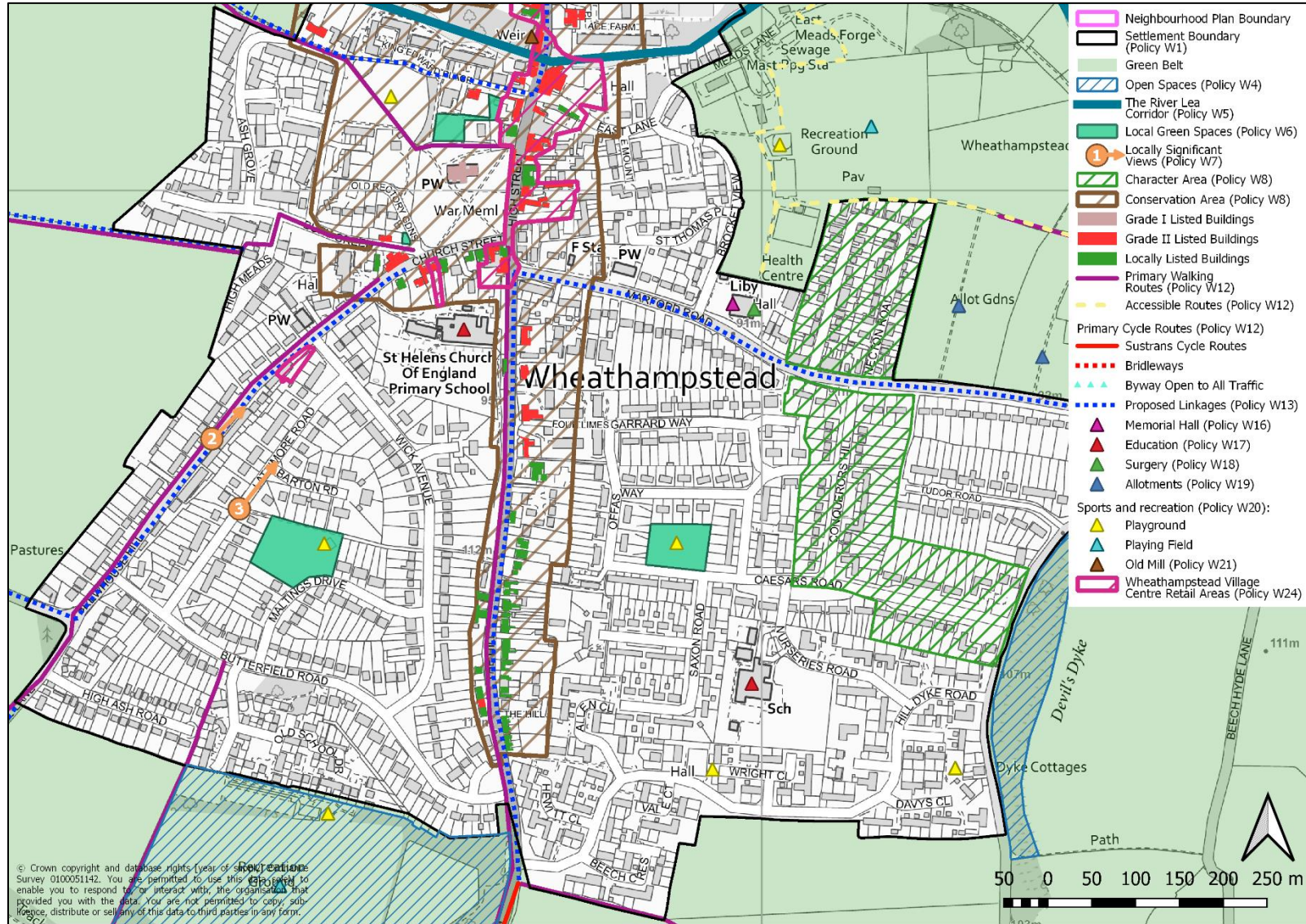
Policies Map 3



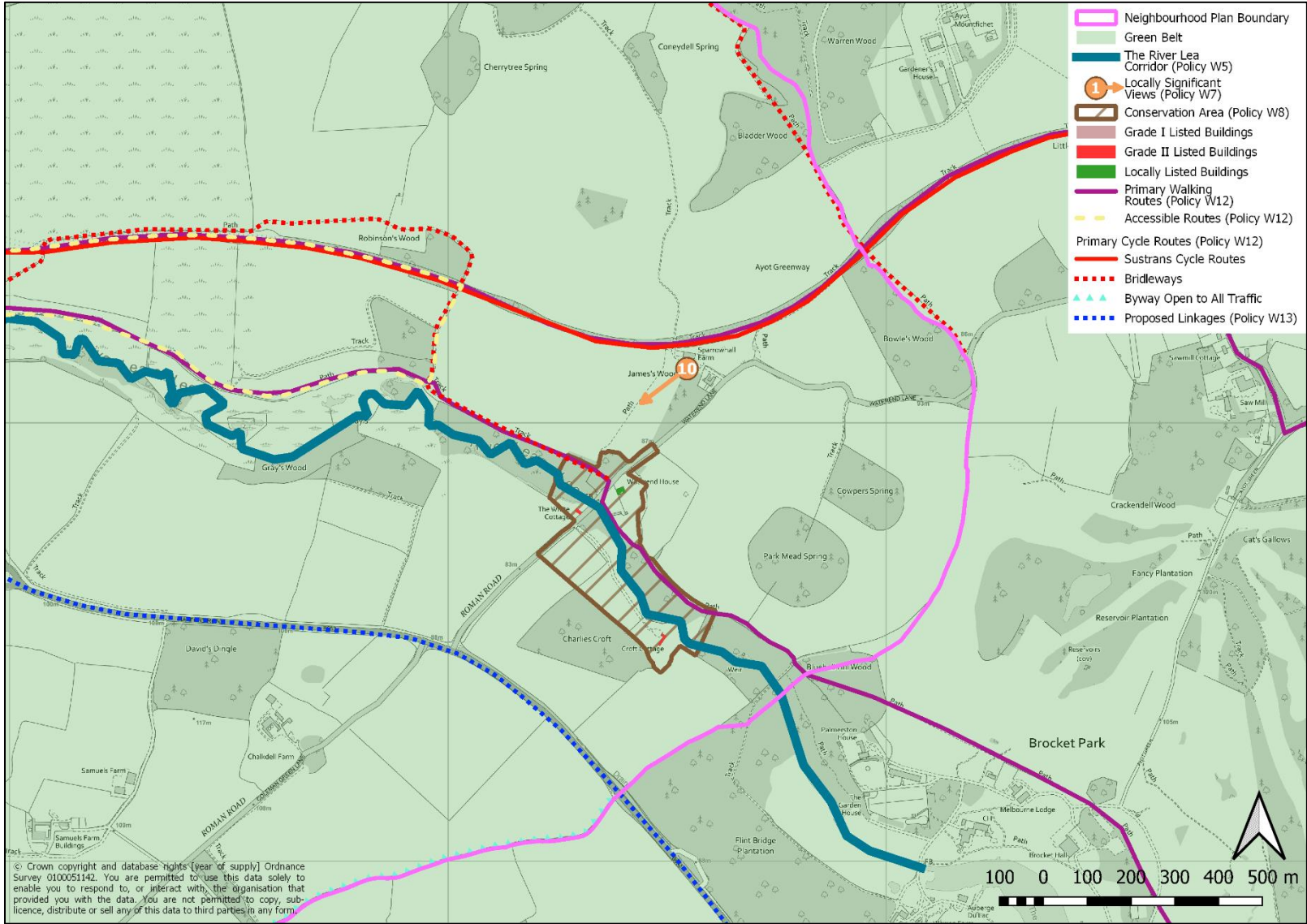
Policies Map 4



Policies Map 5 (north)

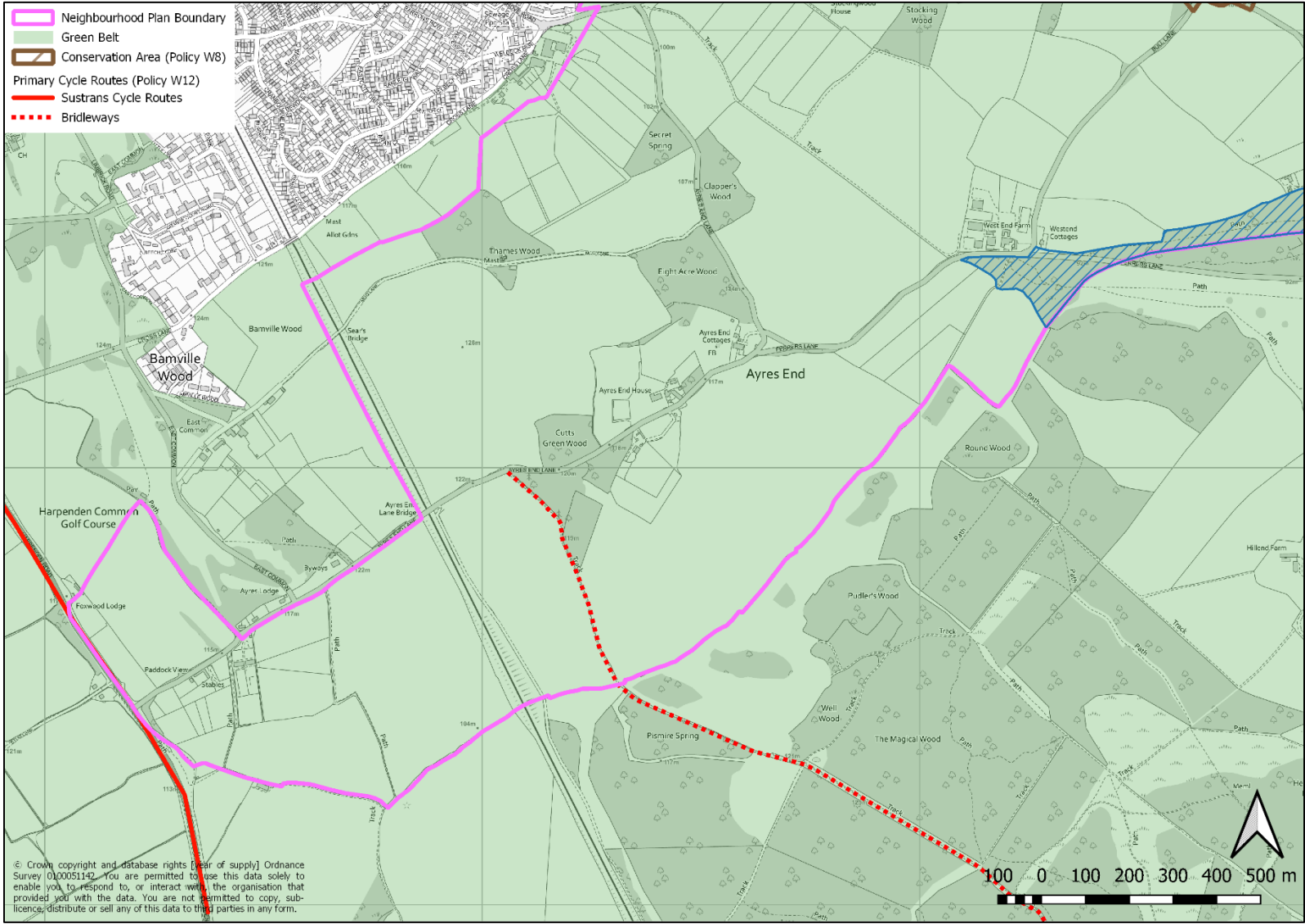


Policies Map 5 (south)

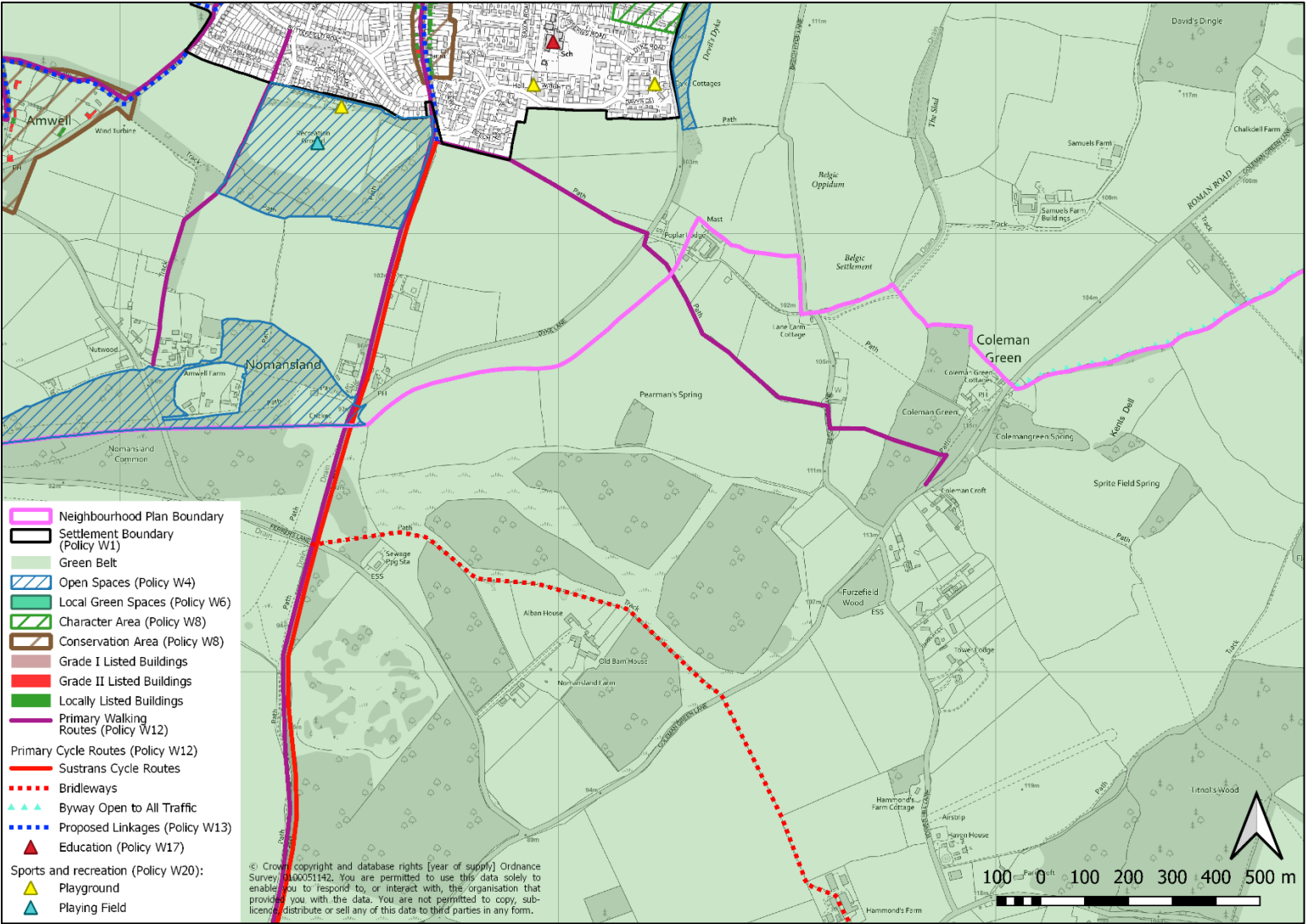


Policies Map 6





Policies Map 7



Policies Map 8

## 14 GLOSSARY

- **Affordable housing:** Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions.

a) **Affordable housing for rent** meets all the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent schemes (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) (Starter homes: In January 2020 the Department announced that the Starter Homes policy was no longer being pursued. In February 2020 it launched a new initiative, First Homes, which also aims to deliver discounted homes for first-time buyers. See below for more information on First Homes).

**First Homes** are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes.

Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:

- i. must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
- ii. are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria;
- iii. on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
- iv. after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).

First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations

c) Discounted **market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

- **Amenity green space** defined in the St Albans Green Space Strategy (GSS) as 'including informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and

village greens'. It is a category which at times overlaps with others, for example Commons can be classified as either amenity green space or natural green space (they are considered partly in both categories in the GSS).

- **Ancient woodland:** An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 CE. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).
- **Brownfield land registers:** Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** A fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by the District Council. A proportion accrues to the Parish Council.
- **Conservation (for heritage policy):** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
- **Conservation area:** An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- **Habitats site:** Any site which would be included in the definition at Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.
- **Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- **Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
- **Local connection:** For the purposes of allocating affordable homes, housing shall be occupied in accordance with the City and District Council's standard allocation procedures as set out in the St Albans City and District Council's February 2021 Housing Allocations Policy - <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Housing%20Allocations%20Policy%20February%202021.pdf> – with priority given to applicants who can demonstrate that they have a local connection to the Parish of Wheathampstead at the time of occupation.
- **Local housing need:** The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach.
- **Local plan:** A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – the national planning policy document which sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Neighbourhood plan:** A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- **Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.
- **Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing, through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.
- **People with disabilities:** People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.
- **Playing field:** The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- **Pop-up shops:** are temporary retail stores that are open for a short period of time in order to take advantage of a passing fad, seasonal demand or economic opportunity. They include holiday markets, Halloween and firework stores, certain niche retailers and limited engagement experimental retailers.
- **Renewable and low-carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared with conventional use of fossil fuels).
- **Section 106 agreement:** A mechanism under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable.
- **Setting of a heritage asset:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance, or may be neutral.
- **Use Class Order:** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended in 1995, 2005 and 2013) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning Permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.

## LIST OF EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS

All documents are available at:

<http://wheathampstead-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplan/>

- [Building for a Healthy Life, Design for Homes, 2021](#)
- [Building In Context Toolkit, English Heritage, CABI and the Kent Architecture Centre](#)
- [Census, 2011](#)
- [The Biodiversity Metric 2.0](#)
- [Call for Sites and Assessment, February 2019](#)
- [Chalk rivers: nature conservation and management, Natural England, 1999](#)
- [Detailed Local Plan Technical Report, Green Spaces, St Albans District Council, 2016](#)
- [EB Biodiversity Impact Calculator – Guidance for use January 2015](#)
- [EB Accounting For Biodiversity In Planning – A toolkit for Local Planning Authorities in England, March 2017](#)
- [Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record](#)
- [Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment produced by Herts County Council](#)
- [Housing Needs Survey Analysis](#)
- [Housing Quality Indicators, 2011](#)
- [Housing Report, 2020](#)
- [Independent Assessment of Housing Needs and Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update: St Albans City and District Council Final Report, 2015](#)
- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [Manual for Streets 1 and 2, DCLG, DfT](#)
- [National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 \(as amended\)](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework, 2019](#)
- [Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017](#)
- [Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2015 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Planning \(Listed Building and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#)
- [Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)
- [Playing Fields Policy and Guidance, Sport England, March 2018](#)
- [Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Hertfordshire County Council, 2017](#)
- [St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994](#)
- [St Albans Green Space Strategy, 2011](#)
- [St Albans Locally Listed Buildings](#)
- [Secured by Design, UK Police Service](#)
- [South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2016](#)
- [Streets for All, Historic England, 2018](#)
- [Town & Country Planning Act 1990](#)
- [Wheathampstead Heritage \(website\)](#)