



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**



CABINET

11 July 2022

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

Sandra Hancock Democratic Services Manager

democraticservices@watford.gov.uk .

01923 278377

Publication date: 1 July 2022

Updated 5 July 2022

Cabinet Membership

Mayor	P Taylor	(Chair)
Councillor	A Dychton	(Deputy Mayor)
Councillors	J Pattinson, I Stotesbury, M Watkin and T Williams	

Agenda

Part A – Open to the Public

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Disclosure of interests (if any)**
3. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 13 June 2022 to be submitted and signed.

4. **Conduct of meeting**

The Cabinet may wish to consider whether there are any items on which there is general agreement which could be considered now, to enable discussion to focus on those items where the Cabinet sees a need for further debate.

5. **Ombudsman Decision (Pages 5 - 14)**

Report of the Group Head of Democracy and Governance

6. **Changing the Joint Committee Agreement for the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee (Pages 15 - 29)**

Report of the Group Head of Democracy and Governance

Appendix 2 attached to this report is considered exempt (Part B) in accordance with Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, as it contains financial and commercially sensitive information.

7. Financial Outturn 2021/22 (Pages 30 - 46)

Report of the Head of Finance

8. South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Statement of Community Involvement (Pages 47 - 284)

Report of the Spatial Planning Manager

9. Exclusion of press & public

The Chair to move: that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1) of the Act for the reasons stated below in terms of Schedule 12A.

Note: if approved, the Chair will ask members of the press and public to leave the meeting at this point.

10. Leisure Contract Extension (Pages 285 - 291)

Report of the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services

This report is considered exempt (Part B) in accordance with Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, as it contains commercially sensitive information.

11. Town Hall and Colosseum Refurbishment - recommendation to appoint a main contractor (Pages 292 - 320)

Report of the Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office

This report is considered to be exempt (Part B) in accordance with Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A as it will contain commercially sensitive information.

Agenda Item 5

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 11 July 2022

Report author: Group Head of Democracy and Governance

Title: Ombudsman Decision

1.0 Summary

1.1 Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the council's Monitoring Officer is legally obliged to make a report to Cabinet of any finding of fault by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

1.2 On 8 June 2022 the council received a final decision from the Ombudsman in relation to a complaint regarding Community Protection. The anonymised decision is attached as appendix 1.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
That the lessons learned are not followed	Similar findings of fault leading to a loss of reputation	That the recommendations be followed	treat	2

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the decision be noted

Further information:

Carol Chen

carol.chen@watford.gov.uk

Tel: 01923 278350

4.0 **Detailed proposal**

- 4.1 Under s5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the council's Monitoring Officer is legally obliged to report to Cabinet any findings of fault by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- 4.2 On 8 June 2022 the council received the final decision on a complaint made to the Ombudsman regarding how Community Protection dealt with a complaint about noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour arising from a nearby business to the complainant's residence.
- 4.3 Whilst the Ombudsman acknowledged that it was for the council to determine whether or not a statutory nuisance existed, and found that the council had done so appropriately, the Ombudsman found fault with failures by the council in communicating with the complainant. The council has accepted the Ombudsman's findings and has apologised to the complainant and is in the process of arranging payment of the £150 to the complainant for his time and trouble in having to pursue his complaint. A copy of the anonymised decision is at appendix 1.
- 4.4 The Head of Community Protection comments that, as outlined in the Ombudsman's decision, an internal review has taken place and actions requested by the Ombudsman to progress the case are all in hand. Learning has been embedded in the procedures and management processes to prevent a recurrence. These include clearly communicated expectations and processes to monitor case work, escalate issues and support team members to ensure case work is reallocated if necessary. Thus unacceptable service levels for customers whilst supporting officers delivering the service.
- 4.5 All decisions by the Ombudsman are published on their website in anonymised form.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the compensation will be met from the service's existing budgets and there are no broader financial implications arising from this report or the Ombudsman's findings.

5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that all findings of fault are required to be reported to Cabinet.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered that there are no direct equalities implications in this report.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 No implications

5.5 Accommodation

5.5.1 No implications

5.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

5.6.1 The Ombudsman has recommended that the council consider whether it can exercise any of its Anti-social behaviour powers in this case. This is being considered by officers.

5.7 Sustainability

5.7.1 No implications

Appendices

Appendix 1 Ombudsman's final decision.

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

The Ombudsman's final decision

Summary: Mr X complains the Council has failed to address noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour arising from a nearby business. Mr X also says the Council failed to communicate effectively with him about his complaints. We have found fault with the Council's actions, causing an injustice to Mr X. We have made recommendations to remedy the injustice caused.

The complaint

1. Mr X says the Council failed to address noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour arising from a nearby business.
2. Mr X says the Council appears willing to engage with the issue, but then does not take any action, or provide updates unless prompted. This has caused Mr X frustration and uncertainty.

The Ombudsman's role and powers

3. We investigate complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. In this statement, I have used the word fault to refer to these. We must also consider whether any fault has had an adverse impact on the person making the complaint. I refer to this as 'injustice'. If there has been fault which has caused an injustice, we may suggest a remedy. (*Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1) and 26A(1), as amended*)
4. We cannot question whether an organisation's decision is right or wrong simply because the complainant disagrees with it. We must consider whether there was fault in the way the decision was reached. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 34(3), as amended*)

How I considered this complaint

5. I considered the information provided by Mr X and spoke to him about the complaint.
6. I considered the information provided by the Council in response to my enquiries.
7. Both parties had the opportunity to comment on a draft version of this decision. I considered any comments received before making a final decision.

Relevant legislation, guidance and policy

Statutory nuisances

8. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA), councils have a duty to take reasonable steps to investigate potential 'statutory nuisances'. Typical things which may be a statutory nuisance include:
 - noise from premises or vehicles, equipment or machinery in the street;
 - smoke from premises;
 - smells from industry, trade or business premises; and
 - artificial light from premises.
9. For the issue to count as a statutory nuisance, it must:
 - unreasonably and substantially interfere with the use or enjoyment of a home or other premises; and / or
 - injure health or be likely to injure health.
10. There is no fixed point at which something becomes a statutory nuisance. Councils will rely on suitably qualified officers (generally an environmental health officer, or EHO) to gather evidence. They may, for example, ask the complainant to complete diary sheets, fit noise-monitoring equipment, or undertake site visits. Councils will sometimes offer an 'out-of-hours' service for people to contact, if a nuisance occurs outside normal working time.
11. Once the evidence-gathering is complete, the environmental health officer(s) will assess the evidence. They will consider factors such as the timing, duration, and intensity of the alleged nuisance. The officer(s) will use their professional judgement to decide whether a statutory nuisance exists.
12. Councils can also decide to take informal action if the issue complained about is causing a nuisance, but is not a statutory nuisance. Examples of such action may include writing to the person causing the nuisance, or suggesting mediation

Anti-social behaviour

13. Councils have a general duty to take action to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). But ASB can take many different forms, and councils should make informed decisions about which of their powers is most appropriate to use.
14. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 gave councils new powers to tackle ASB. These powers include:
 - the power to issue community protection notices (CPN);
 - the power to make a public spaces protection order (PSPO);
 - the power to close premises for a specified period of time; and
 - the power to apply to the courts for a civil injunction.

Principles of Good Administrative Practice

15. The Ombudsman published the Principles of Good Administrative Practice (the Practice) in 2018. The Practice sets out the Ombudsman's benchmark for the standards expected when investigating local authorities' actions.
16. The Practice stresses the importance of being open and accountable, explaining the reasons for decision making, and keeping proper, suitable records.

What I found

Background and previous issues

17. Mr X's property is near a supermarket and petrol garage. In 2016, Mr X contacted the Council to report noise disturbances coming from the site.
18. The Council investigated the reported disturbances in 2016 and 2017. It carried out noise monitoring exercises as part of its investigation, using recording equipment to help decide if the disturbances constituted a statutory nuisance. As a result of the Council's investigation, it was agreed that deliveries to the neighbouring supermarket would not be made before 07:00.

The complaint

19. In mid-2020, Mr X contacted the Council to report new disturbances. Mr X said that:
 - deliveries had started before 07:00 again, despite the change in schedules agreed previously;
 - these deliveries, and other activities such as refuse collection, were causing disturbances throughout the night and preventing him from getting any sleep; and
 - some of the customers were acting in an anti-social manner by urinating in an area that acted as a boundary between the site and Mr X's home.
20. In December 2021, Mr X complained to the Ombudsman about the Council's response to his reports. Mr X said:
 - despite reporting disturbances and anti-social behaviour to the Council for a year-and-a-half, the Council had taken no action to address the problem;
 - he had taken any action the Council had asked of him, including completing noise diaries and reporting new disturbances, but the Council had not returned this effort;
 - the Council conducted noise monitoring exercises in late 2020, but had not told Mr X the outcome almost a year later;
 - the Council had repeatedly failed to provide updates to him about its actions and findings, meaning he had to constantly chase for information; and
 - the Council had upheld his complaints about its response, but this had not resulted in any improvement in the service provided.
21. I have not produced an exhaustive chronology detailing every occurrence. What follows is an analysis of the key events identified in the evidence I have seen about this complaint.

Statutory nuisance and the Council's conclusions

22. As outlined in paragraphs 8-12, councils have a duty to investigate potential statutory nuisances. It is a professional decision for the Council whether a nuisance is considered 'statutory'. The Ombudsman cannot decide if something is a statutory nuisance. While we may criticise failings in the investigation process, we cannot direct the Council to consider its decision again if there was no fault in how it decided.

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23. Between July and December 2020, the Council conducted a site visit and raised Mr X's concerns with the supermarket company. It also conducted a noise monitoring exercise from mid-November to late December 2020. In January 2021, the Council considered the evidence obtained through noise monitoring. It noted there was high background noise from traffic and that deliveries to the site did not always adhere to the 'quiet delivery protocol' put in place by the supermarket. The protocol consisted of practical measures to minimise the noise caused by deliveries, including turning engines off when possible and placing mats under the lorry tail lifts to reduce noise. The Council decided these disturbances did not amount to a statutory nuisance.
 24. The Council took appropriate actions to gather evidence, via the use of noise diaries and noise-recording equipment. It then made a professional decision based on this evidence. I have not therefore identified fault in how it investigated this matter. The Council is entitled to reach this conclusion as a matter of professional judgment, having acted without fault.

The Council's communication and record-keeping

25. The Council decided in January 2021 the disturbances reported by Mr X did not amount to a statutory nuisance. However, the Council did not tell Mr X about this conclusion in any further contact, even though there were several opportunities to do so. This was the case even though Mr X made a formal complaint about the lack of updates. The Council upheld Mr X's complaint at both stages of its complaints process and apologised for not providing the update, but did not tell him of its conclusions. This is fault.
26. In October 2020, the Council received an explanation for the change in delivery schedules. This was to ensure social distancing measures were adhered to, because deliveries during busier trading hours came with increased risks for staff and the public.
27. In March 2021, the Council received more clarification about this decision. The supermarket cited written ministerial statements about retail operations, issued by the Government in March and November 2020, which encouraged local authorities to adopt a flexible approach to deliveries. This was to help ensure access to essential goods. The supermarket intended to keep the amended delivery schedule until the 1 April 2021, the period covered by the written ministerial statements. After this time, it would revert to deliveries from 07:00, unless the Government issued any further advice.
28. The Council did not provide these explanations to Mr X at any point. In October 2020, it said the supermarket would not change its delivery schedule, but it did not say why. It also did not clarify whether it agreed with the supermarket's explanations. This is fault.
29. I consider these faults caused Mr X an injustice. In its response to my enquiries, the Council agreed it should have told Mr X in March 2021 it did not intend to take any formal action at the time. It believed the earlier deliveries, while not ideal, could be justified in the circumstances.
30. Mr X told me it was unclear throughout whether the Council agreed there was an issue it could deal with, or whether it intended to take any action. This caused continual frustration, which may have been mitigated or avoided if the Council had shared this information.

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31. Mr X was allocated a new case officer in May 2021 and continued to report disturbances and anti-social behaviour to the Council. The Council contacted the supermarket sporadically, but did not regularly update Mr X on its actions, or make clear it would not be taking formal action at that point. Mr X occasionally went long periods without updates, unless he contacted the Council first. I consider the Council to be at fault for the way it communicated with Mr X at this time, given it had already upheld complaints about its communication. This fault caused Mr X avoidable frustration and inconvenience.
32. The Council held a meeting with the supermarket's compliance team in October 2021. The Council told Mr X in advance about this meeting. The Council has confirmed to me the meeting covered the following points:
- the supermarket confirmed deliveries were being made after 07:00.
 - petrol deliveries were made outside standard hours to minimise traffic congestion and the general disruption such deliveries could cause. This practice was described as common, but the supermarket would discuss Mr X's concerns with the company that managed the garage.
 - supermarket staff had been reminded to take care to avoid excessive noise when emptying the bins.
 - supermarket staff were not being sent to check on reports of anti-social behaviour at the time, due to safety concerns. The Council confirmed to me in other correspondence that the police had been notified of the matter.
33. The Council told me it should have told Mr X about the outcome of this meeting. It said it also should have advised Mr X it had concluded its investigation at that point, as it could take no further action. The Council has accepted it did not tell Mr X this at the time, nor on later occasions when Mr X raised similar concerns. This is fault by the Council.
34. I consider this fault caused Mr X an injustice. Mr X spent extra time and effort reporting new incidents to the Council and seeking updates on its actions, while being unaware the Council had already decided it could take no formal action. Had Mr X known of the Council's decision, some or all of this effort could have been avoided.
35. The Council's internal records show that some of the incident diaries Mr X returned in late 2020 were not uploaded to the Council's internal records system until August 2021, due to officer oversight. I consider this is fault; however, I cannot say this caused Mr X an injustice. While this information would not have been available to Mr X's new case officer in May 2021, new events had already superseded those reported in the previous year.

Reports of ASB

36. As well as the noise disturbances, Mr X reported ASB perpetrated by those using the garage. Mr X said individuals urinated in the boundary area between the garage and his home, and sometimes played loud music in their cars at unsocial hours.
37. Mr X told me he had suggested installing a new fence along the existing boundary line to mitigate against the impact of this ASB. I have seen evidence the Council raised this as a possibility with the supermarket and that it was due to be discussed with the company that owns the garage. Mr X and the Council also raised this concern with the police service.

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38. The Council could not compel the businesses in question to install a particular fence, although it did seek Mr X's chosen resolution. The evidence I have seen, however, suggests the Council did not seek regular, substantive updates from the businesses on how or if they would act and find a resolution.
39. Further, Councils have some legal responsibility in investigating allegations of ASB and have specific powers to reduce such conduct in their communities. I would expect the Council to assess whether it agreed the incidents reported by Mr X constituted ASB and what risk they posed. It is the case that both Mr X and the Council raised the incidents with the police. I would, however, still expect the Council to consider its responsibility, which is independent from the police, in reducing ASB in the community.
40. I have not seen evidence the Council has properly considered its legal responsibility and whether it could have used the specific powers it has in this case to address the ASB. I consider this is fault.

The Council's proposed actions

41. In its responses to my enquiries, the Council proactively identified many of the faults listed above and recognised the frustration caused to Mr X. It also advised it had received a planning application for redevelopment of the garage site. It understood that the works would include installing a new fence along the boundary line to mitigate the reported ASB and privacy issues for neighbouring residents. The associated Officer Report also notes these proposals.
42. The Council also proposed some steps it would take to address the faults identified in this investigation. It said it would:
- carry out a site visit to consider the implications of the planned changes to the site and seek confirmation from the supermarket of when these works are likely to commence;
 - contact the supermarket and Mr X to confirm deliveries were still being made after 07:00;
 - confirm with Mr X there have been no significant changes with the activities on site which could affect its statutory nuisance assessment; and
 - confirm to Mr X clearly the activities the Council can legally deal with, those it can try and deal with informally, and those he should report to partner organisations directly.
43. A draft version of this decision recommended the Council carry out the actions proposed in paragraph 42, if it had not already done so. In comments on the draft decision, the Council provided an update confirming it had carried out these actions and had written to Mr X.
44. I have therefore removed this recommendation from the final decision. However, I would expect the Council to ensure it communicates with Mr X about this matter in a timely and substantive way in future, given the faults identified in this investigation.

Agreed action

45. Within four weeks of the final decision being issued, the Council has agreed to:
- a) consider whether it can use its specific powers to help address the alleged ASB and confirm a course of action to Mr X;

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- b) pay £150 to Mr X to recognise his time and trouble in pursuing this complaint;
and
 - c) provide a written apology to Mr X for the failures in communication identified in this investigation.

Final decision

- 46. I have completed my investigation with a finding of fault by the Council, causing injustice to Mr X. I have made recommendations to remedy the injustice caused.

Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman

Agenda Item 6

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 11 July 2022

Report author: Group Head of Democracy and Governance

Title: Changing the Joint Committee Agreement for the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Joint Committee is currently in the process of building a new crematorium at Bunkers Farm in Dacorum which is due to be completed in December 2022 and opened in January 2023.

1.2 In order to facilitate the operation of the new crematorium discussions have taken place between the Chief Executives and Monitoring Officers of the 5 councils that make up the Joint Committee (Watford, Three Rivers, Dacorum, St. Albans and Hertsmere) and it became apparent that a revised Joint Committee agreement would be required in order for the 2 crematoria to be managed effectively.

1.3 The Joint Committee met on 13 June 2022 and received the report attached as appendix 1 and unanimously agreed to recommend to the 5 councils that a new Joint Committee Agreement on a Lead Authority model be established with Three Rivers District Council as the Lead Authority.

1.4 Cabinet is therefore asked to approve that Watford enters into a new Joint Committee agreement with the other 4 constituent councils.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
That the new model is not approved by one of the 5 councils	It will not be possible to convert to a lead authority and the Joint Committee continues as it is which may lead to potential future legal challenges	That all 5 councils endorse the change	treat	3

3.0 **Recommendations**

- 3.1 That cabinet agrees to the change of the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee agreement to that of a lead authority model with Three Rivers District Council as the lead authority.
- 3.2 That cabinet delegates to the Group Head of Democracy and Governance working with the Monitoring Officers of the 4 other constituent councils to develop all necessary legal agreements to facilitate the change subject to final approval of the Joint Committee and the constituent councils.

Further information:

Carol Chen
carol.chen@watford.gov.uk
Tel: 01923 278350

Report approved by: Donna Nolan, Managing Director

4.0 **Detailed proposal**

- 4.1 Attached at appendix 1 is the report that went to the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee on 13 June 2022 setting out the rationale for changing the operation of the Joint Committee.
- 4.2 The Joint Committee unanimously agreed the recommendations set out in the report.
- 4.3 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval on behalf of Watford to the change to the Joint Committee. Similar reports will be going to the other 4 constituent councils. Work will take place over the summer to put in place all requisite legal agreements to facilitate the change with a view to final approval being given by the Joint Committee and the councils in the autumn. If all proceeds to plan the new arrangement would come into effect in January 2023 in time for the opening of the new crematorium in Dacorum.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that as at present all liabilities, risks and rewards would still be shared equally between the 5 councils.

5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that a new Joint Committee agreement and also indemnity agreements between the 5 councils will need to be drafted as well as the transfer of contracts and staff to Three Rivers as the lead council. Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP is assisting the 5 councils with all the necessary legal agreements.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1

Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered that there are no equalities implications in this proposal.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 Staff are currently employed directly by the Joint Committee they will need to be formally consulted on the proposal and would TUPE transfer to Three Rivers. In addition Three Rivers will need to enter into a subsumption agreement with the Pension Provider.

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 A land management or lease will need to be entered into between Three Rivers and Dacorum acting on behalf of the Joint Committee for the new crematorium. The form of agreement will be developed alongside the Joint Committee Agreement.

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 There are no implications in this report.

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 There are no direct implications

Appendices

Appendix 1 Report to West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee 13 June 2022 with legal advice options paper.

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Part A

Report to: West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee

Date of meeting: 13 June 2022

Report author: Honorary Secretary

Title: Changing the Joint Committee Agreement

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Joint Committee is currently in the process of building a new crematorium at Bunkers Farm in Dacorum which is due to be completed in December 2022 and opened in January 2023.

1.2 In order to facilitate the operation of the new crematorium discussions have taken place between the Chief Executives and Monitoring Officers of the councils that make up the Joint Committee and it has become apparent that a revised Joint Committee agreement will be required in order for the councils to effectively manage 2 crematoria.

1.3 The councils are therefore recommending to the Joint Committee that a Lead Authority model approach to the operation of the Joint Committee be adopted. This report sets out the rationale for this approach.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
That the joint Committee does not endorse the recommendation	The joint committee continues as is with the potential for challenge	That a revised agreement is adopted	treat	3

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee agrees to the adoption of a Lead Authority model for the future operation of the Joint Committee.

- 3.2 That the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee recommends to each of its constituent councils that the Lead Authority model be adopted and that Three Rivers District Council be the Lead Authority.
- 3.3 That the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee agrees to the development of a new Joint Committee Agreement and associated legal documents and delegates authority to the Monitoring Officers of each council to develop the agreement for final approval by the Joint Committee and partner councils.
- 3.3 That the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee agrees the recommendations in the staffing paper at appendix 2.

Further information:

Donna Nolan Honorary Secretary

Report approved by:

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 The West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee has been in existence for many years and is made up of 5 councils in South West Hertfordshire namely, Dacorum, Hertsmere, St. Albans, Three Rivers and Watford. The Joint Committee has had the responsibility of running the crematorium in Three Rivers, employing the staff and entering into all contracts related to the operation of the crematorium.
- 4.2 The Joint Committee is also in the process of building a second crematorium at Bunkers Farm in Dacorum which is due to complete in December and open in January 2023.
- 4.3 The second crematorium is also on the site of a new cemetery which will be owned and operated by Dacorum Borough Council.
- 4.4 It has become clear that formal legal agreements need to be in place relating to the ownership and management of the crematorium and its relationship with the cemetery. Whilst these issues were being discussed between the councils it also became apparent that stronger governance was required in relation to the overall operation of the Joint Committee's activities. In particular the Joint Committee's legal status, its ability to enter into contractual arrangements, sharing of surplus and liabilities etc.
- 4.5 Independent legal advice was commissioned by the councils from Anthony Collins solicitors on options for going forward. Anthony Collins have produced a detailed advice note on the issues, the options considered and the recommended approach going forward. This is attached as appendix 1.

- 4.6 The Honorary Secretary has met with the Chief Executives of the councils involved in the Joint Committee and they are recommending that the Joint Committee operate as a Lead Authority model. What this means in practical terms is that rather than the Joint Committee itself, which is not a separate legal entity, one of the councils will be responsible for employing the crematorium staff, for entering into any contracts necessary for the operation of the crematorium and for entering into a land management or lease arrangement with the council that the crematorium is in and who currently owns the land.
- 4.7 It would still be overseen by the Joint Committee who would act as now, on behalf of the 5 councils to have overall management responsibility.
- 4.8 Three Rivers District Council has volunteered to undertake the Lead Authority role. The existing crematorium is in their area and therefore 2 land management or lease agreements will not be needed.
- 4.9 If the Joint Committee approves the proposal then a report will go to each of the constituent councils seeking their agreement to the change. Work will then commence to draft a new Joint Committee agreement and also to put in place appropriate indemnity agreements between each of the councils to ensure that the Lead Authority is indemnified and will only incur its fifth share of the costs and liabilities. The current staff will be consulted and TUPE transfer from the Joint Committee to Three Rivers. Contracts in existence will need to be assigned over as well. This work to transition from the current way of operating to the new operating model will be led by Three Rivers as the proposed Lead Authority. HR have started reviewing existing posts and a report is attached at appendix 2 for consideration.
- 4.10 The intention would be for the new arrangements to take effect from 1 January 2023 in time for the opening of the new crematorium.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance for Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council comments that under the Lead Authority model, financial transactions relating to the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee will form part of the Three Rivers District Council statement of accounts. Financial support to the Joint Committee is already provided by Three Rivers District Council and there are no issues anticipated with the transition. The Joint Committee is currently registered separately for VAT. Advice on VAT matters will be sought, however, it is not anticipated that the proposed changes will have an impact on the VAT efficiency of Three Rivers District Council or the Joint Committee. The new Joint Committee

agreement will be a critical document to ensure that liabilities, risks and rewards remain shared between the members of the Joint Committees.

5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 Independent legal advice has been sought by the councils from Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP and is attached as appendix 1. They will continue to assist with the drafting of the new Joint Committee agreement and other legal work required to effect the change.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1

Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered there are no equalities implications in this proposal.

Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 Staff are currently employed directly by the Joint Committee they will need to be formally consulted on the proposal and would TUPE transfer to Three Rivers. In addition Three Rivers will need to enter into a subsumption agreement with the Pension Provider. Details of the proposed staffing arrangements are attached as appendix 2.

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 A land management or lease will need to be entered into between Three Rivers and Dacorum acting on behalf of the Joint Committee for the new crematorium. The form of agreement will be developed alongside the Joint Committee Agreement.

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 There are no implications in this report.

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 There are no direct implications in this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Anthony Collins LLP legal advice,
Appendix 2 HR report on Job Evaluations

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Report to: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 11 July 2022
Report of: Director of Finance
Title: Summary of the Financial Outturn 2021/22

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the revenue and capital year end position for the financial year 2021/22. The position is subject to external audit.
- 1.2 The Council continues to make strong progress in recovery from the financial impact of COVID-19. During the year, the Council's Community Protection Service has continued to lead the operational response to the pandemic within the Borough to minimise transmission, to maximise protection and to support the community. This work has been partially funded by additional income of £1.300 million received from the Hertfordshire Health Protection Board with officers also taking on additional responsibilities and sharing resources across teams to ensure that services are maintained.
- 1.3 The lifting of lockdown restrictions during 2021/22 has resulted in some recovery of income levels. However, income levels remain below pre-pandemic levels across a number of services including leisure and parking. It is likely that this will extend into 2022/23 and will be addressed through the budget monitoring report.
- 1.4 The revised services net **revenue budget** for 2021/22 (set at Council on 17 January 2022) was **£15.050 million**. The outturn position at 31 March 2022 was **£13.610 million**. This is a net underspend of **-£1.439 million**, primarily created by three key variations which are all subject to carry forward requests:
- -£0.359m – additional support agreed for leisure management contract in 2021/22 deferred to 2022/23
 - -£0.693m – funding released by additional Homelessness Support grant received in 2021/22
 - -£0.249m – Renewal Fund Reserve funding for projects slipped into 2022/23
- The revenue variances are set out in full in Appendix 1.
- 1.5 In total, services are requesting that **£1.393 million** is carried forward to 2022/23 for completion of agreed projects. If these are approved, it will leave an underspend of **-£0.046 million** to be transferred to the economic impact reserve.
- 1.6 The Council (at its meeting on 17 January 2022) agreed a revised 2021/22 **capital budget** of **£66.307 million**. At 31 March 2022 the Council had spent **£30.532 million** giving a variance of **-£35.775 million**. Services are requesting that **a net £37.669 million** is rephased to 2022/23. The carry forward is higher compared to the overall variance largely due to Croxley Business Park where direct spend incurred is charged against the contribution received at the time of acquisition.

- 1.7 The Finance Digest reported to Finance Scrutiny Committee in March noted that rephrasing at year end was expected due to the complexity of projects. This is particularly true of the loan drawdowns to the Council's joint ventures which are subject to the changing cashflow requirements of the companies. Reprofiled in relation to the joint ventures account for £15.900m of the carry forward request.
- 1.8 The Council's capital programme has also been subject to macro-economic factors effecting the construction industry. The materials supply chain continues to be effected by the surge in demand that occurred as lockdowns lifted at the same time as reduced supply of materials. Shortages in materials are due in part to China's strategy of Zero-COVID which has effected production and the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Pressure from both demand and supply is contributing to pushing inflation on construction costs above the headline rate. The impact of these factors on the capital programme is being closely monitored and will be reported on during 2022/23 with longer term implications managed through the budget setting process for 2023/24.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To consider the 2021/22 revenue year end position as summarised at Paragraph 4.1, the supplementary notes at Appendices 1 to 5 and to note the year end position, which includes carry forwards into budgets for 2022/23.
- 2.2 To approve the 2021/22 budget carry forwards into 2022/23 as recommended by the Leadership Board totalling **£1.393 million** as detailed at **Appendix 2**. This will change the approved 2022/23 total revenue services budget from £13.743 million to £15.136 million.
- 2.3 To consider the 2021/22 capital year end position as summarised at Paragraph 5.1 and shown in detail in **Appendix 4**. To confirm rephrasing of **£37.669 million** into 2022/23.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact Hannah Doney, Head of Finance, telephone extension 7131, email hannah.doney@threerivers.gov.uk

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 This report focuses on the variation between the latest agreed budget and the final expenditure and income for the financial year. This comparison provides an indication of the accuracy and robustness of financial control and the achievement of the Council's priority to operate the Council efficiently and effectively.
- 3.2 The report provides an analysis of the revenue and capital year end position for 2021/22. A more detailed financial report can be found in the Statement of Accounts that will be reported to the Audit Committee on 28 July 2022 and will be subject to review by the Council's external auditors.

4.0 REVENUE OUTTURN 2021/22

4.1 The table below shows the net expenditure by service area which compares the revised budget to the outturn. The net effect, after proposed carry forwards is a favourable variance of **-£0.046 million**.

Service Area	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance
	£,0000	£,0000	£,0000
Service Transformation	3,689	3,473	(216)
Community & Environmental	11,334	11,167	(166)
Parking Service	(271)	(19)	252
Democracy & Governance	1,994	1,831	(163)
Place Shaping	(6,155)	(6,844)	(688)
Corporate Strategy & Communications	(44)	(229)	(185)
Human Resources	618	572	(46)
Strategic Finance (this includes pension liability costs of £2.3m)	3,886	3,660	(226)
Net Direct Cost of Service	15,050	13,610	(1,439)
		Carry Forwards	1,393
		Total Variance	(46)

4.2 **Appendix 1** details the major variances between the revised budget and the outturn. Some of these variances are:

- Contingency spend on sports centre was not required for 21/22 - £350k
- Net cost of supporting and putting on events was higher - £105k
- Additional costs for the maintenance parks and open spaces was higher by £134k
- Income from the parking service was lower than expected due to COVID19, balances in year have been transferred to the reserve to fund future projects
- Planning Application income was lower due to adverse market conditions - £142k
- Funding of £550k for Homelessness prevention has been carried into 2022/23 to fund the expected surge in 2022/23.
- Saving on employee costs in Policy due to vacant posts - £206k
- Net saving on borrowing due to timing of capital projects - £145k

4.3 **Appendix 2** details the requests to carry forward budgets to 2022/23 amounting to **£1.393 million**. These have been reviewed by the Leadership Board who support the requests on the appendix.

5.0 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2021/22

5.1 **Appendix 3** shows the summary of the Capital position and **Appendix 4** gives a detailed analysis of the council's capital programme, with **Appendix 5** showing the funding of the 2021/22 programme.

5.2 Summary of the major variances between the revised budget and the outturn.

WBC Capital Programme 2021/22	£'000
Revised Budget	66,307
Outturn	30,532
Variance	(35,775)
Rephasing requests to 2022/23	37,669
Croxley Park (Funded from the contribution that formed part of the acquisition)	1,620
Net overspend	274

Major schemes to be rephased into 2022/23 are :-

- Hart Homes JV £14.65m
- Woodside Sports Village £7.86m
- Town Hall Quarter £4.86m
- Watford Riverwell £1.25m

6.0 COUNCIL RESERVES

6.1 The Council has set aside specific amounts which it holds as reserves for future business purposes and to cover contingencies in case of operational need i.e. economic impact reserve.

6.2 **Appendix 6** shows the level of reserves held by the council, which at the beginning of the year stood at **£39.522 million** and closed at the end of the year at **£27.053 million**.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Revenue variances 2021/22

Appendix 2 Carry Forward requests into 2022/23

Appendix 3 Capital Summary 2021/22

Appendix 4 Capital detailed report 2021/22

Appendix 5 Capital Programme Funding 2021/22

Appendix 6 Reserves 2021/22

REVENUE SERVICES – OUTTURN VARIANCES

Service Area	Description	Details of Variances	£
Service Transformation	Support Services	Lower costs on printing, postage and stationary as hybrid working in place due to COVID19.	(73,381)
	Information Unit	Employee costs were lower due to vacant posts and Website development projects were not completed due to the ongoing effects of COVID19. This project has been deferred to 2022/23. A budget carry over of £34k has been requested.	(81,357)
	Customer Services	Employee costs were lower due to vacant posts and a decrease in customer facing services for 2021/22 due to the effects of COVID19.	(72,485)
		Other Variances	10,773
		TOTAL	(216,450)
Community & Environmental	Colosseum	Lower spend on private contractor costs	(69,347)
	Sports Centres	Anticipated expenditure due to COVID19 did not materialise, £350k has been requested to be carried into 2022/23 to compensate against any unexpected costs / loss of income.	(359,300)
	Culture & Play	Expenditure includes events relating to COVID19 recovery, funded by grant income received under Corporate Management.	105,006
	Environmental Health & Licencing	Net increase in agency staff costs due to additional workload, COVID19 related.	(57,136)
	Contract Monitoring, Culture & Play, Parks & Open Spaces	Additional external contractor costs on upkeep and general maintenance. Increases in material costs has had an adverse effect on the service.	134,581
		Other Variances	79,816
		TOTAL	(166,380)
Parking Service	Parking Service	Service is part of Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), the net balance on this account has been transferred to the CPZ reserve, as shown in Appendix 5. This will aid funding new projects as part of the parking strategy.	252,825
		TOTAL	252,825
Democracy & Governance	Legal Services	Increase in employee costs	96,726
	Democratic Services	Members Remuneration and employee costs were lower by £39K and an underspend of £60k on software - licences	(98,174)
	Elections	Lower costs on canvas fee, IT equipment and mayoral elections.	(121,396)
		Other Variances	(39,657)
		TOTAL	(162,501)

Service Area	Description	Details of Variances	£
Place Shaping	Development Section	Net income lower than projected, mainly on Planning Application fees due to changing market conditions.	141,573
	Housing	Repairs & Maintenance on WBC properties was lower by £44k, lower management fees on temporary accommodation £19k and rental income was up £27k	(89,755)
		Funding to address post covid/economic downturn surge in demand expected in 2022-23 plus reconfiguration of department to provide greater prevention of homelessness services. Carry Forward of £550k has been requested fund these costs.	(692,676)
	Transport & Infrastructure	Additional costs incurred on CCTV equipment maintenance	20,998
		Income loss from car parks due to higher than expected drop in demand for 2021/22	125,244
	Policy Team	Saving on employee costs, Budget carry over of £75k requested to fund resources to work on The Local plan in 2022/23	(206,733)
		Other Variances	13,027
		TOTAL	(688,322)
Corporate Strategy & Comms	Corporate Management	COVID19 grant income received in 2021/22 to fund projects across all services	(199,006)
		Other Variances	13,631
		TOTAL	(185,375)
Human Resources	HR	increase in income from providing HR services to external organisations	(29,982)
		Fees and contractual service spend was lower than expected	(18,286)
		Other Variances	1,784
		TOTAL	(46,484)
Strategic Finance	Budget Strategy Items	An allocation of £300k was budgeted for various projects in year. Business cases are being prepared for approval and projects are expected to be completed in 2022/23. The service has requested a budget carry forward of the balance.	(248,915)
		Lower than budgeted charge to capital as part of Support Service Income from revenue. This will also help reduce borrowing costs in the future as part capital requirement.	181,089
	Interest	Net change due Lower borrowing requirements due to timing of capital projects and lower interest income due to market rate variations. This includes the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and Bad Debt provision.	(144,579)
		Other Variances	(13,745)
		TOTAL	(226,150)
		GRAND TOTAL	(1,438,837)

REVENUE CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS TO 2022/23

Service	Description	Amount Requested £	Reason
Service Transformation	Information Unit	34,000	Underspend has occurred as we were aiming to complete at least 4 service dashboards in 2021/2022. This work was not possible, as it proved to be unrealistic for us to secure enough time with services to scope and test dashboards while they are still under pressure from Covid related work.
Community & Environmental	Environmental Health Team	50,000	This budget is from charges to all the other Herts LA's for their contribution to the scheme and need to be carried into 2022/23
	Sustainable Transport	49,708	To be used in the future contract year of the project e.g. lock up grade proposals (£15K) and additional bikes for the scheme
	Sports Development	5,000	3 yr funded project with WFC Active Watford and Three Rivers, funding timeframes don't match WBC financial budgets.
	Colosseum	20,000	Funds to be used to support the costs of additional consultants for the TH and Colosseum project
	Sports Centres	9,300	Intechnology Smart Cities - Town Centre High Street Free Wi-Fi Re-Design. Delayed project for the redesign of the high street - to be completed in 2022-2023
		350,000	Contingency budget not spent but will be required to compensate against lower management income fee in 2022/23
Democracy & Governance	Neighbourhood Forum	1,063	Various community related projects
Place Shaping & Performance	Housing	550,000	Funds carried forward are required in 2022-23 to address post covid/economic downturn surge in demand for Housing Services expected in 2022-23 plus reconfiguration of department to provide greater prevention of homelessness services.
	Policy Team	75,000	Unspent growth bid to be carried into 2022/23 as further Local Plan works are ongoing
Strategic Finance	Budget Strategy Items	248,915	Renewal reserve funded projects, as agreed in 2021/22 MTFS allocation
TOTAL		1,392,986	

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – SUMMARY

APPENDIX 3

Service Area	Service Provision	Latest Budget 2021/22 £	Forecast Outturn £	Actual to date £	Variance due to rephasing	Variance due to (underspend) / overspend	Latest Budget 2022/23 (including rephasings) £	Latest Budget 2023/24 (including rephasings) £	Latest Budget 2024/25 (including rephasings) £
Service Transformation	Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ICT Shared Services	407,367	407,367	304,638	102,729	(0)	303,729	45,000	45,000
	ICT Client Services	62,304	62,304	37,747	24,557	(0)	1,109,557	815,000	485,000
	Corporate Asset Management	705,987	705,987	181,593	523,747	(647)	1,698,999	250,000	250,000
	Town Hall Quarter	5,795,755	5,761,168	1,139,741	4,656,014	(0)	17,193,192	12,190,000	0
Community & Environmental	Waste & Recycling (inc Veolia)	2,334,377	2,334,377	1,190,835	1,143,391	(151)	1,213,391	71,000	72,400
	Parks & Open Spaces	1,183,624	1,048,624	878,484	327,274	22,134	1,417,274	1,110,000	1,045,000
	Cemeteries	859,490	859,490	571,159	288,339	8	330,339	0	0
	Leisure & Play	8,817,433	8,817,433	864,233	7,947,144	(6,056)	8,407,144	250,000	250,000
	Culture & Heritage	1,242,769	1,242,769	278,333	964,435	(1)	1,124,435	0	0
	Environmental Health	1,862,886	1,862,886	1,064,729	798,157	(0)	1,298,157	300,000	300,000
	Community Projects	1,366,526	1,366,526	215,795	1,150,602	(129)	1,150,602	0	0
	Commissioning	780,764	755,214	15,046	760,734	(4,984)	1,060,734	0	0
Town Hall Quarter	108,576	108,515	110,341	(1,765)	0	(1,765)	0	0	
Place Shaping	Watford Business Park	1,003,931	1,003,931	952,479	51,453	1	14,553,787	0	0
	Watford Riverwell	5,123,994	4,123,994	3,877,652	1,246,342	0	11,945,342	4,932,000	1,773,000
	Housing	245,833	245,833	30,296	195,221	(20,315)	245,221	50,000	50,000
	Transport & Infrastructure	3,450,259	2,580,259	2,916,252	517,105	(16,902)	3,417,105	1,050,000	0
	Development Control	17,235	17,235	25,792	0	8,557	0	0	0
	Property Investment Board	132,931	931	0	132,931	0	132,931	0	0
	Property Management	4,580,889	3,580,889	4,600,931	1,962,274	1,982,316	11,988,713	0	0
	Town Hall Quarter	602,088	664,102	477,651	124,437	0	124,437	0	0
Hart Homes JV	24,895,000	24,895,000	10,250,000	14,645,000	0	37,375,000	0	0	
Corporate Strategy & Communications	Town Hall Quarter	517,099	489,733	433,163	83,936	(0)	83,936	0	0
	Corporate Communications	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	0	25,000	0	0
Strategic Finance	Capital Support Services	184,969	184,969	114,665	0	(70,304)	682,020	676,860	676,860
TOTAL CURRENT CAPITAL PROGRAMME		66,307,086	63,144,536	30,531,556	37,669,058	1,893,527	116,879,281	21,739,860	4,947,260
MEMORANDUM ITEM									
Watford BC	Town Hall Quarter	7,023,518	7,023,518	2,160,896	4,862,622	0	17,399,800	12,190,000	0

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – DETAIL

APPENDIX 4

Capital Scheme	Latest Budget 2021/22	Actual 2021/22	Variance	Amount to Rephase to 2022/23 (from 2021/22)	Amount to Rephase from 2022/23 (to 2021/22)	Overspend / (Underspend)	Latest Budget 2022/23 (including rephasings)	Latest Budget 2023/24 (including rephasings)	Latest Budget 2024/25 (including rephasings)	Scheme Update
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
SERVICE TRANSFORMATION										
ICT Shared Services										
ShS-Migration To The Cloud	0	0	0	0	0	0	156,000	0	0	
ShS-Hardware Replacement Programme	407,367	304,638	(102,729)	102,729	0	(0)	147,729	45,000	45,000	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
ICT Client Services										
ICT-Hardware Replacement Programme	41,034	37,747	(3,287)	3,287	0	(0)	603,287	380,000	200,000	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
ICT-Business Application Upgrade	21,270	0	(21,270)	21,270	0	0	386,270	315,000	165,000	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
ICT-Project Management Provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	120,000	120,000	120,000	
Corporate Asset Management										
Community Asset Review	505,987	99,684	(406,303)	406,303	0	(0)	1,356,303	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Building Investment Programme	200,000	81,910	(118,090)	117,444	0	(646)	342,696	250,000	250,000	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Town Hall Quarter										
Town Hall & Colosseum Projects	735,271	652,971	(82,300)	82,300	0	(0)	12,619,478	12,190,000	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23
Decarbonisation Project Salix	5,060,484	486,770	(4,573,714)	4,573,714	0	0	4,573,714	0	0	as project begins delivery phase.
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL										
Waste & Recycling (inc Veolia)										
Veolia Contract Fleet Requirements	2,264,777	1,121,386	(1,143,391)	1,143,391	0	(0)	1,143,391	0	0	Rephasing requirement to meet future fleet needs.
Veolia Capital Improvements	69,600	69,449	(151)	0	0	(151)	70,000	71,000	72,400	
Parks & Open Spaces										
Callowland Allotment Enhancement	23,696	23,696	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Whippendell Woods SSSI Enhancement	39,647	26,164	(13,483)	13,000	0	(483)	13,000	0	0	On going works via five year agreement.
Green Spaces Strategy	154,406	119,468	(34,938)	29,777	0	(5,160)	249,777	250,000	250,000	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Oxhey Park North	341,530	345,687	4,157	38,948	0	43,105	38,948	0	0	Rephasing to cover snagging works.
Tree Planting Programme	30,000	0	(30,000)	30,000	0	0	95,000	50,000	50,000	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
River Colne Restoration	247,382	185,389	(61,993)	61,993	0	0	311,993	250,000	0	Rephasing for ongoing programme delivery.
Cassiobury Park Car Park Improvements	0	(5,383)	(5,383)	0	0	(5,383)	0	0	0	
Garston Park Improvements	14,705	19,865	5,160	0	0	5,160	0	0	0	
Oxhey Park North Project Management	43,105	0	(43,105)	0	0	(43,105)	0	0	0	
Cassiobury Park Performance Space	0	0	0	0	0	0	40,000	0	0	
Parks Litter Bin Replacements	7,780	8,163	383	0	0	383	10,000	10,000	10,000	
Meriden Park Improvements	100,000	4,444	(95,556)	95,556	0	(0)	145,556	0	0	Project delivery expected for Qtr 2 2022/23.
Oxhey Activity Park - Car Park Extension	54,153	60,000	5,847	0	0	5,847	0	0	0	
Cassiobury Park Wetlands	75,000	16,961	(58,039)	58,000	0	(39)	133,000	75,000	0	Project delivery expected for Qtr 3 2022/23.
Biodiversity - Parks & Open Spaces	0	0	0	0	0	0	50,000	0	0	
Cassiobury Park Ad Hoc Works	25,000	25,381	381	0	0	381	25,000	25,000	0	
Meriden Park Barrier	0	393	393	0	0	393	55,000	0	0	
Parks Litter Bins	27,220	27,220	(0)	0	0	(0)	0	0	0	
Footpaths - Cassiobury Park Nature Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	165,000	
Footpaths - Cassiobury Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	120,000	
Allotment Provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	50,000	250,000	250,000	
Shrub Replacement (Open Space)	0	0	0	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	50,000	
Parks - Building Investment	0	0	0	0	0	0	150,000	150,000	150,000	
Oxhey Activity Pk- Modular Unit	0	21,037	21,037	0	0	21,037	0	0	0	Overspend funded by Sport England grant.

Capital Scheme	Latest Budget 2021/22	Actual 2021/22	Variance	Amount to Rephase to 2022/23 (from 2021/22)	Amount to Rephase from 2022/23 (to 2021/22)	Overspend / (Underspend)	Latest Budget 2022/23 (including rephasings)	Latest Budget 2023/24	Latest Budget 2024/25	Scheme Update
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Cemeteries										
Cemetery Reprovision	141,000	0	(141,000)	141,000	0	0	141,000	0	0	Rephasing to cover future cemetery provision.
North Watford Cemetery Improvements	103,624	66,062	(37,563)	37,563	0	1	37,563	0	0	Rephasing to cover snagging works.
New Cemetery Provision	607,794	498,018	(109,776)	109,776	0	(0)	109,776	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Vicarage Road Cemetery Feasibility Study	7,072	7,080	8	0	0	8	0	0	0	
Vicarage Rd - WFC Memorial Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	42,000	0	0	
Leisure & Play										
Gaelic Football Relocation	38,558	32,463	(6,095)	0	0	(6,095)	0	0	0	
Leisure & Cultural Venues	60,521	0	(60,521)	60,521	0	0	60,521	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Watford Tennis Partnership	25,000	0	(25,000)	25,000	0	0	25,000	0	0	To match fund potential improvements from LTA regarding gating of courts.
Oxhey Grange-Bowling Gr'N Imps	0	0	0	0	0	0	110,000	0	0	
Woodside Sports Village	8,418,696	556,963	(7,861,733)	7,861,733	0	(0)	7,861,733	0	0	Rephasing need to deliver the Woodside project.
Cassiobury Park Croquet Club	0	177	177	0	0	177	0	0	0	
Play Area Improvements	214,058	226,168	12,110	0	(12,110)	0	337,890	250,000	250,000	
Lea Farm Recreation Improvements	60,600	48,462	(12,138)	12,000	0	(138)	12,000	0	0	Rephasing to cover snagging works.
Culture & Heritage										
Watford Museum HLF Matchfunding	156,224	27,429	(128,795)	128,795	0	(0)	128,795	0	0	Ongoing cataloguing project to support THQ.
Improvements Community Centres	13,980	0	(13,980)	13,980	0	0	13,980	0	0	Rephasing earmarked for community centre improvements.
Cultural Quarter Phase 1	10,000	0	(10,000)	10,000	0	0	10,000	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Heritage Trail	110,000	12,013	(97,987)	97,987	0	(0)	97,987	0	0	
Watford Market	252,565	238,892	(13,673)	13,673	0	0	13,673	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Delivery of Cultural Plan	700,000	0	(700,000)	700,000	0	0	860,000	0	0	
Environmental Health										
Decent Homes Assistance	1,713,223	1,000,000	(713,223)	713,223	0	0	813,223	100,000	100,000	Grant funded project to complete in 2022/23.
Private Sector Housing Renewal	91,111	63,871	(27,240)	27,240	0	(0)	227,240	100,000	100,000	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Street Improvement Programme	58,552	858	(57,694)	57,694	0	0	257,694	100,000	100,000	
Community Projects										
Cycle Hub	122,216	11,118	(111,099)	111,099	0	1	111,099	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
All Saints Churchyard Improvements	1,129	0	(1,129)	1,000	0	(129)	1,000	0	0	
Paddock Road Depot Enhancements	1,218,181	204,678	(1,013,503)	1,013,503	0	(0)	1,013,503	0	0	Rephasing required to deliver project outcome.
Derby Rd Skate Park Blockade	25,000	0	(25,000)	25,000	0	0	25,000	0	0	Security needs at Derby Road (former skate park).
Commissioning										
Transport App	25,550	0	(25,550)	25,550	0	0	25,550	0	0	Budget no longer required.
Departmental Vehicle Renewal	11,600	0	(11,600)	11,600	0	0	11,600	0	0	In house vehicle fleet requirements.
Watford Cycle Hire Study	4,460	0	(4,460)	0	0	(4,460)	0	0	0	
Cycle Hire Scheme	10,511	9,987	(524)	0	0	(524)	0	0	0	
Cycle & Road Infrastructure Improvements	728,643	5,059	(723,584)	723,584	0	0	1,023,584	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Town Hall Quarter										
Heritage Project	108,576	110,341	1,765	0	(1,765)	0	(1,765)	0	0	Project within budget as it enters delivery stage.

Capital Scheme	Latest Budget 2021/22	Actual 2021/22	Variance	Amount to Rephase to 2022/23 (from 2021/22)	Amount to Rephase from 2022/23 (to 2021/22)	Overspend / (Underspend)	Latest Budget 2022/23 (including rephasings)	Latest Budget 2023/24	Latest Budget 2024/25	Scheme Update
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
PLACE SHAPING										
Watford Business Park										
Watford Business Park Phase 2	1,003,931	952,479	(51,453)	51,453	0	1	14,553,787	0	0	Project to gain momentum post COVID infrastructure delays.
Watford Riverwell										
Watford Riverwell Project	5,123,994	3,877,652	(1,246,342)	1,246,342	0	0	11,945,342	4,932,000	1,773,000	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Housing										
Private Sector Stock Condition	36,850	0	(36,850)	16,534	0	(20,316)	16,534	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Retained Housing Stock	133,983	30,296	(103,687)	103,687	0	0	153,687	50,000	50,000	
York House Boiler Replacement	75,000	0	(75,000)	75,000	0	0	75,000	0	0	Works planned for 2022/23.
Transport & Infrastructure										
Public Realm (High Street)	4,479	3,245	(1,234)	1,234	0	0	1,234	0	0	
Public Realm (Clarendon Rd Phase III)	1,779,858	2,481,546	701,688	0	(701,688)	(0)	298,312	0	0	Scheme progressing and will complete in 2022/23.
St Albans Rd Improvement Works	12,707	6,400	(6,307)	6,307	0	0	6,307	0	0	
CCTV Site Equipment	23,456	20,822	(2,634)	2,634	0	0	2,634	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Public Realm - Market St South	450,000	232,420	(217,580)	217,580	0	0	217,580	0	0	
Camera Enforcement - High St	214,453	54,970	(159,483)	159,483	0	0	159,483	0	0	
Public Realm - Queens Rd, The Broadway	0	0	0	0	0	0	100,000	200,000	0	
Public Realm - Market St North	0	6,105	6,105	0	0	6,105	250,000	250,000	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Sustainable Transport Programme	250,000	45,520	(204,480)	175,817	0	(28,663)	675,817	500,000	0	
St Albans Rd Imp Works (Ph 2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	300,000	0	0	
Wayfinding & Public Realm Strategy	80,000	8,500	(71,500)	71,500	0	0	221,500	100,000	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
EV Rapid Charging Points Programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	100,000	0	0	
CCTV Control Room Strategy	0	0	0	0	0	0	500,000	0	0	
Watford Junction Masterplan	13,548	0	(13,548)	13,548	0	0	13,548	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Watford 3D Planning Model	18,409	5,500	(12,909)	12,909	0	0	12,909	0	0	
Public Realm (Watford Junction)	3,761	9,415	5,654	0	0	5,654	0	0	0	Project overspend mitigated via reduced service rephasing requests.
High St Phase 2 (St Mary's)	592,478	45,670	(546,808)	546,808	0	0	546,808	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Match Funding Capital Projects	0	(3,863)	(3,863)	3,863	0	1	3,863	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Watford Junction Cycle Park Hub	7,110	0	(7,110)	7,110	0	0	7,110	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Development Control										
CIL Review	17,235	25,792	8,557	0	0	8,557	0	0	0	Project overspend mitigated via reduced service rephasing requests.

Capital Scheme	Latest Budget 2021/22	Actual 2021/22	Variance	Amount to Rephase to 2022/23 (from 2021/22)	Amount to Rephase from 2022/23 (to 2021/22)	Overspend / (Underspend)	Latest Budget 2022/23 (including rephasings)	Latest Budget 2023/24	Latest Budget 2024/25	Scheme Update
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Property Investment Board										
PIB Investment Strategy	132,931	0	(132,931)	132,931	0	0	132,931	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Property Management										
Redevelopment Town Hall	7,201	35,864	28,663	0	0	28,663	0	0	0	
Temp Housing Accommodation	1,394,807	1,248,422	(146,385)	146,385	0	0	146,385	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Social Rented Housing	1,000,000	1,334,550	334,550	0	0	334,550	0	0	0	Project overspend which is part of Centrepont development.
Surplus Sites	293,693	318,479	24,786	0	(24,786)	(0)	825,214	0	0	
Croxley Park Asset	20,574	1,640,135	1,619,561	0	0	1,619,561	0	0	0	Overspend funded by PPM contribution that formed part of the original Croxley Business Park transaction
Exchange Road	1,008,939	8,939	(1,000,000)	1,000,000	0	0	1,000,000	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Lower High Street	15,000	14,542	(458)	0	0	(458)	4,985,000	0	0	
Scenery Store Redevelopment	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,500,000	0	0	
Infill Sites (LEP funded)	840,675	0	(840,675)	840,675	0	0	840,675	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Surplus Site - Land Acquisition (Site A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,670,000	0	0	
Surplus Site - Land Acquisition (Site B)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,021,439	0	0	
Town Hall Quarter										
Regeneration Project	602,088	477,651	(124,437)	124,437	0	0	124,437	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23 as project begins delivery phase.
Hart Homes JV										
Land Transfer - Croxley View Phase 2	3,000,000	0	(3,000,000)	3,000,000	0	0	3,000,000	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Land Transfer - Croxley View Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,130,000	0	0	
Land Transfer - Rear Of High St	760,000	0	(760,000)	760,000	0	0	760,000	0	0	
Land Transfer - Scheme A	605,000	0	(605,000)	605,000	0	0	605,000	0	0	
Land Transfer - Scheme B	530,000	0	(530,000)	530,000	0	0	530,000	0	0	
Loan to Hart Homes WDLTP	20,000,000	10,250,000	(9,750,000)	9,750,000	0	0	14,450,000	0	0	
Loan to Hart Homes WDLTD	0	0	0	0	0	0	14,900,000	0	0	
CORPORATE STRATEGY & COMMUNICATIONS										
Town Hall Quarter										
Town Hall Quarter Cultural Programme	388,525	323,556	(64,969)	64,969	0	0	64,969	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23 as project begins delivery phase.
Transformational Change	42,978	26,723	(16,255)	16,255	0	0	16,255	0	0	
Innovation & Incubation Hub	85,596	82,884	(2,712)	2,712	0	(0)	2,712	0	0	
Corporate Communications										
Town Boundary Signage	25,000	0	(25,000)	25,000	0	0	25,000	0	0	
STRATEGIC FINANCE										
Capital Support Services										
Support Services	56,699	0	(56,699)	0	0	(56,699)	552,470	552,470	552,470	Underspend due to reduced officer time spent on delayed capital schemes.
Major Projects - FBP and QS	128,270	114,665	(13,605)	0	0	(13,605)	129,550	124,390	124,390	
TOTAL CURRENT CAPITAL PROGRAMME	66,307,086	30,531,556	(35,775,530)	38,409,407	(740,349)	1,893,527	116,879,281	21,739,860	4,947,260	
MEMORANDUM ITEM										
Property Investment Board (PIB)										
PIB Renovations	132,931	0	(132,931)	132,931	0	0	132,931	0	0	Service request for budget rephasing into 2022/23.
Total	132,931	0	(132,931)	132,931	0	0	132,931	0	0	

FUNDING THE 2021/22 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Capital Funding Statement	2021/22
Actual @ Year End	30,531,556
Funded By :-	
Grants & Contributions, S106 & CIL	(3,890,558)
Capital Receipts (PIB, Non PIB & THQ)	(613,125)
Borrowing (Internal & External)	(26,027,873)
Total Funding Used	(30,531,556)

RESERVE BALANCES

Description	Balance at 1 April £000	Movement 2021/22 £000	Balance at 31 March £000	Purpose
Revenue Reserves				
Budget Carry Forward	(826)	484	(342)	Budgets carried forward from prior years
Car Parking Zones	(46)	(429)	(475)	Ring fenced for parking projects
Collection Fund	(19,863)	10,562	(9,301)	Equalisation fund to smooth impact of surplus / deficit, allocation end of 2022/23
Crematorium	(150)	0	(150)	Funding repairs and maintenance
Economic Impact Reserve	(3,004)	1,231	(1,773)	Provide resources to offset economic downturn
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(1,693)	110	(1,583)	Provision if Dept for Work & Pensions claw back funds
Housing Planning Delivery Grant	(266)	0	(266)	Improve planning outcomes and delivery of housing
Leisure Structured Maintenance	(57)	0	(57)	Funding unforeseen maintenance not covered in contract
Local Development Framework	(178)	0	(178)	Support local plan production and inspection
Multi-Storey Car Park Repair	(181)	0	(181)	Funding major structural works
Pension Funding	(2,248)	0	(2,248)	Reduction of pension deficit
Project and Programme Management	(76)	76	0	Support major project work
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	(100)	0	(100)	Assist in providing homelessness accommodation
Riverwell Project	(7,768)	0	(7,768)	To cover any guarantees, repayments of outstanding loans and fund future investment.
Weekly Collection Support Grant	(30)	30	(0)	Reserve balance merged with Economic Impact Reserve
Renewal Recovery Fund	(1,036)	405	(631)	To support the recovery process for additional costs due to COVID19
	(37,522)	12,469	(25,053)	
General Fund Working Balance	(2,000)	0	(2,000)	Prudent balance
Total Revenue Reserves	(39,522)	12,469	(27,053)	

Extract from Finance Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet

Finance Scrutiny Committee

27 June 2022

Present: Councillor Turmaine (Chair)
Councillors Clarke-Taylor, Jeffree, Khan, Martins, Nembhard, G
Saffery, Stanton and Wenham

Also present: Councillor Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Finance)

Officers: Head of Finance
Senior Democratic Services Officer

5. **Financial outturn 2021/22 (Q4)**

The committee received the report of the Head of Finance. The report informed the committee of the revenue and capital outturns for the financial year 2021/22 and provided an update on the reserves position. The committee was asked to review the recommendations for Cabinet and make any further comments.

The Head of Finance introduced the report and highlighted the key areas, in particular:

- There was a revenue underspend of £1.4 million with carry forward requests totalling about £1.4 million, which had resulted in a small underspend of £0.046 million which was proposed to be sent to the economic impact reserve.
- Part of this was an underspend in Community and Environmental Services totalling £0.35 million as support for the leisure provider. This was sustainable without additional support in-year and a report to Cabinet was forthcoming.
- Additional grant funding had been received for Housing and the resulting underspend would also be carried forward.
- The rephasing of some projects as part of the renewal fund had resulted in further carry forwards into the new financial year.
- There had been a significant variance in the capital budgets due to requests for re-phasing.
- There was an overspend in relation to Croxley Park which would be covered by the earmarked reserve for planned property maintenance.
- The major schemes to be rephased were Hart Homes, Riverwell, Woodside Sports Village and the Town Hall Quarter.
- Levels of reserves had fallen from £39.5 million to £27 million. This was primarily due to the planned draw down from business rates reserve to offset the impact of Covid on the levels of business rates.

The committee discussed the carry-forwards and asked for more detail about how these were justified. It was noted that in the majority of cases it was because an

Extract from Finance Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet

agreed policy objective had not yet been met. Reviews of requests were made by Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders and were challenged.

Members asked about the impact on revenue accounts of reprofiling of major capital projects which spanned several years. Where the projects were funded by borrowing; this would have a positive impact on revenue budget in the short term as it would reduce the level of borrowing and interest payments. The schemes highlighted were not invest-to-save schemes where delays would impact the achievement of savings in the revenue budget. There would be further rephasing of Riverwell and Hart Homes but these were typical of the delivery of these types of projects.

The committee considered the impact of how projects were managed and the need to carry forward funding. The joint ventures were being delivered in partnership and there were a variety of external factors that could impact the project delivery timing. When budgets were included in the capital programme, broad assumptions were made about timing but further due diligence was undertaken to ensure more robust cost projections during projects. Good project management would mean the figures would be updated over time. There were also firm deadlines that needed to be met in the projects.

Turning to the rephasing of the Woodside Sports Village, it was highlighted that the budget was over £8 million but the spend was £0.556 million, giving a variance of £7.8 million which was significant. The impact on the financial statements was considerable if the financial forecasting was not accurate enough. The officer advised that the project was still in the planning stage and construction had not yet commenced. She undertook to provide further information about this specific project for the committee.

The Portfolio Holder commented that the council had become much stronger in project management in recent years. Woodside was a very complex project and involved working with a number of groups. It was important to ensure that expenditure was not undertaken until it was clear that the right approach was being taken.

It was further noted that budget oversight was undertaken as part of the day to day project management but the committee only received budgetary updates on a quarterly basis.

Discussing the impact of the inflationary environment on capital projects, the committee was informed that this was less of a risk to the joint ventures as increased costs could be partially offset by the performance of the housing market and therefore the income that would be achieved by the joint ventures. An exercise was being undertaken to understand the inflation risk for each project within the capital programme and the sustainability of the contractors and sub-contractors.

Extract from Finance Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet

RESOLVED –

that the Finance Scrutiny Committee supports the recommendations to Cabinet as set out in the report.

Action – Head of Finance

Agenda Item 8

PART A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 11 July 2022

Report author: Spatial Planning Manager (JG)

Title: SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan: Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Consultation Document and Statement of Community Involvement

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The five South West Hertfordshire Local Planning Authorities of Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City & District Council, Three Rivers District Council, Hertsmere Borough Council and Watford Borough Council, together with Hertfordshire County Council, have agreed to prepare a new Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire.
- 1.2 The JSP is expected to identify strategic growth locations and priorities, as well as the strategic infrastructure necessary to deliver the spatial strategy which will extend to 2050. This will provide a strategic framework that will guide the preparation of future Local Plans and how they address local development needs while contributing towards growth in a coordinated manner across SW Hertfordshire.
- 1.3 The JSP Members Group, comprising senior elected members from the partner authorities, have been involved in the developing and agreeing the Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Consultation Document, Appendix 4, for consultation which sets out broad strategic planning issues considered important to guide development across South West Hertfordshire in the future.
- 1.4 Each of the partner authorities needs to approve the Issues and Options Consultation Document through their own governance process before the consultation can start. As such, Cabinet is being asked to approve the document for public consultation on behalf of Watford Borough Council.
- 1.5 The Regulation 18 consultation will be undertaken in line with the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Statement of Community Involvement, which the Cabinet endorsed for consultation on 6 September 2021. As part of this report, Cabinet is asked to adopt the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Statement of Community Involvement (appendix 1).

1.6 The JSP visual material in draft is attached to this report, together with the Sustainability Appraisal, the proposed approach to engagement on the JSP and the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

1.7 Similar approvals are being sought from the other South West Herts authorities, with consultation scheduled to take begin in August 2022, for eight weeks.

1.8 **Risks**

1.9

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
This Council or another of the participating Councils does not approve the Statement of Community Involvement for adoption.	To fail to have an agreed Statement of Community Involvement in place, or to have an inconsistent approach to consultation arrangements could potentially result in a successful future legal challenge to the JSP.	Engagement with Members to explain the approach to engagement.	Treat	3
This Council or another of the participating Councils does not approve the Regulation 18 document for public consultation.	Consultation on the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan would be delayed.	Liaison through the SW Herts Strategic Planning Members Group, Steering Group and Officers Group.	Treat	4

Role of the JSP is not understood.	Stakeholders become disenfranchised from the JSP and potential change to their communities in the long-term.	Ongoing political, stakeholder and community engagement with clear messaging.	Treat	6
Changes to national guidance.	Uncertainty of compliance with national guidance and project plan.	When planning guidance is revised review programme structure.	Tolerate	4

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet agrees:

1. That, the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Statement of Community Involvement attached at appendix 1 be adopted;
2. That, the Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Consultation Document titled 'The JSP: South West Hertfordshire 2050, Realising our Potential' and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal attached at appendix 4 is approved for public consultation;
3. That, any amendments required to be approved to the Regulation 18 consultation document and the Statement of Community Involvement be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Partnerships and Planning.

Further information:

Jack Green
jack.green@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Ben Martin

3 Detailed proposal

Role and Scope of the JSP

- 3.1.1 The South West Herts authorities (Dacorum Borough Council, St. Albans City and District, Watford Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council and Three Rivers

District Council, with the support of Hertfordshire County Council) have agreed to work together to produce the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). This will provide a South West Hertfordshire integrated strategic planning framework and supporting evidence base to support sustainable growth to 2050.

- 3.1.2 The JSP will be a statutory planning document, prepared under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Plan will identify the overall quantum of housing and economic growth within South West Hertfordshire to be planned for to 2050 and its broad distribution priorities, as well as the strategic infrastructure necessary to deliver the spatial strategy. The Issues and Options document at appendix 1 does not yet do that, rather it articulates a vision for the sub-region and frames a number of key issues and options to be resolved as the JSP passes through the plan making process.
- 3.1.3 The JSP will focus on climate resilience, infrastructure delivery, strategic housing and employment. However it will be about more than planning and will help create a framework for investor confidence in SW Herts.
- 3.1.4 The benefits of a JSP include:
- Increased potential for unlocking infrastructure investment from Government;
 - Creating a bigger canvas to make decisions about future growth;
 - Allowing an infrastructure-led approach; not 'planning by numbers'; and
 - Enabling a coordinated approach to investment and delivery of infrastructure giving priority to strategic solutions.
- 3.1.5 All five councils will retain 'sovereignty' over the JSP process, with the plan following essentially the same process as individual Local Plans and therefore needing approval from each of the partner authorities at each key stage of its preparation and final adoption. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the approach to consultation set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), Appendix 1, and approval of public consultation on an initial Issues and Options (Regulation 18), document, Appendix 4.

Relationship of the JSP to district Local Plans

- 3.1.6 Each of the councils is in the process of updating their individual Local Plans, which currently run to between 2031 and 2038. The JSP will not affect the content of this current round of Local Plans. Rather these Local Plans will help inform the JSP by establishing the medium term planning strategy for the area. The JSP will then look

further ahead in a more co-ordinated way, to 2050, to help provide a longer-term framework for the area. When each authority comes to review their Local Plan again, they will be able to frame those new policies in the context of the jointly developed policies in the Joint Strategic Plan.

3.1.7 The next round of Local Plans will also add more detail to the policies of the JSP and facilitate their delivery. Working in the context of the jointly developed Joint Strategic Plan policies, these more detailed Local Plan policies will be more effective in delivering the overall policy aims for the South West Hertfordshire area.

3.2 Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

3.2.1 The role of a SCI is to set out the partner Councils' approach for involving the community when preparing the SW Herts JSP. The requirements for preparing SCIs are set out in Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Context

3.2.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the proposed SCI for the JSP is limited in scope, covering only the consultation that will be carried out as part of the strategic plan-making process. Development Management matters will remain the responsibility of the local authority area in which they are located and consultation on planning applications will therefore continue to be governed by the SCI for the relevant council area. Watford Borough Council's own SCI will also continue to cover consultation arrangements relating to the borough's Local Plan.

3.2.3 The content and structure of the JSP SCI is consistent with that of Watford Borough Council's own SCI. This in turn reflects the requirements of relevant national planning regulations governing statutory plan consultation, whilst also highlighting the increasing importance of online messaging, through social media and other platforms, in raising awareness of plan consultations.

3.2.4 The statutory JSP SCI will be supplemented by a more detailed and public facing Communications and Engagement Strategy, Appendix 6, that has been prepared to support the SCI and JSP. This strategy will run alongside the SCI, and will be updated for each plan-making stage, setting out the detailed consultation arrangements. It is not considered appropriate to cover these detailed arrangements within the SCI itself, as they will be tailored to the nature of each consultation, insofar as time and resources allow, thereby allowing the evolution of the JSP to reflect and respond to emerging best practice in terms of approaches to engagement.

- 3.2.5 In accordance with the JSP governance structure, the SW Herts JSP Planning Members Group (SPMG), which comprises the Planning Portfolio Holder for each of the 5 authorities, and the JSP Steering Group, which comprises Chief Executives, Managing Directors or Corporate Directors of each of each authority has supported the principle of having a high level SCI, with more detailed consultation strategies drawn up for each specific consultation stage.
- 3.2.6 Hertfordshire County Council do not need to formally endorse the SCI but have confirmed their support for the approach set out within it.

Consultation arrangements

- 3.2.7 There is no longer a legal requirement to consult on the content of SCIs. However, this Council, and a number of the other Councils within the SW Herts area have previously chosen to carry out targeted engagement on their documents. For consistency this approach was applied to the SCI for the JSP.
- 3.2.8 The JSP team co-ordinated consultation with statutory consultees. These are listed in Appendix 2. This included organisations such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, key utilities companies, adjoining local authorities and town and parish councils within the SW Herts area.
- 3.2.9 These organisations were all consulted by email where possible, or letter where an email address was not available. They were directed to the JSP website www.swhertsplan.co.uk where they could view the document, or were advised that an electronic copy could be provided on request. These notifications were sent on 22 November 2021 with replies requested by 17 January 2022, giving an 8 week period to respond, to reflect the fact the consultation period included the Christmas and New Year holidays.
- 3.2.10 A covering letter and copy of the SCI were also sent to all libraries within the SW Herts area for their reference sections, and to each district Council office to keep on their reception desks, should residents wish to see a hard copy.

Consultation responses

- 3.2.11 Thirteen responses were received to the consultation. These were from:
- Affinity Water

- Planning Property Team, Herts County Council
- Sport England
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Ministry of Defence
- Hertfordshire Gardens Trust
- Nash Mills Parish Council
- Harlow Borough Council
- National Highways
- Canal and River Trust
- Berkhamsted Residents Action Group (BRAG)
- Central Bedfordshire Council

Changes required as a result of consultation responses

3.2.12 The table in Appendix 3 of this report summarises the responses received and the proposed Officer response. All of the comments were either supportive of the document, or supportive subject to certain minor amendments being made. As summarised in Appendix 3 to this report, it is recommended that most of these suggested amendments are accepted, as they improve clarity.

3.2.13 Two responders, Sport England and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, requested that they are added to the list of consultation bodies set out in Appendix 1 of the SCI. Officers have taken external legal advice on this matter which states that this list should only include those groups and organisations specified in the Town and County Planning (Local Plans (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)). It is important to note that non-inclusion on the list does not mean these groups are unable to engage with the process of preparing the JSP. Their contact details will be added to the wider JSP database and they will be notified when any consultation on the plan takes place. This will ensure that all interested parties, whether listed in Government regulations or not, have the opportunity to comment on the JSP's content. It is suggested that an explanatory sentence is added to the SCI to provide this reassurance.

3.2.14 Two respondents, the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and Nash Mills Parish Council asked more general questions about the Joint Strategic Plan. Responses have been provided to these two organisations by email, as summarised in Appendix 3 of this report.

Other changes required to the draft document

- 3.2.15 In addition to the changes proposed to the draft SCI as a result of responses received, Officers have also carried out a check of the organisations listed in Appendix 1 of the SCI to ensure it is fully compliant with the regulations. Some updates have been made as a result of this check, including a reference added to Neighbourhood Forums. As a result of this change, it is recommended that a paragraph is added to the SCI to refer to Neighbourhood Planning documents and the fact that any of these documents prepared within the SW Herts area will need to be in conformity with the Joint Strategic Plan, once adopted.
- 3.2.16 The names of some organisations listed within the document have also been amended to ensure they are up to date. Some other minor amendments to ensure diagrams are correctly referenced and for textual clarity have also been made, together with some minor changes to reflect the fact that this is no longer a draft document for consultation.

Next Steps

- 3.2.17 Once adopted by all five councils, the SCI will be kept under review to ensure it continues to reflect legal requirements and best practice.

Regulation 18 Issues and Options Consultation Document

3.3 Content

- 3.3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and associated regulations leave matters such as the number of consultations undertaken at the Regulation 18 stage, and the content of these consultations, very much to the discretion of the authorities involved. It has, however, been agreed through the Statement of Common Ground signed by the 5 authorities and county council in 2021, that engagement on the JSP will involve two Regulation 18 stages. The first will be an 'Issues and Options' document, focussed on establishing a clear vision and set of objectives for the plan. The second Regulation 18 stage will comprise a draft 'Spatial Options' document. This report seeks approval to consult on the first of these Regulation 18 documents – entitled '*Realising Our Potential.*'
- 3.3.2 This consultation document sets out the long-term planning issues that are expected to face the SW Herts area to 2050, and suggests some broad principles

that could be used to develop a plan to address these issues. It also begins a high level discussion on the types of future growth that could be considered for the area.

- 3.3.3 The document is intentionally high level at this first formal consultation stage. Importantly, it does not include any indicative housing or employment targets or suggest any locations where growth may occur. This is because:
- (a) It is unclear at the present time what any future housing and employment targets for the area will be on a long term basis; and
 - (b) Technical work to inform any decisions on the appropriate scale and location of growth has not been completed.
- 3.3.4 Feedback is sought through a series of yes/no questions, with the opportunity for respondents to explain the reasons for their answers.
- 3.3.5 In accordance with the JSP governance structure, the SW Herts JSP Planning Members Group (SPMG), which comprises the Planning Portfolio Holder for each of the SW Herts authorities and the county council, has considered both the Issues and Options Regulation 18 consultation document itself and the Communications and Engagement Plan (Appendix 6). They have advised that they are satisfied with the content of both.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.3.6 As required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Government Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated Regulations, the Issues and Options Regulation 18 consultation document is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Appendix 5), prepared by Land Use Consultants Ltd on behalf of the authorities. The principal role of this Scoping Report is to set out a suggested framework against which future iterations of the plan can be assessed to establish its likely social, economic and environmental impacts. It also includes:
- (a) A review and summary of international and national policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) that are of relevance to the JSP, drawing on the information within the SA reports for the constituent Local Plans as a starting point and updating these as necessary; and
 - (b) A high level initial assessment of the proposed vision and objectives, and growth types, to help ensure these are comprehensive and that any potential social, environmental and economic impacts are highlighted at an early stage in the plan-making process, to enable any negative effects to be addressed and/or mitigated; and

(c) Information on how an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Health Impact Assessment will be integrated into the assessment, as details of the JSP's proposed policy approaches becomes clearer over time.

- 3.3.7 As the JSP progresses, the Sustainability Appraisal work will be extended to reference the conclusions of a separate process relating to the Habitats Regulations Assessment which must also accompany the later stages of a statutory plan. This will be particularly important considering the recent report prepared into the impact of visitor numbers, air pollution etc on the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within Dacorum Borough: the impact of which extends beyond the borough boundary.
- 3.3.8 As required by the regulations, feedback will be sought on this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report as part of the Issues and Options engagement.

Approach to consultation

Early engagement

- 3.3.9 The content of the Issue and Options document has been informed by two informal consultations. The largest of these was the 'SW Herts Your Future' poll carried out in early 2020. This successful social media-based engagement generated over 14.5k comments and provided a high level overview of what those who live and/or work in SW Herts like about the area now, and what should be priorities for the future. Further information on this engagement is available on the JSP website.
- 3.3.10 More recently, as part of work to inform a vision for SW Herts, an interactive questionnaire was published on www.swhertsplan.com, asking what type of future respondents envisaged for the area. This was accompanied by a series of videos from leaders across the academic, industry and voluntary sectors to help stimulate responses. This online questionnaire was live between 1 November and 14 December 2021, and advertised through a press release and a direct email to all Members. The responses received were fed in to the vision workshops held with the JSP Strategic Planning Members Group, Officers from each authority and key stakeholders, and have helped inform the draft vision statement and objectives contained within the Issues and Options document which is now proposed for formal consultation.

Issues and Options consultation

3.3.11 As for all Local Plans, there is a legal requirement to undertake public consultation on statutory Joint Plans. The broad arrangements for engagement in plan-making are set out in the SCI, which was approved for consultation by Cabinet in September 2021. This SCI is being supplemented by a Communications and Engagement Plan, prepared by specialist engagement consultants Icenl and the JSP Communications Officer, in liaison with Communications Officers at each participating authority (Appendix 6). This Communications and Engagement Plan provides more detail regarding the proposed consultation approaches that will be deployed. This approach reflects the recent award of a 'Proptech' grant from central Government to progress an innovative approach to engagement using a variety of social media platforms, as well as via the SW Herts bespoke engagement website - www.swherstplan.com. This is based on the successful informal engagement '*SW Herts – Your Future*' referenced above.

3.3.12 The engagement will employ a range of mechanisms to raise awareness and increase response rates to the consultation material, including:

- Interactive consultation document hosted on the SW Herts website, with supporting material.
- A linked social media based campaign, supported by short videos and graphics, utilising a shortened version of the full Regulation 18 document, with simplified questions.
- Paper copies of consultation material and response forms issued to all libraries and deposit points within the SW Hertfordshire area.
- Introductory video hosted on JSP website.
- Direct notification letters / emails to all key consultation bodies listed in the Statement of Community Involvement, plus other groups and individuals on JSP consultation database.
- Articles in district / county e-newsletters / newsletters / magazines as timing permits.
- Signposting of consultation website via partner authority websites
- Press release(s) – co-ordinated by JSP team and issued by each authority
- Business cards with QR code information on the consultation distributed to colleges, libraries and deposit points in the SW Herts area.
- Posters provided for display at libraries and deposit points.
- Updated 'Frequently asked Questions' on website.

3.3.13 Consultants Icenis are also supporting the JSP team, the JSP Communications Officer and district / county Communication Officers to prepare a 'toolkit' of material to enable districts to roll out wider engagement within their areas, should they wish to do so.

3.3.14 The Proptech grant has also enabled the formal establishment of Youth Forum, who have provided early feedback on the engagement approach. This is to try to ensure that responses are received from 18-25 year olds, the age group who will be most impacted by a long term strategy such as the JSP.

Consultation timing

3.3.15 Due to the need to gain the necessary Member approvals from the five authorities involved in the preparation of the JSP, the earliest that consultation on the '*Realising Our Potential*' document and associated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping will be late July / early August 2022.

3.3.16 As this engagement will take place over the summer period it is proposed it is extended from the usual 6 weeks to 8 weeks (as per paragraph 2.12 of the Statement of Community Involvement).

3.3.17 It is important to note that the social media focussed element of the engagement, which is the core of the Government funded 'Proptech' grant will need to be completed by around the end of August / early September and reported on to DLUHC by the end of September to meet the grant conditions. The wider consultation will, however, continue beyond this cut-off.

3.3.18 Having a shorter consultation period for the social media based element of the consultation will actually prove beneficial, as it will enable a clear comparison to be made between the effectiveness of this method of engaging with different residents versus more traditional web-based means.

Duty to Co-Operate

3.3.19 Whilst liaison between Watford Borough Council and other prescribed Duty to Co-Operate (DtC) bodies is ongoing through work on the Local Plan, this Issues and Options consultation marks the first formal opportunity for DtC bodies to respond to a consultation on the SW Herts JSP.

3.3.20 A number of DtC bodies have already been engaged more informally through participation workshop sessions that helped inform the content of the draft vision and objectives for the plan that now forms the core of the Regulation 18 consultation (see above).

3.3.21 In advance of this Regulation 18 consultation commencing, all DtC bodies will be contacted to advise them of the scope and content of the *'Realising our Potential'* document and to offer a meeting to discuss any cross boundary issues raised. They will also be formally consulted on the engagement, as per the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement for the JSP. An update on the outcome of any of these discussions held in advance of this meeting can be provided verbally if required by the Committee.

Next Steps

3.3.22 Following consultation on this first Regulation 18 document, the JSP team will summarise the comments received and set this out in a Consultation Report. The content of this will be discussed with the cross-authority Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG), Steering Group (SG) and Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG), before being formally reported back to the authorities. Formal reporting is likely to take place when approval is sought to progress the second Regulation 18 ('Spatial Options') document. The timing of this next stage will depend upon Local Plan progress. More informal briefings on the outcome of the consultation can however be provided before this time, if required.

4 Implications

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that **there are no direct financial implications related to this report. The Joint Strategic Plan Programme is supported by an annual contribution of £40k from each of the participating authorities. The costs of preparing and consulting on the 'Issues and Options' document are met by a Government 'Proptech' fund grant and does not require a financial contribution from the Council.**

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the process of preparing the Issues and Options document for the Joint Strategic Plan has been carried out in accordance with Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), Localism Act 2011, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. The preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations referenced above.

4.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

Statement of Community Involvement

4.3.1 For the SCI, there are no implications for the purpose of this report. The SCI seeks to ensure that consultation arrangements enable all sectors of the community to engage with planning processes.

Regulation 18 Consultation Document

4.3.2 The Regulation 18 consultation document is supported by an independent Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report prepared by Land Use Consulting Ltd. This considers the impact of the document against a sustainability framework, covering a range of environmental, social and economic objectives. The final Sustainability Appraisal report will also incorporate a high level Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

4.3.2 The sustainability appraisal objectives set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report address equality issues. This SA Scoping Report has been carried out independently of the councils by Land Use Consultants Ltd as part of a wider Sustainability Appraisal.

4.3.3 There is currently insufficient information within the consultation document to undertake a full impact assessment. The assessment will however be extended and updated as the JSP progresses through the statutory stages, when recommendations will be made in relation to how the equality-related impacts of the JSP can be optimised as the options are developed into detailed policies and broad locations for development.

Data Protection Impact Assessment

4.3.4 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report. The data will not be handled by Watford Borough Council but will be the responsibility of the JSP Secretariat.

4.4 **Staffing**

4.4.1 The consultation will be managed by the JSP Secretariat, with support from communications consultants Icen and the officer lead for the JSP at the Council.

4.4.2 The main additional staff implications will be if the Council wishes to supplement the proposed engagement strategy with any additional local consultation activities.

4.5 **Accommodation**

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

4.6.1 N/A

4.7 **Sustainability**

4.7.1 The consultation sets out growth issues to be considered at a strategic level with a long-term view to deliver sustainable development.

Appendices

1. South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic plan Statement of Community Involvement
2. Stakeholder List for the South West Hertfordshire Statement of Community Involvement
3. Responses to the draft Statement of Community Involvement for the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan
4. South West Hertfordshire 2050 – 'Realising our Potential'
5. South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan - Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
6. Communications and Engagement Plan



SWHERTS

Joint Strategic Plan

YOUR FUTURE

Statement of Community Involvement

June 2022



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

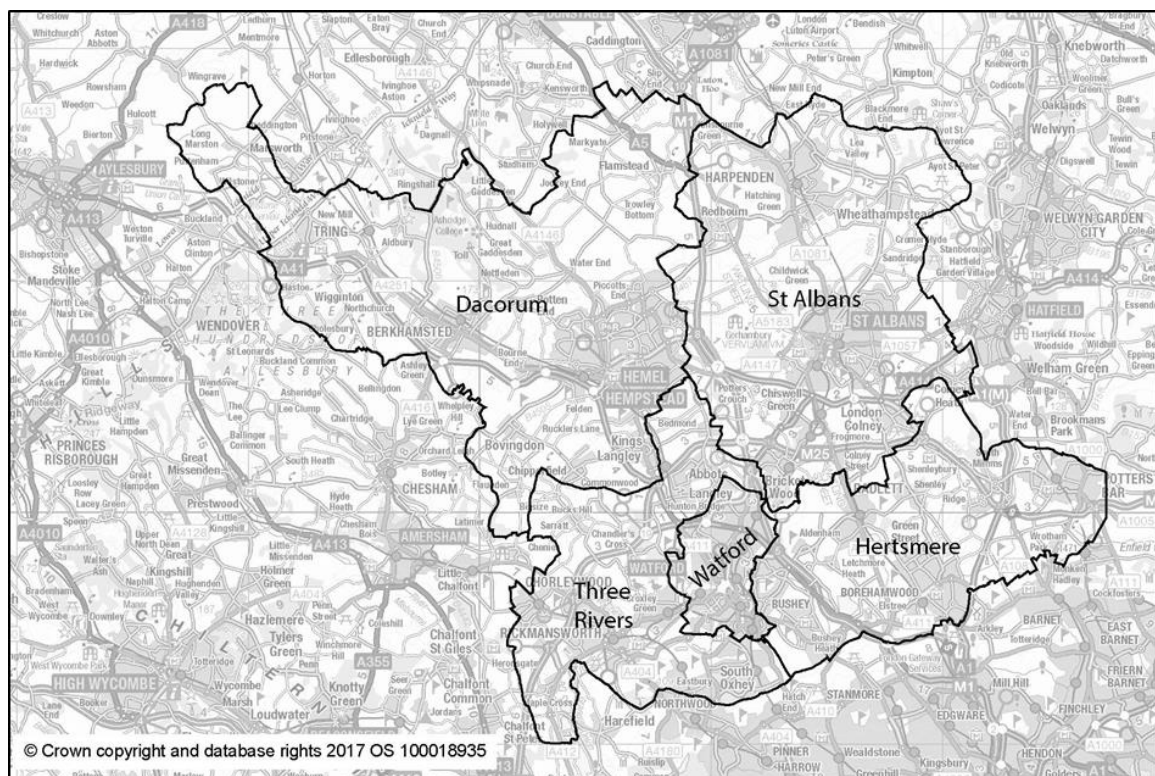
What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City & District Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, Watford Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council and Hertfordshire County Council (referred to as 'the Councils'), will engage stakeholders and the public in preparation of the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).
- 1.2 The SCI describes how the Councils will ensure that the public, businesses, landowners, developers, adjoining local authorities, government agencies and any other individuals, groups and organisations within, and with an interest in, the local authority areas, can get involved in the creation of the JSP.
- 1.3 The production of an SCI is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

What is the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan?

- 1.4 The South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) will provide South West Hertfordshire with an integrated strategic planning framework and supporting evidence base to support sustainable growth to 2050. The area covered by the JSP is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Area covered by the JSP



- 1.5 The JSP will be a formal Development Plan Document (DPD), prepared under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) which enables two or more local planning authorities to agree to prepare a joint Plan. Hertfordshire County Council will support the plan preparation process.
- 1.6 The JSP will identify the overall quantum of housing and economic growth within South West Hertfordshire to be planned for to 2050 and its broad distribution across the area. The plan will identify strategic allocations and priorities, as well as the strategic infrastructure necessary to deliver the spatial strategy.
- 1.7 The JSP will build on the current suite of adopted and emerging Local Plans (that cover the periods up to between 2031 and 2038), the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan, and will also link to a new Local Industrial Strategy prepared by the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- 1.8 The JSP will be formally adopted by the individual LPAs and will provide a high-level framework for the review and roll-forward of the Local Plans and related Neighbourhood Plans. Figure 2 shows the relationship between the JSP and other relevant plans.

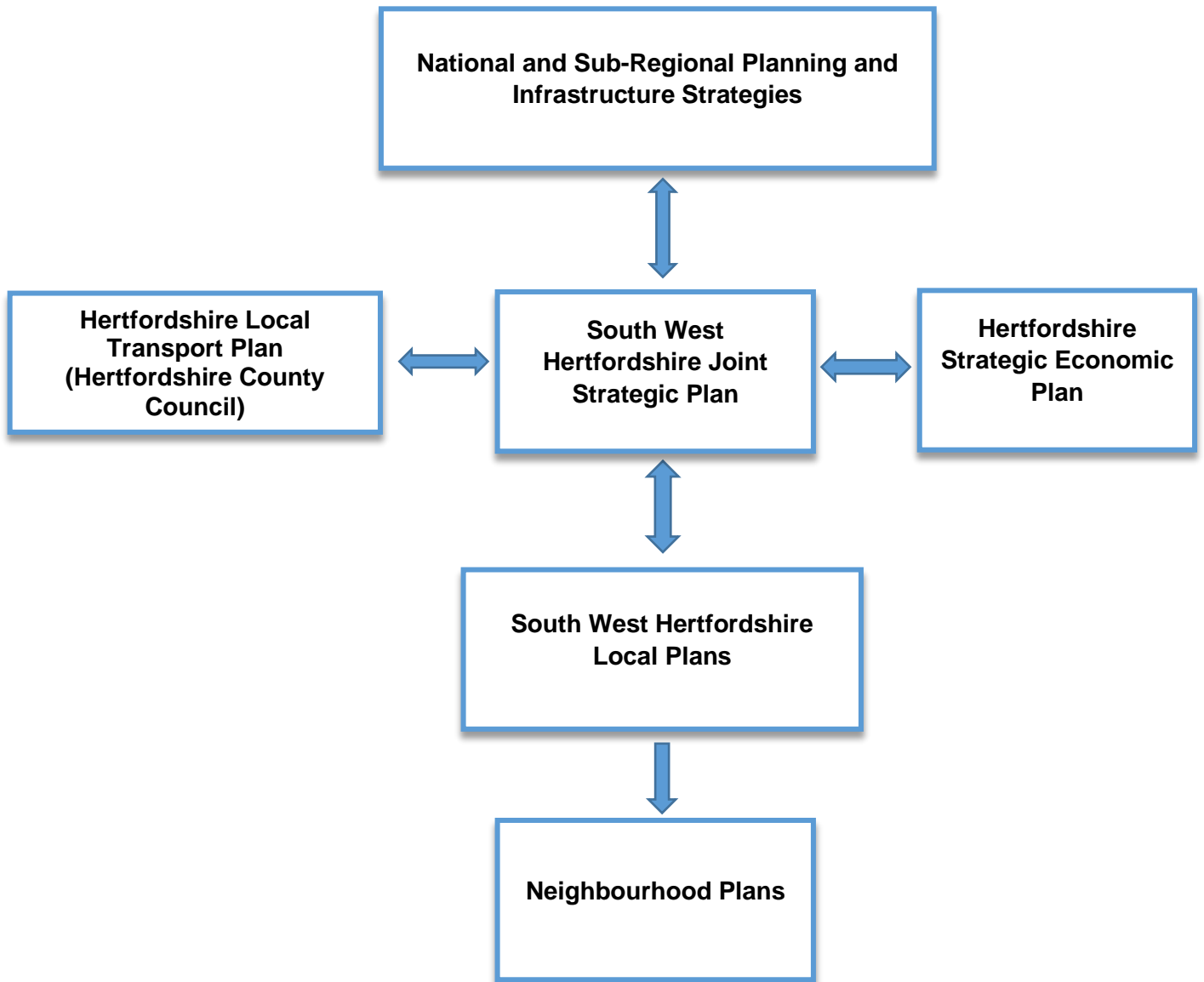
Why is a Statement of Community Involvement being prepared?

- 1.9 There is a legal requirement on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to undertake public consultation on local plans. In addition, one of the aims of the planning system is to encourage effective and meaningful community and stakeholder involvement throughout all of the stages of the plan making process. Effective community involvement will give people the opportunity to say what sort of place they want South West Herts to be and explain how their views can make a difference.
- 1.10 This SCI sets the steps that will be taken to ensure that the JSP will be shaped by early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees.
- 1.11 The outcomes of the consultation processes set out in this SCI will be an important element of the considerations of the LPA's in developing the JSP. However, they are one element of a wider range of material considerations such as the evidence base and the Sustainability Appraisal. Consultees and those engaged should therefore recognise the multi-faceted considerations that will go towards informing the content of the JSP that is submitted for Examination.
- 1.12 The South West Hertfordshire authorities are committed to a continuous review of the SCI to ensure that it continues to reflect current advice and best practice guidance.

What does this Statement of Community Involvement cover?

- 1.13 This SCI is specific to the production of the JSP. The Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) will also have their own individual SCIs concerned with the production of their Local Plans and any Neighbourhood Plans in their areas. These district-level SCIs also set out how each authority will deal with planning applications arising as a result of site allocations.
- 1.14 This SCI will therefore sit alongside the existing SCIs; it will not replace them.

Figure 2: Relationship between JSP and Other Plans



JSP Governance

- 1.15 A JSP Strategic Planning Member Group (SPMG) was established in November 2019 to guide the preparation of the JSP. The SPMG will monitor progress on the JSP, approve its budget and review the milestones as part of an annual review. Minutes from the SPMG meetings can be found on each of the partner authority’s websites.
- 1.16 This SCI has been endorsed by the Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG) and formally considered through the governance arrangements of the respective South West Hertfordshire Local Planning Authorities.

Duty to Cooperate

- 1.17 The Localism Act 2011 places a 'duty to cooperate' on local planning authorities, county councils, neighbouring authorities and other public bodies for any strategic cross boundary issues.
- 1.18 The duty to cooperate prescribed bodies are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) and listed in Appendix 1.
- 1.19 The way the South West Hertfordshire local authorities are working together under the Duty to Cooperate to complete the JSP is set out in a South West Hertfordshire-wide Statement of Common Ground, available at <https://www.swhertsplan.com/governance-and-papers>. The preparation of additional Statements of Common Ground covering the relationship of the JSP with other adjoining authorities will be considered as the plan-making process progresses.

2.0 WHEN AND HOW WILL THE COUNCILS CONSULT ON THE JSP?

Background

- 2.1 A public-sector Equality Duty came into force on 5 April 2011. This means that public bodies must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It also requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination
 - advance equality of opportunity
 - foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
- 2.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) identifies certain prescribed bodies that must be consulted when preparing Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents. These bodies must be consulted where the proposed subject matter will be of interest to them. These groups are listed in Appendix 1.

How and when will we involve Stakeholders?

- 2.3 Government regulations set out the formal stages in the preparation process of the JSP i.e. when we must formally publish the documents for comment and for how long. This SCI reflects how these requirements will be met.
- 2.4 The South West Hertfordshire Councils intend that all people should have the opportunity to have their say in how South West Herts is planned, irrespective of their differences; including by way of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. Research may be commissioned to understand public attitudes on relevant topics. Documents will be written in plain English. To achieve value for money and to ensure that consultation is proportionate to the issues being considered, the translation of documents into other languages will be balanced against the cost, time constraints and the available resources.
- 2.5 The early stage of plan preparation (under Regulation 18) will involve engagement with stakeholders, prescribed bodies, partners and consultees to inform the identification of issues and options. Notwithstanding this, engagement with key stakeholders will be undertaken on a continuous basis to ensure options are thoroughly tested and policy preparation is robust. Panels or reference groups may be used as part of this engagement as well as additional research such as opinion polls.
- 2.6 A JSP consultation database will be maintained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations. This will include contact information for the prescribed bodies listed in Appendix 1, together with any other groups or organisations who have asked to be kept notified. When an individual or organisation makes a representation on the JSP, or its supporting documentation, we will add their details to this consultation database.
- 2.7 There will also be opportunities to comment on the draft JSP when it is formally published (Regulation 19 stage) and to be involved during its examination by an independent Inspector (Regulations 23-24).

- 2.8 A Sustainability Appraisal is an integral part of the plan preparation process and is required for Development Plan Documents (DPDs) such as the JSP. It looks at the environmental, social and economic effects of a plan to make sure that the plan promotes sustainable development and takes the most appropriate approach given reasonable alternatives. At each stage of the JSP preparation there will be a corresponding stage of the Sustainability Appraisal which will be made available for comment during public consultation.
- 2.9 Groups we will engage with during the JSP preparation process will include:
- the community and members of the public;
 - statutory consultees as set out in the relevant regulations, including neighbouring councils;
 - local service providers and other consultation bodies who may have an interest in the JSP; and
 - other interested groups, businesses, developers, landowners, agents, Town Councils and Parishes, and residents who register on our consultation database.
- 2.10 Different levels and methods of community involvement will be appropriate as the JSP progresses through the plan-making process, but in summary, we will follow the following approach:
- We will contact appropriate organisations and individuals directly (i.e. those listed in Appendix 1 and on the wider JSP consultation database).
 - We will publicise consultations by a combination of methods, as appropriate, such as: website, press release, displays, social media, and community events.
 - We will make consultation documents available at council offices and public libraries where appropriate (see list in Appendix 2).
 - Consultation documents will be made available for download via the JSP website, which will be signposted from each Council's own website.
 - Where appropriate we will organise consultation events such as public exhibitions and stakeholder workshops.
 - We will publish comments received or a summary as soon as feasible. We will explain how these comments have been taken into account when decisions are made.
- 2.11 Table 1 sets out the key consultation stages and milestone dates in the preparation of the JSP, together with the different groups we will involve in the plan-making process and how we propose to involve them and keep them updated on progress of the plan.

Table 1
Stages and methods of consultation and communications

Plan stage	What will we be consulting or communicating on?	How will we consult / communicate?
Issues and Options <i>(Regulation 18)</i>	This stage can comprise one or more public consultations. These can relate to broad issues and options, draft policies and/or potential sites. To include consultation on associated sustainability appraisal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting representations through the JSP and signposted from individual council's websites. • Advertising through social media, press releases and electronic alerts. • Written / email consultation with key consultees / organisations as required by the regulations. • Consultation documents available to view at specified deposit points (listed in Appendix 2) • Public consultation events such as targeted workshops and/or exhibitions, if appropriate to the nature of the consultation.
Pre-submission publication <i>(Regulation 19)</i>	This stage comprises consultation on the plan that the authorities wish to take forward to adoption. To include consultation on associated sustainability appraisal. <i>Note: All representations must be received within the specific consultation period.</i>	
Submission <i>(Regulation 22)</i>	This is the stage when the plan is formally passed to the Planning Inspectorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice on JSP website and signposted from individual council's websites. • Written / email notification of consultees / organisations as required by the regulations. • Advertising through social media, press releases and electronic alerts. • Publication of documents listed in the Regulations.
Examination <i>(Regulations 23-24)</i>	This stage comprises the formal Examination of the Plan by an independent Inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice on JSP website and signposted from individual council's websites. • Written / email notification of consultees / organisations as required by the regulations (via Programme Officer)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising through social media, press releases and electronic alerts.
Consultation on Inspectors main modifications to the draft plan <i>(if any)</i>	This stage comprises consultation on any changes to the plan required by the Inspector to ensure the plan is 'sound.' To include consultation on any associated sustainability appraisal update required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inviting representations through the JSP and signposted from individual council's websites. Advertising through social media, press releases and electronic alerts. Written / email notification of consultees/ organisations as required by the regulations. Consultation documents available to view at specified deposit points (listed in Appendix 2).
Publication of Inspector's Report <i>(Regulation 25)</i>	Notification of people/ organisations of the outcome of the examination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice on JSP website and signposted from individual council's websites. Written / email notification to groups / organisations as required by the regulations.
Adoption <i>(Regulation 26)</i>	Notification of final adoption of the JSP.	

How long we will consult for

- 2.12 Where a formal consultation is carried out (as set out in Table 1), this will be for a minimum of six weeks. Where part of the consultation falls over a holiday period, where possible, the consultation period will be extended to accommodate members of the public who may be away at these times, usually up to a maximum of 8 weeks. Timescales for informal consultation that is targeted at specific groups will be depend on the nature of that engagement.

How to comment on the JSP

- 2.13 Table 1 sets out the methods we will use to engage with stakeholders and residents on the development of the JSP. We will encourage electronic engagement as the primary portal for consultation and will encourage people to make use of the JSP consultation portal, accessed through the JSP website as this will set out the information we are seeking at each consultation stage, together with clear instructions on how to register comments. This will offer an easy method for response and in turn will help speed up the analysis of the comments received.
- 2.14 A comments form will also be produced for each consultation stage that can be submitted by email or post. Verbal comments will not be recorded because it is important that all comments are accurately logged and reported.

- 2.15 Comments will be made publicly available. The Councils will comply with the obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations, and the principles of the Data Protection Act, in how they manage any personal data collected through consultation processes.
- 2.17 All comments made during the consultation periods will be carefully considered and will be reported to the relevant committee. A report summarising the consultation activities and the comments made and how these have informed the next stage of plan making will be prepared for each stage. This report will be made available.

3.0 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.1 SPDs cannot be progressed by the JSP programme until there are adopted, or well progressed policies, for them to relate to. Due to the limited size and resources of the JSP team, the work programme does not envisage production of any JSP-sponsored SPDs until the JSP itself is adopted. Any joint SPDs in the meantime will be prepared by the districts and relate to policies within their adopted Local Plans. They will therefore need to comply with the requirements set out in their individual SCIs. More detailed reference to engagement on SPDs will be set out when this SCI is next reviewed.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 3.2 Neighbourhood planning is led by Town and Parish Councils or designated Neighbourhood Forums. The main aspects of neighbourhood planning are:
- *Neighbourhood Development Plan* – a local framework for guiding future development, regeneration and conservation of an area;
 - *Neighbourhood Development Order* – a way for town and parish councils or designated Neighbourhood Forums to grant planning permission for certain kinds of development within a specified area; and
 - *Community Right to Build Orders* – a special kind of Neighbourhood Development Order, which grant planning permission for certain development schemes.
- 3.3 It is the role of the district councils to support neighbourhood planning, and associated consultation, as per the Neighbourhood Planning regulations. However, before they can come into effect, all neighbourhood planning documents need demonstrate general conformity with the JSP (once adopted), as well as with the relevant Local Plans covering their area.
- 3.4 Whilst advice on conformity will usually be provided by the relevant district council, the JSP team can also be contacted directly for advice via SWHJSP@dacorum.gov.uk.

4.0 REVIEW OF THE SCI

4.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017, state that LPAs in England must review their SCI every five years to ensure it is kept up to date and reflects current legislation and best practice.

4.2 Notwithstanding this, the SCI will be updated if a review is required due to changes to:

- Legislation / national policy
- Local decisions
- Consultation methods
- Technology
- The development of any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) related to the Joint Strategic Plan

Consultation Groups

The following consultation bodies are prescribed by the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Specific consultation bodies

Defined as:

- Coal Authority
- Environment Agency
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage)
- Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- National Highways
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Adjoining local authorities
- Town and Parish Councils and Neighborhood Forums within and adjoin SW Herts
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Relevant Telecommunications Companies
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- National health Service Commissioning Board
- Relevant Electricity Undertakers
- Relevant Gas Companies
- Relevant Sewerage Undertakers
- Relevant Water Undertakers
- Homes England

General consultation bodies

Defined as:

- voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authorities' areas;
- bodies which represent the interest of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authorities' areas;
- bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the local planning authorities' areas;
- bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local planning authority's area; and
- bodies which represent the interests of person's carrying on business in the local planning authorities' areas.

Duty to Co-operate bodies

(Note: there is some duplication with the lists above)

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Defined as:

- Neighboring authorities
- Environment Agency
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage),
- Natural England
- Mayor of London
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Homes England
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- National Health Service Commissioning Board
- Office and Rail and Road
- Transport for London
- Relevant Integrated Transport Authorities
- Highway Authority
- Marine Management Organisation
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Nature Partnership

Document inspection points

Main Council Offices

Hertsmere Borough Council,
Civic Offices, Elstree Way, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 1WA

Watford Borough Council
Town Hall, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD17 3EX

Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP11DN

Three Rivers District Council
Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1RL

St Albans City and District Council
Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3JE

Local libraries

Borehamwood Library

96 Shenley Road
Borehamwood
WD6 1EB

WD24 7RW

Watford Library
Hempstead Road
Watford
WD17 3EU

Potters Bar Library

The Elms
High Street
Potters Bar
EN6 5BZ

Abbots Langley Library
High Street
Abbots Langley
WD5 0AP

Bushey Library

Sparrows Herne
Bushey
WD23 1FA

Chorleywood Library
Lower Road
Chorleywood
WD3 5LB

Radlett Library

Radlett Centre
1 Aldenham Avenue
Radlett
WD7 8HL

Croxley Green Library
Barton Way
Croxley Green,
WD3 3HB

North Watford Library

St Albans Road
Watford

Rickmansworth Library
High Street
Rickmansworth
WD3 1EH

South Oxhey Library

Bridlington Road
South Oxhey
WD19 7AG

Adeyfield Library

1A Queens Square
Hemel Hempstead
HP2 4EW

Berkhamsted Library

185 High Street
Berkhamsted
HP4 3HB

Bovingdon Library

High Street
Bovingdon
HP3 0HJ

Hemel Hempstead Library

The Forum
Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 1DN

Kings Langley Library

The Nap
Kings Langley
WD4 8ET

Leverstock Green Library

Village Centre
Leverstock Green Way
Hemel Hempstead
HP3 8QG

Tring Library

High Street
Tring
HP23 4AF

Harpenden Library

27 High Street
Harpenden
AL5 2RU

London Colney Library

Community Centre
Caledon Road
London Colney
AL2 1PU

Redbourn Community Library

Redbourn Fire Station and Community
Library
Dunstable Road
Redbourn
AL3 7BE

St Albans Library

Level 2, The Maltings
St Albans
AL1 3JQ

Wheathampstead Library

Fire Station and Library
Marford Road
Wheathampstead
AL4 8AY

Glossary of acronyms

CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group	The arm of the National Health Service responsible for commissioning primary healthcare services.
DPD	Development Plan Document	A formal planning strategy document, such as a Local Plan or Joint Strategic Plan
GLA	Greater London Authority	The office of the Mayor of London
LPA	Local Planning Authority	The local council responsible for planning services in a particular area
LDS	Local Development Scheme	The project plan setting out when Local Plans and Joint Strategic Plans will be prepared and when they will be issued for consultation
JSP	Joint Strategic Plan	A high level planning policy document being prepared by a number of councils on a joint basis.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	The document which sets out the Government's planning policies and approach to key issues, which must be taken into account by councils when preparing their own planning documents
PINS	Planning Inspectorate	The organisation to are appointed by the Secretary of State to carry out independent public examinations of plans
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	The document which sets out how consultation on planning matters will be carried out by local councils.
SPMG	Strategic Plan Members Group	The group of elected representatives (one for each council) who will oversee production of the Joint Strategic.

Stakeholder list for SW Herts SCI

Organisations contacted by the JSP team

Key Stakeholders

Natural England
The Environment Agency
Highways England
Historic England – Essex, Hertfordshire and London Team
Local clinical commissioning groups (Herts Valleys CCG)
National Health Service Commissioning Board (now NHS England)
Network Rail
Homes England
Electricity Undertakers - UK Power Networks
Gas Companies – Cadent Gas
Sewerage Undertakers – Thames Water
Telecommunications Companies
Water Undertakers – Affinity Water
Canals and Rivers Trust
Coal Authority
Marine Management Organisation
Transport for London

Government departments

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Department of Health (through relevant Regional Public Health Group)
Department of Trade and Industry (now department for international trade)
Ministry of Defense
Department of Work and Pensions
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Transport
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Adjoining Councils

Hertfordshire County Council
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Broxbourne Borough Council
East Hertfordshire District Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
Stevenage
Mayor of London (GLA)
London Borough of Barnet
London Borough of Enfield
London Borough of Harrow
London Borough of Hillingdon
Essex County Council
Uttlesford Council
Harlow Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Central Bedfordshire Council
Luton Borough Council

Town and Parish Councils

Aldenham Parish Council
Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council
Shenley Parish Council
South Mimms Parish Council
Ridge Parish Council
London Colney
Colney Heath
St Stephen Parish Council
Harpenden Town Council
Redbourn Parish Council
Wheathampstead Parish Council
Sandridge Parish Council
St Michael Parish Council

Harpenden Rural Parish Council
Bovingdon
Berkhamsted
Tring
Tring Rural
Markyate
Kings Langley
Aldbury Parish Council
Great Gaddesden
Chipperfield
Flamstead
Flauden
Little Gaddesden
Nash Mills
Nettleden with Potten End
Wiggington
Northchurch
Abbots Langley Parish Council
Batchworth Community Council
Chorleywood Parish Council
Croxley Green Parish Council
Sarratt Parish Council
Watford Rural Parish Council

MPs

Mike Penning
Gagan Mohindra
Daisy Cooper
Bim Afolami
Oliver Dowden

General Consultation organisations

Local Strategic Partnerships
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Other key national or SW Herts wide groups

Herts Bird Club
SE Herts RSPB
Herts Gardens Trust
CPRE Hertfordshire
Hertfordshire Natural History Society
Salvation Army
Age UK Hertfordshire
Communities 1st
Watford & Three Rivers Trust
East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Herts Constabulary
Herts Fire and Rescue (HQ)
Watford Chamber of Commerce
Herts LEP
Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
Sports England
Herts Chamber of Commerce

Organisations contacted by the District

districts to add if relevant

Responses to draft Statement of Community Involvement for the SW Herts JSP

Organisation	Summary of comment	Officer response	Change required to document and/or any other related actions?
<p>Affinity Water (James Kenyon)</p>	<p>No specific comments to make on the document.</p> <p>Welcome the opportunity to engage at the appropriate stages of any plan and policy document development. In addition, welcome the opportunity to engage as early as is practicable with the planning application process.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The JSP will not be consulting on or determine planning applications – this will be done by the relevant district council.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Planning Property Team, Hertfordshire County Council (Andrea Gilmour)</p>	<p>No comments to make on the document.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Sport England (Roy Warren)</p>	<p>Request that Sport England is added to the list of specific statutory consultation bodies in Appendix 1. As set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595), Sport England (the English Sports Council) is a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields. Furthermore, we are also a formal non-statutory consultee on a range of planning application types as listed in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance</p>	<p>The JSP will not be consulting on or determining planning applications – this will be done by the relevant district council in which the application site falls. The SCI therefore does not cover this aspect of planning consultations. There is therefore no legal or procedural requirement to include Sport England in Appendix 1 of the SCI.</p> <p>This does not mean that Sport England will not be consulted on relevant JSP matters. The email address provided will be added to</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Amend the text in section 2 of the SCI to ensure it is clear that consultation on the JSP will include those on the consultation</p>

	<p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space. Consultation on strategic development plan documents such as the JSP would allow Sport England to offer advice on strategic sport and physical activity infrastructure matters. Direct consultation by email would be Sport England's preferred method of engagement.</p> <p>For future reference, consultations should be sent to our generic planning administration email address planning.south@sportengland.org</p>	the JSP consultation database to ensure that they are made aware of all relevant plan-related consultations and can offer advice on strategic sport and physical activity infrastructure matters as appropriate.	<p>database as well as the bodies listed in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Add generic planning email address to JSP consultation database.</p>
Environment Agency (Becki Ingram - Hertfordshire and North London Team)	<p>No comments to make on the document.</p> <p>Look forward to seeing further consultations on the Plan as time progresses.</p>	Noted.	No.
Natural England (Dominic Rogers)	<p>Supportive of the principle of meaningful and early engagement of the general community, community organisations and statutory bodies in local planning matters, both in terms of shaping policy and participating in the process of determining planning applications.</p> <p>Are unable to comment in detail on individual SCIs, but information on the planning service offered is available online.</p> <p>Request that all planning consultations are sent electronically to the central hub at consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.</p>	Noted.	<p>No changes required to SCI.</p> <p>Add generic planning email address to JSP consultation database.</p>

<p>Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Ministry of Defence, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence. (Louise Dale)</p>	<p>Grateful for the opportunity to comment on the above emerging Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).</p> <p>Note that the MOD military establishment Northwood Headquarters is located within the Three Rivers District Council area. Request that the MOD are specifically listed as being a consultee, via the Defence Infrastructure Organisation Town Planning team, as it is important that planning authorities and development plans recognise that MOD establishments are of strategic military importance to the UK. Therefore, they should be consulted as part of the local planning policy process to ensure MOD assets are not degraded due to development.</p>	<p>There is no legal or procedural requirement to include the Defence Infrastructure Organisation in Appendix 1 of the SCI, as they are not one of the bodies or organisations specified in the relevant regulations.</p> <p>This does not mean that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation will not be consulted on relevant JSP matters. The specific named contact for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation's planning team will be added to the JSP consultation database to ensure that they are made aware of all relevant plan-related consultations. They can therefore respond with regard to their landholdings as appropriate.</p>	<p>No changes required to SCI.</p> <p>Add email address for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation planning team to JSP consultation database.</p>
<p>Hertfordshire Gardens Trust (Kate Harwood)</p>	<p>Responding on behalf of The Gardens Trust, statutory consultee for historic parks and gardens, on planning issues in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>Welcome the joint plan and are satisfied with the consultation strategy set out in the SCI document.</p> <p>Would welcome:</p> <p>(a) Clarity on the linking of Local Plans by each authority and the Joint Plan and whether comments made by stakeholders at various stages during the preparation of Local Plans by each authority will also be taken into consideration during preparation of the Joint Local Plan; and</p>	<p>Support for the principle of the JSP and content of the SCI is welcomed.</p> <p>With regard to the other two matters on which clarity is sought, the response is as follows:</p> <p>(a) Whilst in principle a summary of responses provided with regard to individual Local Plans consultations being used to inform work on the JSP is supported, due to the number of responses made to each Local Plan, it will be hard to guarantee that this cross-over occurs fully. The JSP will also be planning on a much larger geography than the individual Local Plans, on a much more strategic scale (with a focus on a</p>	<p>No changes required to SCI.</p> <p>A reply has been sent by email to Hertfordshire Garden Trust in response to matters (a) and (b).</p>

	<p>(b) More information on the additional documents and evidence base which will support this plan and how these documents from each Local Plan are to be reconciled.</p>	<p>limited number of high level policies) and cover a different timeframe. Direct responses to the JSP itself and the specific matters it raises will therefore be encouraged from consultees, rather than a reliance on comments made to the current round of Local Plans. That said, district representatives on the Strategic Plan Officers Group (who are planning policy managers or equivalent) will be asked to highlight key Local Plan matters that are of relevance to the JSP as the JSP process progresses (and vice versa if appropriate).</p> <p>(b) The range of evidence required by the JSP versus the next iteration of Local Plan is currently being discussed by Officers. Whilst for some strategic matters there will be some reliance (at least initially) on the evidence that has been prepared to support the current round of Local Plans, much of this evidence base will require updating to support the JSP and the next iteration of Local Plans. The precise scope, sequence and timing of this work has yet to be agreed, but there will be opportunities to comment on the evidence base as the JSP is developed and consulted upon.</p>	
<p>Nash Mills Parish Council (Nikki Bugden)</p>	<p>Confirmed that the Parish Council's working group did not have any specific comments on the document itself and were pleased to note that "town councils and parishes" are listed on</p>	<p>Support for content of the SCI welcomed.</p> <p>With regard to the relationship to other plans and projects, each of the South West</p>	<p>No changes required to SCI.</p>

	<p>page 8 as an example of groups that will be engaged with during the JSP preparation process.</p> <p>Queried how the JSP would align with others such as Dacorum’s Local Plan and the Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) project.</p> <p>Noted two updates to dates and links required on the JSP website.</p>	<p>Hertfordshire authorities is in the process of updating their individual Local Plans, which will cover the period up to around 2038. The JSP will not impact upon the content of these plans, or the HGC project that is linked to the current Local Plans being prepared by Dacorum and St Albans Councils. Rather the Joint Strategic Plan will look further ahead, to 2050, to help provide a longer-term framework for the area. Together the councils, through the Joint Strategic Plan, will set the high-level strategic policies on issues such as climate change mitigation, delivering net zero carbon, housing, employment and infrastructure to 2050. When each authority comes to review their Local Plan again, they will be able to frame those new policies in the context of the jointly developed policies in the Joint Strategic Plan. The next round of Local Plans will also add more detail to the policies of the Joint Strategic Plan and facilitate their delivery. Working in the context of the jointly developed Joint Strategic Plan policies, these more detailed Local Plan policies will be more effective in delivering the overall policy aims for the South West Hertfordshire area.</p>	<p>Reply sent by email to Nash Mills Parish Council in response to the relationship with Local Plan and related projects following liaison with Dacorum Officers.</p> <p>The necessary updates to JSP website have been made.</p>
<p>Harlow Borough Council (Andrew Bramidge)</p>	<p>Suggests that:</p> <p>(a) As public consultation on the Regulation 18 plan is set to begin in spring 2022, it would be prudent to expand on the engagement methods if Covid-19 restrictions are in place to allow for plan-making to progress.</p>	<p>(a) The first R18 consultation is programmed for summer 2022, and will be primarily web and social media based. It is also not known what, if any, Covid restrictions will be in place at that time. No amendments are therefore considered necessary to the document. A more detailed communications plan</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Add reference to submission stage to Table 1.</p>

	<p>(b) Paragraph 2.4 should be expanded to include how hard to reach groups will be consulted with, as well as adding that the documents will be clearly written. This is especially important if electronic engagement is to be the primary portal for consultation on the draft JSP.</p> <p>(c) Table 1 should be extended to mention how consultation will occur during the submission and adoption stages, as it is important to keep key stakeholders informed and engaged during the whole process.</p> <p>(d) Information should be included on the consultation procedures to be undertaken for Supplementary Planning Documents.</p> <p>(e) Requests that Harlow Council are consulted on other specific cross county matters, such as the Herts and Essex Rapid Transit (HERT).</p>	<p>will be published to accompany the R18 stage.</p> <p>(b) The precise methods to be used to elicit responses from harder to reach groups will be set out in the detailed communications plans for each stage of the plan-making process and will reflect current and emerging good practice. Due to the timeframes of the JSP, the key hard to reach group is that of the 18-25 demographic. For the R18 engagement it is hoped that a youth forum can be established to advise on the engagement material to ensure it is likely to elicit responses from this age group, as well as to other individuals, groups and organisations. It is not considered necessary to reference the fact that engagement documents will be clearly written. This is always the intention with all consultation material and the JSP programme will seek support from council communications teams and/or external communications advisers to ensure this is the case. Section 2 of the SCI also already states that all documents will be written in plain English.</p> <p>(c) Agreed that a line should be added to Table 1 to reference the submission stage. The adoption stage is already included, so no further information required re that stage of the process.</p>	<p>Add a new section to the SCI to reference SPDS and that the SCI will need to be reviewed before any of these documents are consulted upon.</p> <p>The request to ensure Harlow continue to be consulted on progress of the HERT project has been passed to relevant Officers at Herts County Council, who are leading the project.</p>
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		<p>(d) SPDs cannot be progressed by the JSP programme until there are adopted, or well progressed policies for them to relate to. Due to the limited size and resources of the JSP team, the work programme is not expected to include production of any JSP-sponsored SPDs until the JSP itself is adopted. Any joint SPDs in the meantime will be prepared by the districts and therefore need to comply with the requirements set out in their individual SCIs and relate to policies within their adopted Local Plans. It is agreed that this position should be referenced in the JSP SCI. More detailed reference to engagement on SPDs will be considered when the SCI is next reviewed. This review needs to be carried out at least every 5 years</p> <p>(e) The JSP programme will continue to consult adjoining authorities such as Harlow on documents directly related to the JSP. The HERT project is at present a stand-alone infrastructure scheme and consultation is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council as the local highway authority. If and when it progresses as a defined proposal, then this will need to be referenced in the JSP and feedback sought upon this proposal (along with other relevant strategic infrastructure projects) as the JSP process progresses.</p>	
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<p>National Highways (Janice Burgess)</p>	<p>National Highways (formerly Highways England) has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN).</p> <p>Highlights key areas of the SRN located in SW Herts area and the guidance document that sets out how they will engagement with local authorities, communities and developers in the preparation of planning documents.</p> <p>Note that they are a statutory consultee and have a duty to cooperate with local authorities to support the preparation and implementation of development plan documents.</p> <p>They welcome the fact that SCI identifies them as a statutory consultee and welcomes engagement on the preparation of a JSP, with consideration given to development impacts identified for the SRN.</p> <p>They look forward to continuing to participate in future consultations and discussions regarding the JSP, as well as reviewing the traffic modelling and mitigation strategy as it develops.</p> <p>Note that the SRN covered by the SW Herts JSP is administered through two National Highways Regional offices and it is important</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>It is understood that Highways England was rebranded as National Highways on 19 August 2021. References within the document should be amended accordingly.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Amend reference in Appendix 1 from 'Highways England' to 'National Highways' to reflect formal name change, and add generic planning email address to JSP consultation database.</p>
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	<p>that a collaborative approach is taken to working together to ensure that the views of officers from both Regional officers are considered for the appropriate sections of our network.</p> <p>Provides a general contact address of planningse@highwaysengland.co.uk.</p>		
Canal and River Trust (Anne Denby)	<p>Note that the Trust is a statutory consultee for Development Management matters and welcome their inclusion as a specific group in Appendix 1. The reference is however to their old title of 'British Waterways' and this needs to be updated.</p> <p>The Trust wishes to engage with the production of the JSP and would like their generic email planning@canalrivertrust.or.uk added to the consultation database.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>British Waterways (now the Canal and River Trust) were erroneously included in the list of statutory consultation bodies for plan-making in Appendix 1 of the draft SCI. It is therefore appropriate to remove them from this list and instead add them to the JSP consultation database. This is consistent with the approach suggested for Sport England and Defence Infrastructure Organisation and reflects legal advice.</p>	<p>No changes required to SCI.</p> <p>Add generic planning email address to JSP consultation database.</p>
Berkhamsted Residents Action Group (BRAG) (Antony Harbidge)	<p>Notes that as is standard for a Statement of Community Involvement, in addition to specific statutory consultation bodies there is a commitment to consult with relevant organisations representing the interests of local residents, the environment, businesses etc in the area.</p> <p>In BRAG's experience it is left to these organisations to engage with the process rather than the planning body being proactive and actually engaging with the local organisations. The planning body should</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>No changes required to SCI.</p> <p>Add BRAG to JSP consultation database.</p>

	engage with local organisation and not leave it up to the organisations to do all the work.		
Central Bedfordshire Council (Christine McGoldrick)	<p>Welcome the opportunity to respond this consultation and look forward to continuing the good working relations with the five substantive authorities involved as the Joint Strategic Plan progresses.</p> <p>Supports the delivery of the South-West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) to support sustainable growth to 2050 in a comprehensive manner across the area.</p> <p>CBC recognises that the SCI is specific to the production of the JSP and that the individual Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) also have their own individual SCIs relating to their individual Local Plans and any Neighbourhood Plans in their areas, and that therefore CBC will continue to engage with them on an individual basis as well as part of the South-West as a whole.</p> <p>Supports the approach taken in drawing up the SCI which will ensure that all interested parties will be able to influence and feed into the evolution of the Strategic Plan. Also supports the provision of more detailed engagement strategies to supplement the SCI.</p> <p>Note at paragraph 1.18 that how the SW Herts authorities are working together under the Duty to Cooperate to complete the JSP will be set out in a South West Hertfordshire-wide Statement of Common Ground that will be</p>	<p>Support for the JSP welcomed, as is recognition that Central Bedfordshire Council will need to continue to engage districts and Town / Parish councils on Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans respectively.</p> <p>It is agree that clarification about the extent of the Duty to co-operate would be helpful in para 1.18, including a general reference to the preparation of Statements of Common Ground being considered with adjoining authorities as the JSP progresses. It is also recommend that the Duty to co-operate bodies specified in the regulation are also added to Appendix 1 of the SCI, as they are statutorily prescribed consultees.</p> <p>It is not considered appropriate for the SCI to confirm whether Statements of Common Ground will be prepared with specific adjoining councils, as the need for such document swill depend upon the content of the JSP, any cross boundary issues arising as a result, and any comments received from those authorities on the plan. However, the general principle can be added to the document.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Add additional text to para 1.18 to refer to the preparation of Statements of Common Ground with adjoining authorities.</p> <p>Add list of duty to co-operate bodies to Appendix 1 of the SCI.</p>

	<p>published shortly. However, the Duty to Cooperate extends beyond just the five local authorities that make up the area of the South-West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan. Although it is noted that neighbouring authorities are listed in Appendix 1, this section could make it clearer that the Duty to Cooperate extends beyond the boundaries of the plan and will involve the neighbouring authorities listed, including Central Bedfordshire Council.</p> <p>Confirmation on whether Statements of Common Ground will be sought between the South West Hertfordshire area and neighbouring authorities would be welcomed.</p>		
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SWHERTS
Joint Strategic Plan

South West Hertfordshire 2050

Realising our Potential

Page 95



August 2022



Foreword

As Leaders of the six authorities that make up South West Hertfordshire, we are pleased to introduce a vision for the future of our area and to seek your feedback.

This consultation marks the first exciting step in a new approach to long term planning in South West Hertfordshire, covering the areas of Dacorum Borough, Hertsmere Borough, St Albans City and District, Three Rivers District and Watford Borough.

The South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) will establish a collective ambition and set a blueprint for the future of the area to 2050. Eventually it will need to address big issues like the scale and location of new growth, the infrastructure needed to deliver it and our response to the challenges of climate change. However at this stage it is not about housing or employment numbers, or locations for growth. We don't yet know where growth should go, but we know we want it to happen as sustainably as possible.

This is your chance to tell us how you think our area can realise its full potential and how we can ensure sustainable growth provides a better future for everyone. In section 5, you will find a draft vision and

objectives for our area, which we want your thoughts on. This will then guide future stages of our plan.

We want the preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan to be an open process. This initial document is therefore designed to stimulate debate. We want the plan to be visionary, aspirational and use growth as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for those who currently live, work and play in the area, and those who wish to do so in the future.

When developing our draft vision, we have tried to recognise the many assets and strengths of SW Herts – in terms of our built, natural and human resources. We have also tried to ensure that we make the most of our economic strengths, enhance the quality of our life and reduce and adapt to the impact of climate change.

We want to talk to as many people as possible to ensure that the process of preparing the plan is fully collaborative and inclusive. Only by planning collectively for a sustainable future that benefits all our existing and new residents and businesses can we truly realise our area's potential together.

We look forward to hearing what you have to say.

SIGNATURE 1

SIGNATURE 2

SIGNATURE 3

SIGNATURE 4

SIGNATURE 5

SIGNATURE 6

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1 Introduction

We, the five local authorities which makes up South West Hertfordshire, supported by Hertfordshire County Council, are working together to produce a Joint Strategic Plan, which will provide a long-term blueprint for the future of the area to 2050.



The SW Herts area

Our collective ambition is that by working together and over a longer timescale, we will be in a stronger position to deliver and better fund the essential local transport links, health services, educational facilities, homes and employment that local people want to see, as well as ensuring that this part of Hertfordshire is sustainable, cleaner, greener and healthier. By considering the longer-term future of this area as a whole, and by working together, we believe that the opportunities to plan successfully for the future will be greater.

The Joint Strategic Plan will address cross boundary issues and set out high level policies covering:

- Reducing the negative impacts of climate change and the amount of carbon we release into the atmosphere
- Identifying needs for key infrastructure, such as schools and new public transport links, where this should go and how it is paid for
- Reflecting important designations such as the Green Belt and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- Establishing long term opportunities for providing new homes and jobs
- Identifying where any large scale growth should be located

It is important to recognise that in preparing this initial consultation document on the Joint Strategic Plan we don't yet know the amount of growth needed, or where that growth might be best located.

These statutory stages and the timetable for when they will be completed are shown in Figure 2 overleaf.

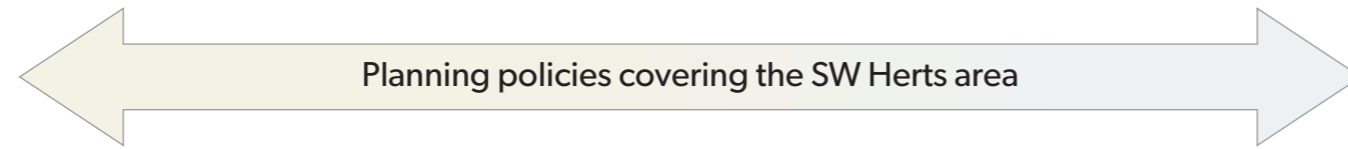




How does the Joint Strategic Plan fit with Local Plans?

The Joint Strategic Plan will play a very important role in shaping the future of SW Herts, by drawing up a longer term strategy to 2050 which best meets the needs of our area as a whole. This will include defining where any large scale growth locations should be.

The Joint Strategic Plan will not replace each district's own Local Plan. Each district and borough will still be required to prepare their own Local Plan. Local Plans set out a local council's policies and proposals for how land will be used and what types of development can happen in that area. Future Local Plans will sit within the framework set by the Joint Strategic Plan and will set out detailed site boundaries and the choice of smaller-scale sites, as well as continuing to guide other day to day planning decisions.



SWHERTS
Joint Strategic Plan

Sets out a series of high level (strategic) policies on key topics that apply across the whole of SW Herts and identify any large-scale development sites.

Local Plans (or equivalent documents)

Sets out for each district/borough:

- the remaining planning policies required to enable the JSP polices to be implemented for that area;
- policies covering more local issues; and
- the detailed boundaries for any large scale development sites identified in the JSP, together with any additional smaller sites

You can read more at www.swhertsplan.com or in the background section at the end of this document.



Your views will help shape the future of SW Herts...

Please let us have your feedback by answering the question(s) at the end of each section. We will firstly ask for your views on the area as it currently is, and then ask for your views on whether you agree with our draft vision for the future and the types of growth that are the most appropriate for us to consider.

You don't have to answer every question we ask, but we would like to receive as much feedback as possible, to help ensure that the Joint Strategic Plan reflects a wide range of views.

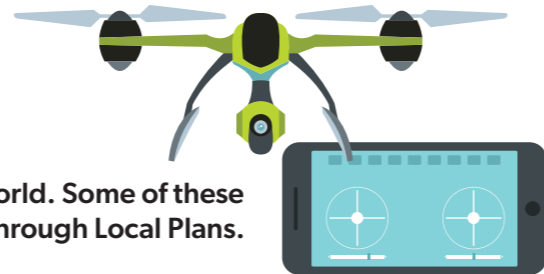
If you would prefer to respond by email or letter, please see further information about how to do this at the end of this document.

The consultation closes at **5pm on **date**** so please ensure that we receive your views by then.

Details of the full engagement programme that supports the Joint Strategic Plan is available on our website www.swhertsplan.com/**



2 Our world is changing



The future of South West Herts will be affected by trends and shifts occurring in the area, the country, and the world. Some of these are set out below. The Joint Strategic Plan will also need to take into account decisions that have already made through Local Plans.

Climate

The UK Government and we, the SW Herts Authorities, have declared a climate emergency. In the face of this climate emergency we need to radically change the way our society and economy operates. To do so will both safeguard the planet and increase our own ability to adapt to a changing planet.

Economy

The UK's decision to leave the EU has created considerable uncertainty for some UK businesses. It continues to be unclear what the UK's eventual relationship with the EU will look like and how this will affect things such as market access, the availability of migrant labour and product regulation. In SW Herts 63% of jobs growth since 2010 has been among non-UK nationals. Migration controls may therefore limit an important labour supply.

Demographics

Across the country, populations are growing, changing, ageing and becoming more diverse. Families are getting smaller and more people are living alone. We're living longer and healthier lives, although there remain inequalities in health and life expectancy. In SW Herts, as well as an ageing population there is also a predicted increase in young people and families moving in; young people who may have different priorities, skills and aspirations than their parents.

Mobility

Connectivity is more important now than ever, both to peoples' daily quality of life and to the wider economy. The way people move around has been affected by the pandemic and it is too soon to see what the long term implications will be. However, traffic congestion and environmental impacts are still key things that will influence how we move around in the future. From better public transport, a move to electric vehicles and just getting more people walking and cycling, the future of mobility needs to be greener, easier and more joined-up.

Technology

Data and digital systems are becoming increasingly integrated into our day to day lives. A report by consultants McKinsey Digital suggests that digital adoption has accelerated by 7 years over the 2 years of the pandemic. As a result, how we manage, experience and participate in our towns and cities, and wider society, is changing. This shift poses many challenges, but it also has the potential to make our places more efficient, resilient, inclusive and better places to live.

COVID-19

In the past two years, the nature of the places and spaces where we live, work, shop, exercise and raise our children have been brought into sharp focus. Lines between home, office, schools, pub and gym have become blurred. High streets, local centres and parks have become focal points for daily life. We have learned that we still need to come together socially and professionally, but that this can take many shapes and forms. Many have suffered greatly and recovery may take many years. How we understand the challenges and opportunities the pandemic has created is an important backdrop for the future vision for our area.

Feedback



1) Are there any other national or global issues or trends that we should take account of when preparing the Joint Strategic Plan?

YES NO

If YES, please explain what these are and why:

3 SW Herts today

South West Herts today is a great place to live, work and spend leisure time.

It is a place defined as much by its urban character and proximity to London as its rural character, countryside and access to fantastic green and open spaces. From rural villages to historic market towns, a New Town, a small city and outer London feel, there is a great diversity of character across the area.

But there are still issues that we need to address, especially when planning for the future.



What you've already told us...

Before beginning work on the Joint Strategic Plan, we wanted to get a better understanding from those who live and work in SW Herts about what they like about the area now and what we should be prioritising as we look to shape the future.

To help with this we carried out a 'SW Herts Your Future' poll in early 2020.

One of the key messages from the poll was that 86% of local people felt happy about living or working in SW Herts. Their favourite things about the area were parks, open spaces and its closeness to London

In terms of improvements, the provision of better health facilities was the priority for most respondents. Additionally, three key themes were also identified, these being the need for green spaces, infrastructure and healthcare facilities

In terms of the priorities for improving the area, 65% of respondents voted for 'Better Health Facilities'. For the under 25s, they pointed to 'Easier to get around', 'Better housing choice' and 'Better health facilities'.

We have also held a series of workshops involving elected Councillors, Council Officers, stakeholders and a SW Herts based youth group.

We have sought informal feedback from residents through our engagement website.

We asked for your views on SW Herts as it is today and what it should be like in the future.

The issues, challenges and opportunities raised through those conversations are included in the following summaries.



Our environment in South West Herts

Climate emergency

- All five South West Herts local authorities, as well as Hertfordshire County Council, have declared a climate emergency and the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) was established in January 2020
- Further action is required to meet, and ideally exceed, the Government's target of net zero carbon by 2050
- Area's water resources are under particular pressure, with lower than average annual rainfall, a growing population, and water use higher than the national average

Home to important landscapes

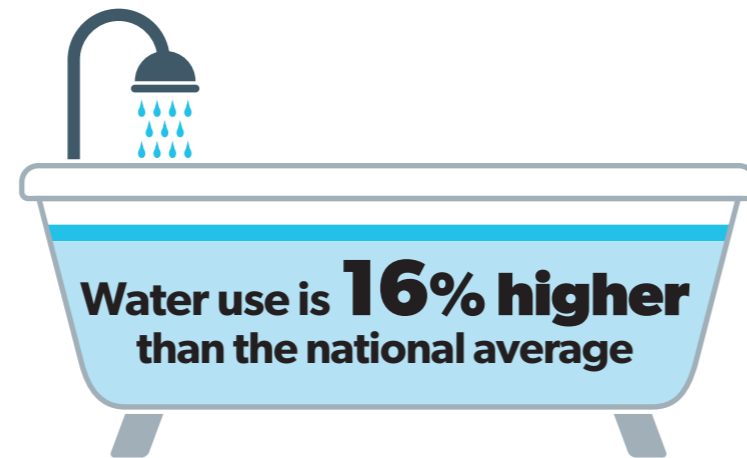
- Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) characterised by its chalk streams, commons and beech woodlands, part of which is designated as a 'Special Area of Conservation'
- Colne Valley Regional Park, connecting Rickmansworth with the Thames
- A wide range of public open spaces, such as the award winning Cassiobury Park and Verulamium Park, plus historic gardens, woodlands, and lakes

- The Grand Union Canal is a key asset that could be further enhanced and utilised for wildlife and recreation

Strong historic heritage

- Numerous listed buildings, many of which are located in designated Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments such as Berkhamsted Castle and St Albans Cathedral, which is thought to be the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in Britain

Home to **88** Conservation Areas



Access to green space

- Making better use of the land between our buildings and informal open space can help improve our public areas, improve connectivity with green spaces, support biodiversity and help mitigate the effects of climate change
- Access to high quality green space can have a positive impact on our well-being

- The Covid pandemic has made us value both public and private open space more than ever, with green space especially important to those living in more built-up parts of the area
- The greening of urban areas can also help support biodiversity, link up wildlife corridors and lessen the impacts of climate change

Attractive as a home for businesses and people

- High quality natural environment that makes the area attractive as a location for businesses and a desirable place to live

40 Green Flag Award winning parks



Feedback

2) Do you agree with our summary of the current issues relating to OUR ENVIRONMENT in SW Herts?

YES NO

If NO please explain why:

3) Are there any issues or opportunities we have missed?

YES NO

If YES please explain why:

Living in South West Herts

Location

- The area has many locational advantages, being attractive for those needing access to London, or to Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted or Luton airports, whether for business or pleasure

Diversity of character

- Home to a wide range of communities, from large towns to a number of smaller historic market towns, rural villages and hamlets
- A variety of types of homes, ranging from large detached houses in more rural parts of the area, through to higher density apartments in central Watford

Population changes

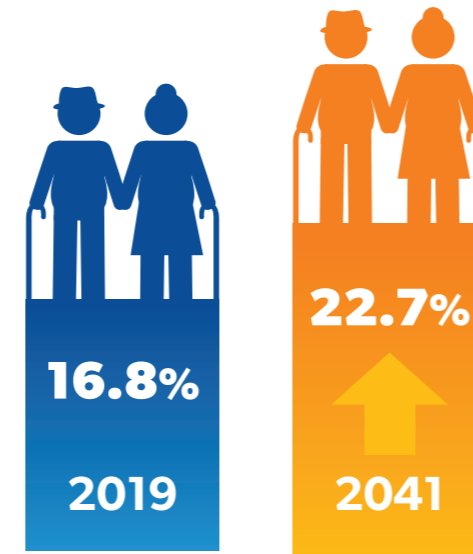
- The local population is growing. In particular, growth in the 65+ age group will increase demand for different types of housing, accessible healthcare and accessible local facilities.
- Watford is also seeing an increase in younger people moving into the town, which places different demands on services and facilities

Housing pressures

- Demand for housing is high, but a large proportion of the area is designated as Green Belt or rural area, so finding suitable locations for sustainable growth is a huge challenge
- House prices are very high, making it very hard to get on the housing ladder and to afford the type of home that suits your family size and lifestyle

Prosperity hides some inequalities

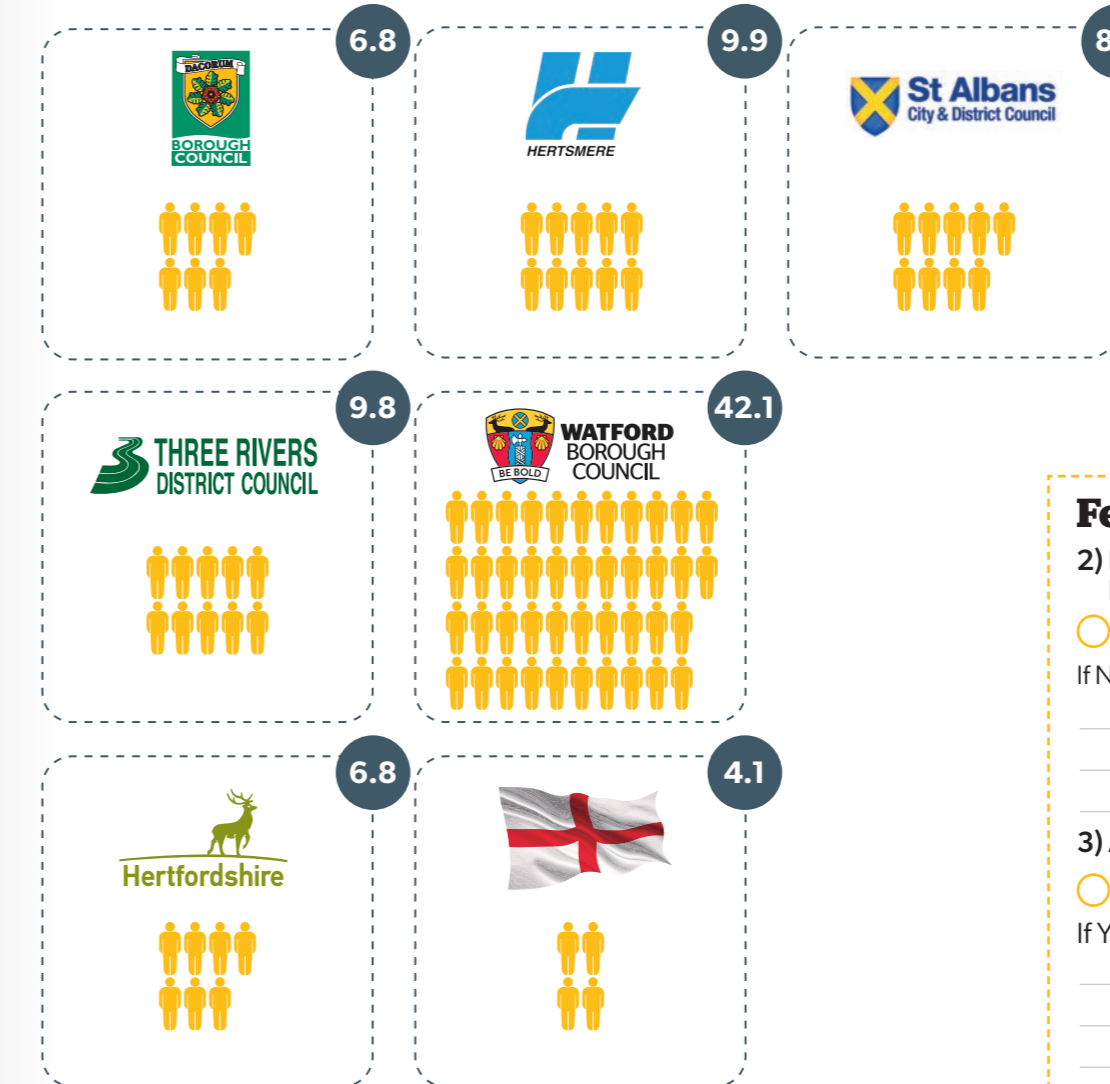
- There are some pockets of deprivation, mostly focussed in the larger centres of Watford, Hemel Hempstead and Borehamwood
- There are health inequalities across the area, with differences in life expectancy of up to 10 years
- Patients have variable access to local health and social care services
- Hospitals within the area are in a poor physical condition and need upgrading to ensure they can continue to deliver the range and quality of services required
- Those living outside of the larger towns are more likely to suffer from isolation and need access to a car to be able to reach local services and facilities



In 2019 those aged **65+** represented **16.8%** of the area's population, with this predicated to rise to **22.7%** by **2041**

Population density

Number of people per hectare (2011)



House prices



Feedback

2) Do you agree with our summary of the current issues relating to LIVING in SW Herts?

YES NO

If NO please explain why:

3) Are there any issues or opportunities we have missed?

YES NO

If YES please explain why:

Working in South West Herts

Strong and growing economy

- Economy has recovered well from the last recession, growing by around 4% a year since 2011
- Historically driven by the professional and business services sectors, with other strong sectors emerging such as film/TV, life sciences, sustainable construction and advanced engineering and manufacturing

- Home to a number of international business HQs, in area such as Clarendon Road in Watford and the Maylands Business Park in Hemel Hempstead

Economic Pressures

- Some sectors have declined in recent years, particularly public administration and manufacturing
- Land availability for both new and existing businesses is very challenging due to planning constraints and competition with housing
- Some companies have moved out of the area in the search for cheaper and larger premises

- Growth in the construction, education and healthcare sectors is particularly dependent on the employment of non-UK nationals

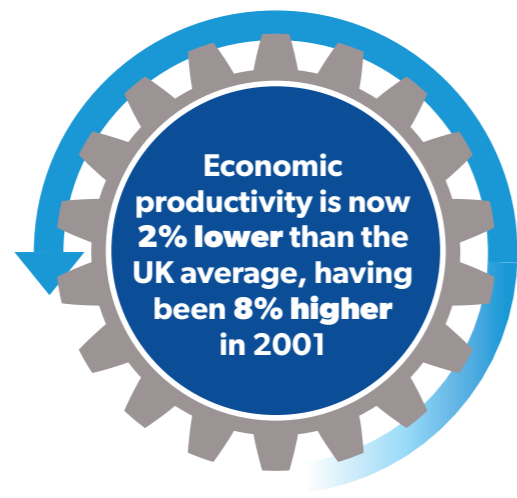
- High house prices are one of the reasons key sectors struggle to recruit

Research and innovation

- A strong research and innovation sector with the likes of Rothamsted Research and the Building Research Establishment - global leaders in the fields of agri-tech and building research
- The Herts Innovation Quarter Enterprise Zone will encourage growth in these and other related sectors

Creative industries

- A strong and growing location for creative industries including publishing, film and TV, arts and entertainment
- Home to Elstree Studios, BBC Elstree, Warner Bros Studios at Leavesden and the newly developed Sky Studios, Borehamwood



Low unemployment

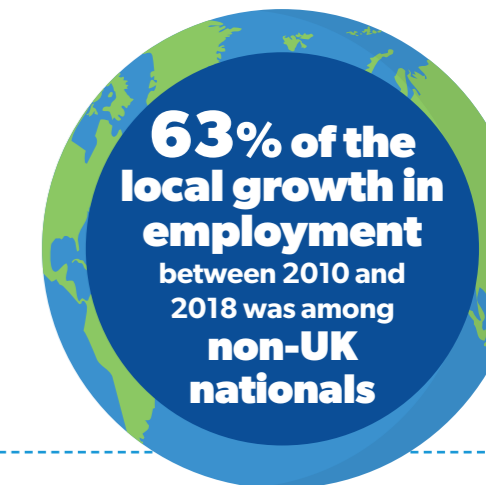
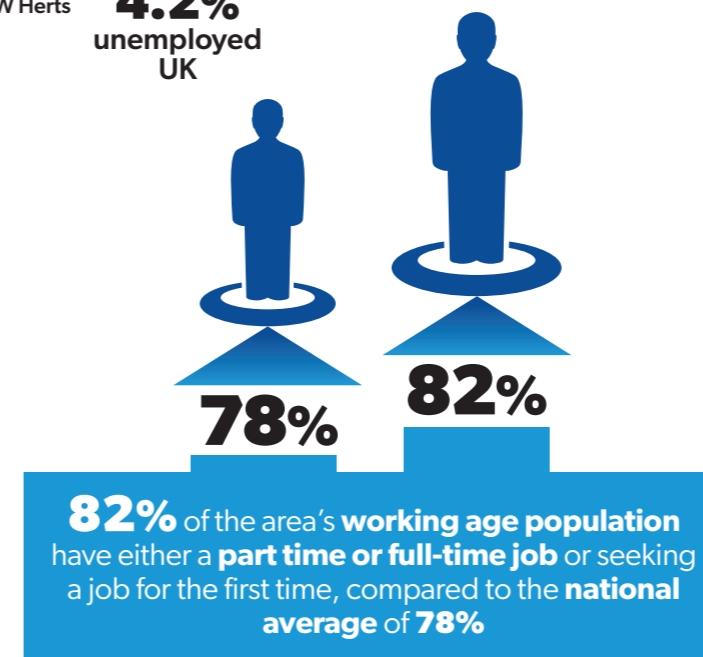
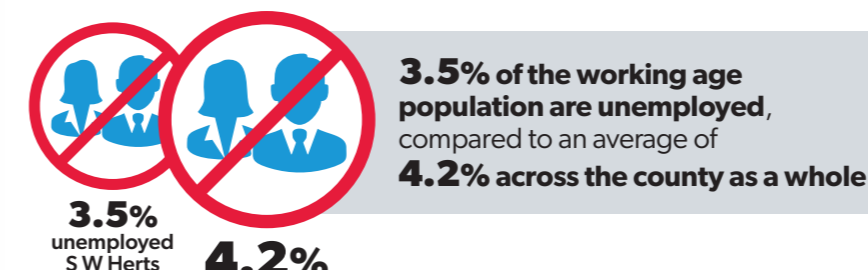
- The proportion of the area's working age population who have either a part time or full-time job or seeking a job for the first time is significantly higher than the national average.
- Unemployment is lower than the national and county average, with all districts have seen a significant fall in those without jobs since 2010

A highly skilled workforce

- Home to a highly skilled workforce, but there are not always suitable jobs to allow residents to work locally
- Local skills and education opportunities are supported by the nationally respected University of Hertfordshire
- Further education opportunities are offered by both West Herts College and Oaklands College

Agile working

- The Covid pandemic has increased the importance of ensuring technology and data networks are sufficient to support changing ways of working, especially in some rural areas where access to broadband needs upgrading



Feedback

4) Do you agree with our summary of the current issues relating to WORKING in SW Herts?

YES NO

If NO please explain why:

5) Are there any issues or opportunities we have missed?

YES NO

If YES please explain why:

Playing in South West Herts



Strong sporting community

- SW Herts has one of the highest sports participation rates in the country, helping to keep obesity levels below the national average
- Teams such as Watford, Arsenal, Boreham Wood, Kings Langley and other grassroots football clubs provide local outreach to people of all ages

High quality visitor attractions

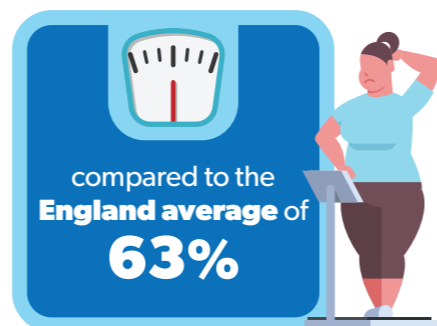
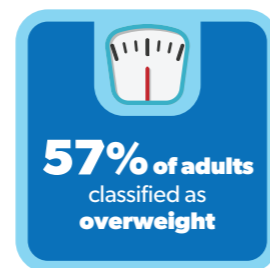
- The area is home to nine registered parks and gardens and six National Trust sites
- Warner Bros. Studio and St Albans Cathedral attract local, national and international tourists
- Most visitors only stay for the day, and more can be done to celebrate and promote SW Herts as a destination where visitors spend more time

Shopping and socialising

- A number of well-established town centres, with Watford providing the largest range of leisure and shopping facilities
- A better night-time and entertainment offer would attract a more diverse and younger range of people, but must be supported by improved public transport
- Scope to provide new leisure, cultural and recreational facilities and to improve the accessibility of existing facilities for those who do not have access to a car



Watford FC's Community Sports and Education Trust run over **30 different projects** engaging with over **158,000 participants** annually



High quality cycle networks

- There are a number of high quality cycle networks in the area that are predominantly used for leisure and recreation, including the Nickey Line that follows the route of the former Harpenden to

Hemel Hempstead Railway and the Ebury Way connecting Watford and Rickmansworth and other routes along the Grand Union Canal

- These networks form important green corridors, providing wildlife links as well as pleasant traffic free routes

Streets and public spaces

- There are opportunities for the well-planned regeneration of some town centres, which can boost local trade and improve the experience for those shopping there

72% of adults recorded as **physically active** in 2019/20

compared to the **national average of 66%**



In 2019 'The Making of Harry Potter' studio tour at Warner Bros. generated almost **£133 million** for the local economy

Feedback

6) Do you agree with our summary of the current issues relating to **PLAYING** in SW Herts?

YES NO

If NO please explain why:

7) Are there any issues or opportunities we have missed?

YES NO

If YES please explain why:



Moving around South West Herts

Good North-South links

- Connected by fast and efficient links to London and the Midlands by the M1, A1, M25, Midland Main Line and West Coast Main Line, as well as stops on the London Underground and Overground network
- The Abbey Line connecting St Albans and Watford has significant future potential and a more frequent service would help improve local north south links
- Residents have highlighted the importance of continued easy accessibility to leisure and employment opportunities in London



9 out of 10 households own at least one car

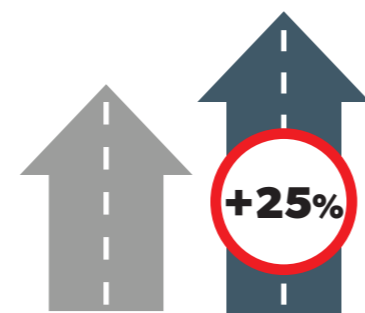
Poor East-West links

- East-west movements, particularly for public transport, are however poor and focussed on the M25 and A414.
- East-west travel is not possible by train, whilst bus services are infrequent and slow

63% of trips in Hertfordshire are less than 5 miles

Rail and road congestion

- Road congestion is a particular issue along east-west routes where there isn't a realistic public transport alternative
- Rail congestion is a common issue at peak times, and likely to increase with growing demand
- A number of rail lines are forecast to be operating at over capacity by 2031, especially the Midland Main Line to St Pancras, West Coast Main Line suburban services and Great Northern services to Moorgate, although it is unclear how the Covid pandemic will affect these forecasts



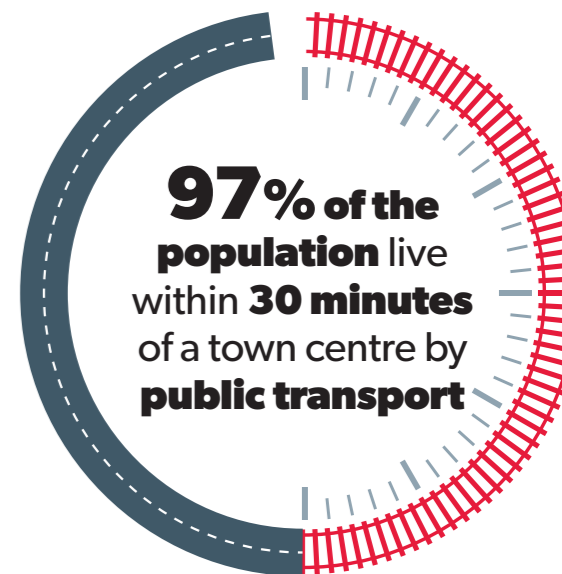
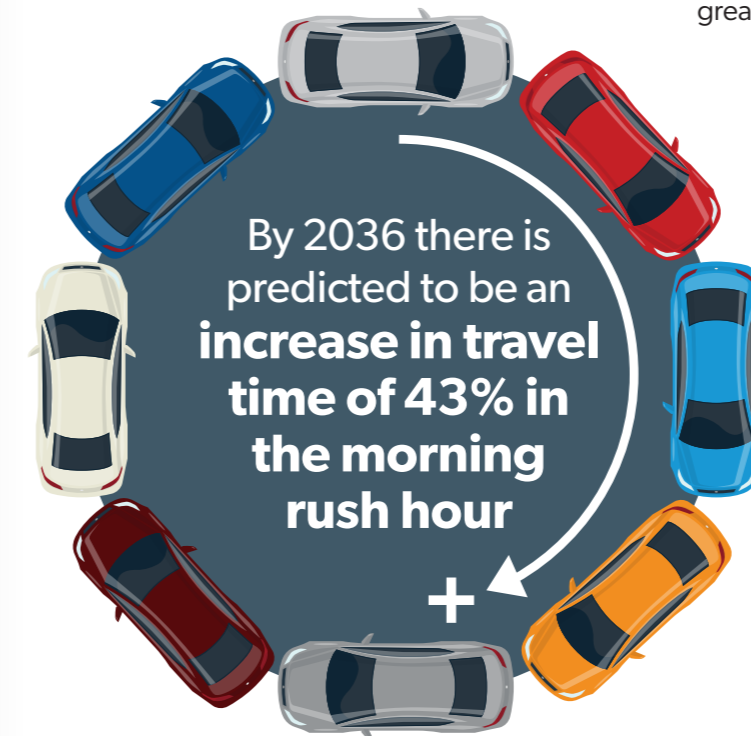
Predicted **25% increase in trips originating in Hertfordshire by 2036**

Cycling connections

- More than half of trips made in Hertfordshire are less than 5 miles, a distance that many could do on a bicycle with the right infrastructure in place
- Cycling improvements around Hemel Hempstead and an off-road cycleway connecting St Albans to Luton via Harpenden, and along the A405 from St Albans to Leavesden are helping to improve the otherwise patchy and variable quality cycle network. However these routes remain underused

Car reliance

- Public transport in rural parts of SW Herts is poor. Car dependency in the area is therefore very high, both for local and longer trips. Car use has increased as a result of the pandemic
- Discussions are underway to deliver an east-west Mass Rapid Transit scheme, broadly following the route of the A414 from Hemel Hempstead to Harlow, to help support a move away from reliance on the private car
- Whilst there is a slow move towards greener movement with electric cars and shared travel options such as car clubs, there is a lack of supporting infrastructure to encourage greater uptake



Feedback

6) Do you agree with our summary of the current issues relating to MOVING in SW Herts?

YES NO

If NO please explain why:

7) Are there any issues or opportunities we have missed?

YES NO

If YES please explain why:

4 Planning for infrastructure

It is vital when planning for our area's future that full account is taken of the infrastructure needed to deliver sustainable growth and what opportunities there are to help reduce gaps in existing provision. It is also critical to ensure these essential facilities and services are delivered at the right time and in the right place.

What do we mean by 'infrastructure'?

The term covers a wide range of services and facilities, from those we use every day to others we use more occasionally. It includes things like:

- Public transport – buses, trains and bike hire schemes
- Footpaths and cycle routes
- Roads
- Water (both drinking and waste)
- Internet and telephone connections
- Energy supplies
- Sports facilities – both indoor and outdoor
- Health services – such as GPs and hospitals
- Green spaces – parks, country parks and more informal areas of open space
- Community halls
- Schools

Whilst we don't directly provide much of this infrastructure, it is important that when planning for our area we work with the relevant providers to ensure these services and facilities are provided at the right time and in the right place. New infrastructure should be planned so that it brings benefits to existing as well as new residents and employers.

Work done to support our Local Plans highlights significant gaps in infrastructure provision, and in particular the difficulties in planning for services and facilities that cross council boundaries. These challenges are reflected in the informal feedback we have received so far, and will only increase over time.

By working together, we will be in a stronger position secure funding and deliver the infrastructure that local people and businesses want to see.

The Joint Strategic Plan will need to be supported by a longer term delivery plan setting out what types of infrastructure are needed where, by when, and how they are expected to be paid for. This document will be prepared once it is clearer how much growth the area will need to accommodate and where it will be located.

Some of the challenges we face have been highlighted in the 'SW Herts today' section above, but there may be others that you wish to draw our attention to.

Feedback

12) Are there any long term infrastructure challenges or opportunities that you would like to make us aware of as we begin work on the plan?

YES NO

If YES, please explain what these are and why:

Current and proposed key infrastructure

Two important large scale infrastructure projects are already at the planning stage, or underway across SW Herts. They provide an indication of the type and scale of infrastructure investment that will be required to support long term sustainable growth.



The **West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust** has been identified by Government as one of eight 'Pathfinder' Trusts to deliver their plans to build 40 new hospitals across the UK by 2030. The proposals would see Watford General redeveloped, together with significant improvements to the trust's other sites in St Albans and Hemel Hempstead, – improving the range and quality of services on offer and the way in which they are delivered.



The **Hertfordshire Essex rapid transit (HERT)** is intended to be a new, sustainable passenger transport network running from Hemel Hempstead and West Watford, joining just south of St Albans in Hertfordshire, to Harlow in Essex and onwards to Stansted Airport. It will carry more people than a car but will be more convenient and reliable than a traditional bus.

Initial public consultation has been carried out to help inform the business case that will be submitted to government. This will explore what benefits the HERT could provide, the different options available and potential costs. [See YouTube clip for more information](#)

5 The draft vision – tell us what you think

We have drafted a vision statement for the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan, which we would like your feedback on.

This vision has been developed in line with issues raised about our environment, and living, working, playing and moving around in the area.

Our vision statement

Realising our potential

“South West Herts will realise its full potential of being globally connected, nationally recognised and locally cherished. Known for its creative spirit, collaborative working and willingness to accelerate positive change, it will be a place where sustainable growth provides a better future for everyone.”



Feedback

13) Does the draft vision statement summarise your aspirations for the future of South West Hertfordshire to 2050?

YES NO

14) Are there any changes you would like to see to the vision statement?

YES NO

If YES, please explain what these are and why:

The objectives we set today will shape the lives of generations to come. And this is where it starts...

Setting clear objectives

In order to achieve our vision, we have established six pillars to guide us.

These set out our ambitions for the key areas that the plan will cover. Each pillar contains a number of more specific objectives that are designed to help shape future policies and allocations within the Joint Strategic Plan, and wider investment decisions in the area.

Through these pillars we aim to understand current and future needs and desires of those who live and work in the area, and where we want to be by 2050.

The 6 Pillars

Living green in a healthy natural environment

What if SW Herts made living green easy and led our country's response to climate change?

Growing opportunities to work locally

What if SW Herts was a place where investors, innovators, entrepreneurs and creators chose to come together?

Living in healthy, thriving local communities

What if SW Herts was an affordable, sustainable and fulfilling place to live?

Moving easily in well connected places

What if SW Herts had more people moving around by public transport, bikes and on foot than by car?

Building homes and places that people are proud of

What if SW Herts became nationally recognised as providing a high quality of life?

Delivering robust and sustainable infrastructure

What if SW Herts was cleaner and greener, with more robust and sustainable infrastructure?



These pillars are expanded in more detail overleaf. We would like your feedback on each of these and the objectives that sit beneath them.

Living green in a healthy natural environment

We have nationally recognised and locally cherished green and open spaces, but our natural environment is fragile. We are facing a climate and ecological emergency and it is time for us to accelerate change. Our future will balance demand for resources and growth with the natural capacity of our environment. We must be greener, healthier and leaders in climate action.

Our objectives



Commit to net zero carbon

Ensure all new development is net zero carbon and striving to be carbon negative, while improving the carbon performance of our existing built environment.



Bring people closer to nature

Protect the natural, recreational and character value of the area's green spaces, integrate nature into all new development, and improve existing links.



Create sustainable buildings and infrastructure

Introduce nature based solutions that are resilient to the effects of climate change.



Enrich native biodiversity and ecology

Protect, enhance and connect new and existing biodiversity and ecological networks.



Green construction

Build responsibly with modern methods that reduce resource consumption and reuse materials.



Feedback

15) Do you support the draft objectives relating to LIVING GREEN IN A HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT?

YES NO

Please explain your answer and any suggested changes:

Growing opportunities to work locally

We have a high performing economy with globally leading scientific research, film, TV and creative media together with office and service sector jobs. But it will not be enough to rely on these businesses and sectors alone to drive our future. We must embrace new and growing sectors, new models of working, and new ways of shopping and accessing services. There must be opportunities for everyone.

Our objectives



Create space to grow

Support the delivery of a wide range of quality workspaces, where new and existing businesses from different sectors can grow and flourish.



Target investment

Encourage investment in new and high performing sectors to allow the local economy to prosper and keep the workforce local.



Diversify and increase activity in centres

Encourage the resilience of high streets and town centres by supporting mixed use and their diversified role as destinations for leisure, culture and work.



Retain and develop talent

Support and promote the provision of facilities, funding, and links to business for education and training, including access to higher education, lifetime learning, apprenticeships, and re-skilling for all.



Strengthen the visitor economy

Build on our globally recognised attractions, to develop a thriving visitor economy.



Feedback

16) Do you support the draft objectives relating to GROWING OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK LOCALLY?

YES NO

Please explain your answer and any suggested changes:

Living in healthy, thriving local communities

Our area is a desirable and attractive place to live. Our population is generally healthy, prosperous and people feel positive about the experience of living and working here. But this must not mask our challenges. We have areas of deprivation and a number of services under pressure. We know that our people are our future, and we must help both new and existing communities achieve the highest quality of life and support their physical and mental health and wellbeing.



Our objectives



Provide healthy places to live

Focus on creating homes and neighbourhoods that provide opportunities for healthy living and strong physical and mental wellbeing.



Locate facilities to encourage community interaction

Support the timely delivery of well located, flexible spaces for work, leisure, health, learning, cultural, community and shopping facilities.



Ensure safe and inclusive places and spaces

Create and protect environments where individuals and communities feel safe and supported.

Feedback



17) Do you support the draft objectives relating to LIVING IN HEALTHY, THRIVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES?

YES NO

Please explain your answer and any suggested changes:

Moving easily in connected places

Our area is defined by its location and its easy access to London. However, our roads are congested and east-west public transport links are poor. It is time for us all to change the way we travel. We need a future where fast, efficient and affordable public transport and walkable neighbourhoods encourage greener travel, where our communities feel connected and where our people, businesses, visitors and goods can move around easily.

Our objectives



Transform travel

Encourage a radical shift away from car travel by providing accessible, efficient, safe, and affordable alternatives.



Connect towns and villages

Make travel between new and existing communities easier by strengthening public transport, cycle and walking networks and promoting on-demand services.



Improve delivery solutions

Support a move towards carbon negative and more sustainable delivery networks.



Create walkable neighbourhoods

Create a neighbourhood full of activity, where people can access all their daily needs, workplaces and transport options by foot and bike, and where life is active.



Feedback



18) Do you support the draft objectives relating to MOVING EASILY IN CONNECTED PLACES?

YES NO

Please explain your answer and any suggested changes:

Building homes and places that people are proud of

Our area's distinct qualities have long attracted people to move here. The natural environment, the mix of towns and villages and the proximity to London are all key factors in what makes the area an enviable place to be. There is no single unifying character, but this variety is our strength. We want to build on our diversity and desirability by making strategic decisions about where and how we build.

Our objectives



Design attractive places

Deliver places that are fit for current and future needs, where high quality buildings and public spaces create places that people feel proud to call home.



Celebrate a diverse place

Reinforce the varied urban and rural character of the area.



Deliver new homes in the right places

Ensure homes are built in sustainable, well connected locations, accompanied by the timely delivery of new infrastructure.



Recognise current and future housing needs

Ensure current and future residents can live in a high quality home they can afford, that is flexible and adaptable to different lifestyles and work patterns.



Feedback

19) Do you support the draft objectives relating to BUILDING HOMES AND PLACES THAT PEOPLE ARE PROUD OF?

YES NO

Please explain your answer and any suggested changes:

Delivering robust and sustainable infrastructure

Our area is growing and there is an ever increasing demand on resources. This will not change and indeed we want to actively encourage continued investment in our area. But we must change how we do this. We need a proactive and positive approach to planning and delivering infrastructure that focuses on a more resilient and sustainable future.

Our objectives



Deliver key infrastructure

Identify the infrastructure required to support new and existing growth, work with partners to deliver it in a timely manner and ensure it meets local needs, and adapts to the effects of climate change.



Green energy generation

Promote local energy production with an increased focus on renewable sources.



Promote circular economies

Minimise waste by promoting the reduction, reuse and recycling of materials.



Advance digital infrastructure

Ensure everyone can be connected through fast digital networks.

Feedback

20) Do you support the draft objectives relating to DELIVERING ROBUST AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE?

YES NO

Please explain your answer and any suggested changes:

Feedback

21) Which of the six topics covered by the 'pillars' is of most importance to you?

Please tick the relevant box below:

- Living green in a healthy natural environment
- Growing opportunities to work locally
- Living in healthy, thriving local communities
- Moving easily in well connected places
- Building homes and places that people are proud of
- Delivering robust and sustainable infrastructure

Please explain the reasons for your choice:

6 Shaping the future



Between now and 2050 SW Herts will grow and change. The Joint Strategic Plan will play a very important role in shaping the future of the area, identifying broad locations for sustainable growth, with the allocation of detailed site boundaries and the choice of smaller-scale sites being left to Local Plans to define.

No decision on either the scale or location of new development has been made yet.

We know it will be a challenge to decide on the best locations for the most sustainable growth, and specific local concerns will need to be considered alongside the need for new infrastructure, homes and jobs before any decisions are made.

The pattern of sustainable growth that is eventually chosen for the Joint Strategic Plan is unlikely to be based on just one of the growth types outlined here. Rather it will include a mix of types of growth that are best suited to the SW Herts area and reflect local constraints, opportunities and ambitions.

We are required by Government to ensure that we have maximised the use of land that has been previously built on ('brownfield' sites), before considering using any undeveloped land ('greenfield' sites).

We would like your feedback on each of each of these growth types. When answering the questions that follow, please think about how the growth types might impact on **the 6 pillars and objectives** set out in section 4:

- 1 Living green in a healthy natural environment**
Green spaces and biodiversity could be enhanced through larger-scale growth, for example by creating large-scale new green spaces. Alternatively, smaller green spaces could be linked together or existing spaces could be extended.
- 2 Growing opportunities to work locally**
The success of some job types is based in part on companies co-locating so that **businesses can work together**. Equally, **spreading job opportunities** around, including to smaller towns and villages, can help **to sustain existing and new town and local centres**.
- 3 Living in healthy, thriving local communities**
New growth should ideally be located where it can benefit new and existing communities by ensuring it enables improved **access to services, facilities and green space** and **support community interaction**.
- 4 Moving easily in well connected places**
Our ambition to meet and ideally exceed net zero **carbon targets** suggests that we should locate growth in places which will reduce the need to travel by private car. Think about which options will provide the best opportunities for residents to use more **sustainable forms of transport**, such as public transport, walking or cycling to get from one place to another.
- 5 Building homes and places that people are proud of**
Different types of growth can support **different types of homes** – whether that be houses or apartments – which can be suited to different people at different stages of their lives. **Affordable housing** may also be easier to deliver as part of some growth types than others, due to economies of scale.
- 6 Delivering robust and sustainable infrastructure**
When deciding where to locate new growth we need to consider where **access to existing and planned infrastructure** (see section 4) could promote the **efficient use of resources**.

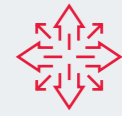
Shaping the future

We have set out a number of different growth types below, and your feedback will help us develop these in more detail in the next stage of our plan.



A) Growth within existing large settlements

A continued focus on our existing city, towns and large villages, through a combination of more dense development than traditionally seen in SW Herts and maximising redevelopment opportunities.



B) Outward growth of existing large settlements

The outward growth of existing city, towns and large villages, through urban extensions.



C) New settlements

The creation of completely new communities. These would need to be large enough to ensure they can provide key local facilities.



D) Growth of groups of settlements

Expanding the size of a number of existing communities which are located near to one another. These would need to be large enough in total to ensure they can provide key local facilities.



E) Growth along sustainable transport corridors

Locating growth where there is potential to create new connected and improved public transport corridors, particularly those running east-west through the area.



F) Growing the best connected places

A focus on areas that already have, or have the potential for, good access to railway stations, high frequency bus routes, high quality cycle routes and good pedestrian accessibility.



G) Scattered growth

Growth spread across the whole area, in all sizes of settlements, from large to small.

A high-level assessment of how each of these different growth types performs in terms of their social, economic and environmental impacts is set out in a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report that accompanies this consultation. This has been prepared by independent specialist consultants and is available at www.swhertsplan.com/**. You are welcome to give your views on this assessment as part of your feedback.

There may also be other ways that you think the SW Herts area could accommodate sustainable growth that we haven't mentioned and that you would like to put forward for consideration.

The potential levels of new homes and jobs that could be accommodated by each growth type will be assessed at the next stage of the plan-making process. The views received through this consultation will be taken into account when refining options.



Feedback



22) Which option or options do you think is the most appropriate way to shape future growth in SW Herts?

Please tick **ALL** that apply:

- a) Growth within existing large settlements
- b) Outwards growth of existing large settlements
- c) New settlements
- d) Growth of groups of settlements
- e) Growth along key transport corridors
- f) Growing the best connected places
- g) Scattered growth

Please explain the reasons for your answer, relating this to the draft vision and objectives for the plan where possible.

23) Are there any other growth types we have not mentioned that you think should be considered?

YES NO

If YES, please explain what these are and why. (Note: we are not considering specific locations or sites at this stage):

7 Making it happen

At this early stage of preparing a plan, details of precisely how the vision and objectives will be delivered are not being considered. That will come in future stages. However, it is important to consider how the Joint Strategic Plan could support innovative solutions to the challenges faced in SW Herts, as this will help determine how aspirational the Joint Strategic Plan should be.

Some case studies, ranging from an international to more local scale that show what we might want to try to achieve are set out below.



Aarhus Carbon Neutral City

Aarhus, Denmark aims to become a carbon neutral city by 2030, having already cut its emissions by 50% in the last 10 years. The city has undergone a radical energy transformation, moving from fossil fuel to heat pumps and electric boilers and switching the majority of heating and electricity to biomass. To reach its goal of 100% renewable energy, it is planning to increase solar and wind power, boost efficiency in buildings, and decarbonise transportation. [More information](#)



Heartwood Forest

The Woodland Trust have created a new forest near Sandridge, in St Albans district. Heartwood Forest's 347-hectare site was created on what was once mainly agricultural land. It's so big that it's now the largest continuous new native forest in England; a place where everyone can find space, peace, wildlife and miles of beautiful woodland to explore. [More information](#)



Co-located community services

Loneliness can be a major issue in cities and towns, and the loss of community space and increasingly independent lifestyles are often considered contributing factors. Café 1759 in Whitehill & Bordon, Hampshire is a not-for-profit community café and multi-purpose space run by the local housing association. It provides a range of activities and services including programmes with the local GP surgery, employment and health-check events. [More information](#)



Rivertech, Rickmansworth

Flexible working is here to stay. Rivertech is a shared workspace in Rickmansworth for entrepreneurs, freelancers, start-ups, small and medium businesses. Inclusive and affordable workspace is complemented by a range of clubs and programmes that support skills exchange, partnerships, and member wellbeing. [More information](#)



Lifetime neighbourhoods

Lifetime neighbourhoods are designed to be welcoming, accessible, and inviting for everyone; regardless of age, health, or disability. They are built to be accessible, offer a mix of services and amenities, promote social networks and interaction with nature, and offer a range of house types and tenures that can be flexible to meet residents' changing needs. [More information](#)



One Planet Living

Bioregional created the One Planet Living framework in 2003 from their experience developing the multi-award-winning BedZED eco-village in South London. The One Planet Living sustainability framework comprises principles and guidance designed to support the creation of a 'One Planet Action Plan' that acts as a route map towards a more sustainable future for organisations and authorities. [More information](#)



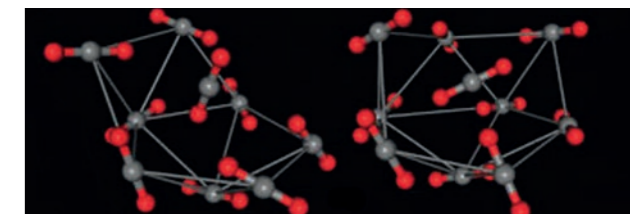
High density mixed use, Watford

The primary office location in SW Herts, Clarendon Road has seen £100m of private sector investment and commitments for 62,000sqm of new high quality employment floorspace including KPMG, PwC and TJX's new flagship European headquarters. A public realm improvement scheme has been completed to prioritise pedestrians and sustainable travel choices that supports higher density living in a quality environment.



Cycle Superhighways

Denmark is developing a cycle superhighway network to link urban areas and workplaces across municipal borders. The first cycle superhighway opened in 2012 and there are now nine across the country. On average, there is a 23% increase in cycle trips every time a route is upgraded to a cycle superhighway. Cooperation between municipalities was key in realising this model. [More information](#)



Carbon capture

As concentrations of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) continue to rise and drive climate changes, scientists have been researching options not just to reduce CO₂ emissions, but to actually remove existing carbon from the atmosphere. 'Carbon cracking' is one such approach that is at the pilot stage.

[Good News: Rocks Crack Under Pressure from Mineral CO₂ Storage – Eos](#)

Feedback

24) Are there any further comments you would like to make on the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan?

YES NO

If YES, please explain what these are and why:

25) Are there any other 'good practice' examples you feel should be considered for SW Herts?

YES NO

If YES, please explain what these are and why:

8 How to comment

We are really keen to hear your views on the questions we ask within this consultation. Comments can be made from *****date***** to *****date*****. Your views are important as they will help shape the next stages of the Joint Strategic Plan.

You can make your comments in a number of different ways. The easiest way is via our website:

 www.swhertsplan.com



Alternatively if you would prefer to send us your written comments you can download a comment form from the website and return to:

 **Email**
*****.gov.uk

 **Post**
SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan Team
c/o Dacorum Borough Council

The Forum, Marlowes,
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire HP1 1DN

You can also comment on the Sustainability Scoping Report that accompanies this consultation *****add link***** by sending an email or letter to the above addresses.

If you respond to this consultation we will also give you the opportunity to say if you would like your contact details added to our database to ensure you are kept informed of progress on the project.

All comments/completed forms must be received by 5pm on **date**** 2022.**

Next steps

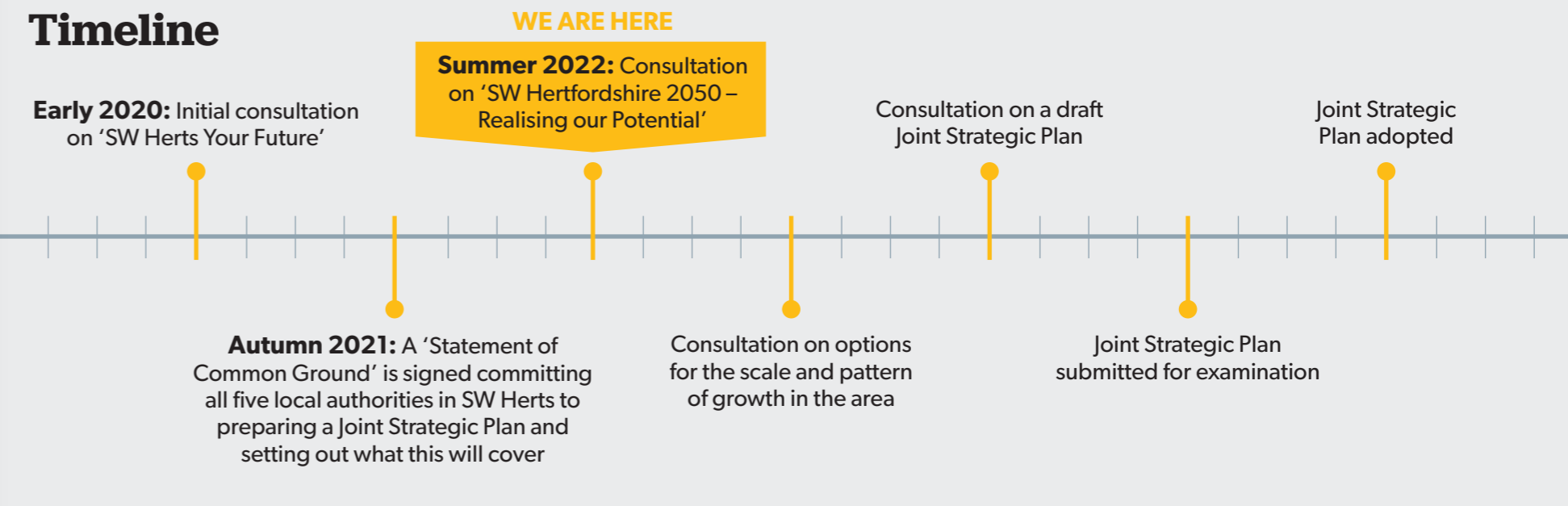
All the comments received before the consultation closes will be analysed and a summary report produced and published on our website.

The responses will be carefully considered and used to help inform the next stage of the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan. This will be a 'spatial options' consultation, where we seek feedback on the appropriate amount and best locations for growth.

Further details of these next steps are available on our website.



Timeline

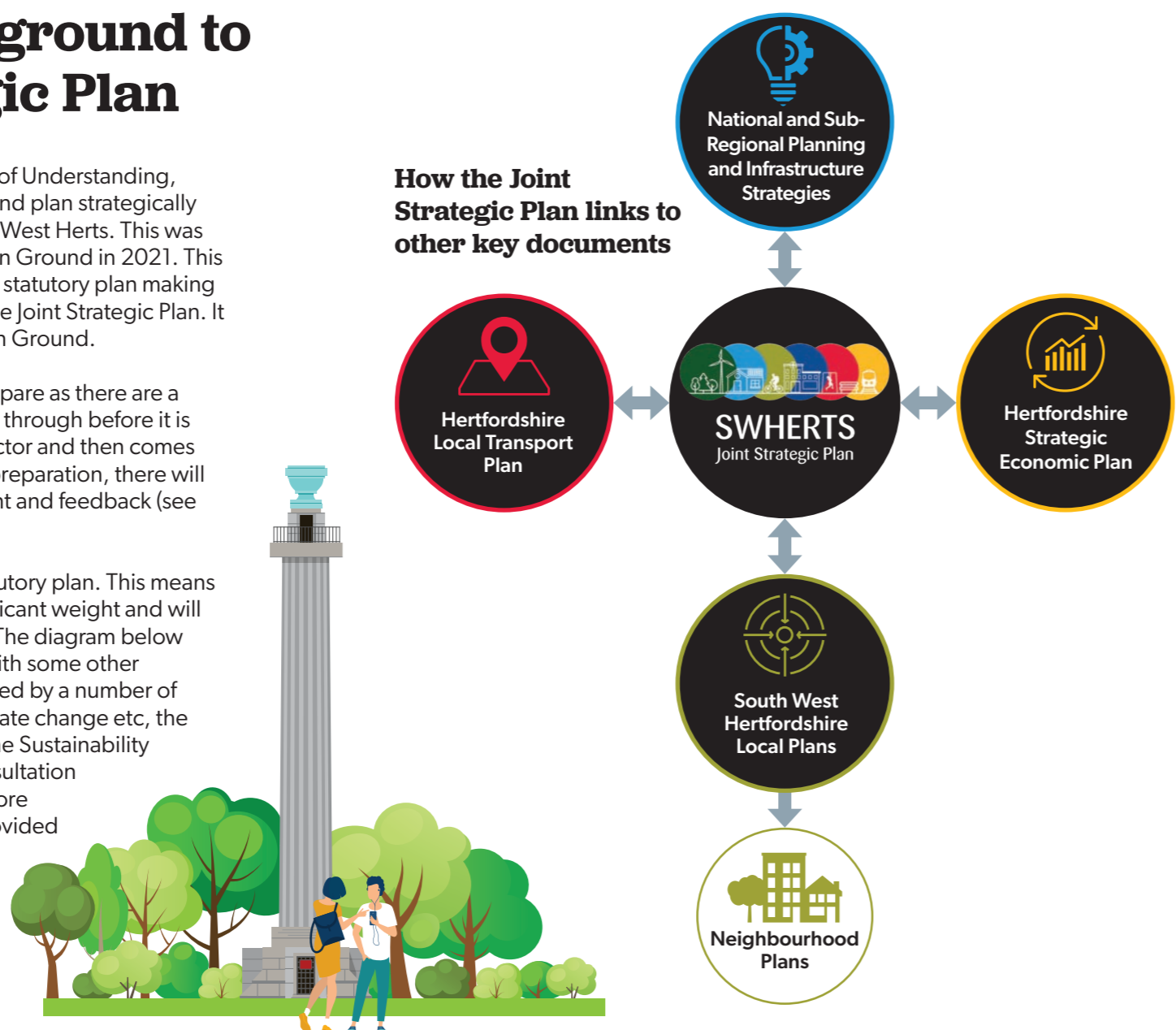


Appendix: Background to the Joint Strategic Plan

In 2014 we agreed a formal Memorandum of Understanding, pledging to work together to understand and plan strategically for the future development needs of South West Herts. This was followed by a signed Statement of Common Ground in 2021. This sets out a clear commitment to engage in a statutory plan making process, now taking shape in the form of the Joint Strategic Plan. It can be viewed here: [Statement of Common Ground](#).

The Joint Strategic Plan will take time to prepare as there are a number of formal stages that it needs to go through before it is put before an independent Planning Inspector and then comes into effect. At each key stage in the plan's preparation, there will be opportunities for further public comment and feedback (see timeline below).

The Joint Strategic Plan will be a formal statutory plan. This means that once finalised, the plan will carry significant weight and will be used to inform key planning decisions. The diagram below shows how the Joint Strategic Plan will fit with some other important documents. It will also be informed by a number of strategies relating to transport, health, climate change etc, the most important of which are listed within the Sustainability Scoping Report that accompanies this consultation [****add link****](#) and within a series of more technical 'Topic Papers' that have been provided as background to this consultation [***add link***](#).



It is important to note that the Joint Strategic Plan will not replace our individual Local Plans, which will continue to be prepared by each of the district and borough councils. The Joint Strategic Plan will provide the overall strategic spatial strategy and set the level of housing and employment land to be provided to 2050 to meet the needs of SW Herts. It will also identify the key pieces of infrastructure required to support sustainable growth. As shown in the diagram below, the Joint Strategic Plan will be supplemented by more detailed plans prepared by the individual councils. New versions of these Local Plans are currently being prepared and, whilst they must usually cover a period of at least 15 years, there is a requirement that they are reviewed every 5 years after adoption. We would again note that no decisions have been made on any locations for growth. This will come later.

Future Local Plans (or their equivalents) will need to reflect the vision, objectives and strategic policies set by the Joint Strategic Plan, to help ensure the strategy set out in the Joint Strategic Plan is delivered. This includes both additional policies and the land allocations that these Local Plans will contain.



Any Neighbourhood Plans prepared in the SW Herts area will also need to take account of the Joint Strategic Plan when it comes into effect.

Statutory plan-making can be a complex and detailed process and it can be challenging to ensure everyone engages in this process, particularly when it looks a long way ahead and covers a large geographical area. However, the Joint Strategic Plan needs to be owned by our communities. To support this, effective public engagement and awareness raising is crucial. In July 2022 we adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) [\(***inset web link***\)](#). This set out how we intend to consult on the Joint Strategic Plan. This was subject to public consultation from November 2021 to January 2022 before being finalised earlier this year. A more detailed Consultation and Engagement Plan that supports this current stage of the Joint Strategic Plan is on our website [***add link***](#).



SWHERTS
Joint Strategic Plan

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South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

South West Hertfordshire Authorities

Final report

Prepared by LUC

April 2022

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1	Draft Scoping Report	B. Miller S. Newman H. Ennis O. Dunham	O. Dunham K. Nicholls	K. Nicholls	18.03.22
2	Final Scoping Report	B. Miller S. Newman H. Ennis O. Dunham	O. Dunham K. Nicholls	K. Nicholls	30.03.22
3	Final Scoping Report with minor update	O. Dunham	O. Dunham	K. Nicholls	26.04.22



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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The South West Hertfordshire authorities, supported by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), commissioned LUC in December 2021 to carry out the Scoping stage of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the emerging South West (SW) Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). As explained later in this chapter, Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be carried out as part of the SA and are addressed within this Scoping Report; however for simplicity most references throughout the report are just to the SA, which should be taken as incorporating SEA, HIA and EqIA.

1.2 The purpose of this Scoping Report is to provide the context for, and determine the scope of, the SA of the JSP and to set out the framework for undertaking the later stages of the SA.

1.3 The Scoping stage of SA is summarised below:

- Reviewing other plans, policies and programmes.
- Considering the current state of the environment, as well as social economic factors in the plan area (South West Hertfordshire)
- Identifying any key environmental, social and economic issues which may be affected by the JSP.
- Setting out the 'SA framework', which comprises specific sustainability objectives against which the likely effects of the JSP can be assessed.

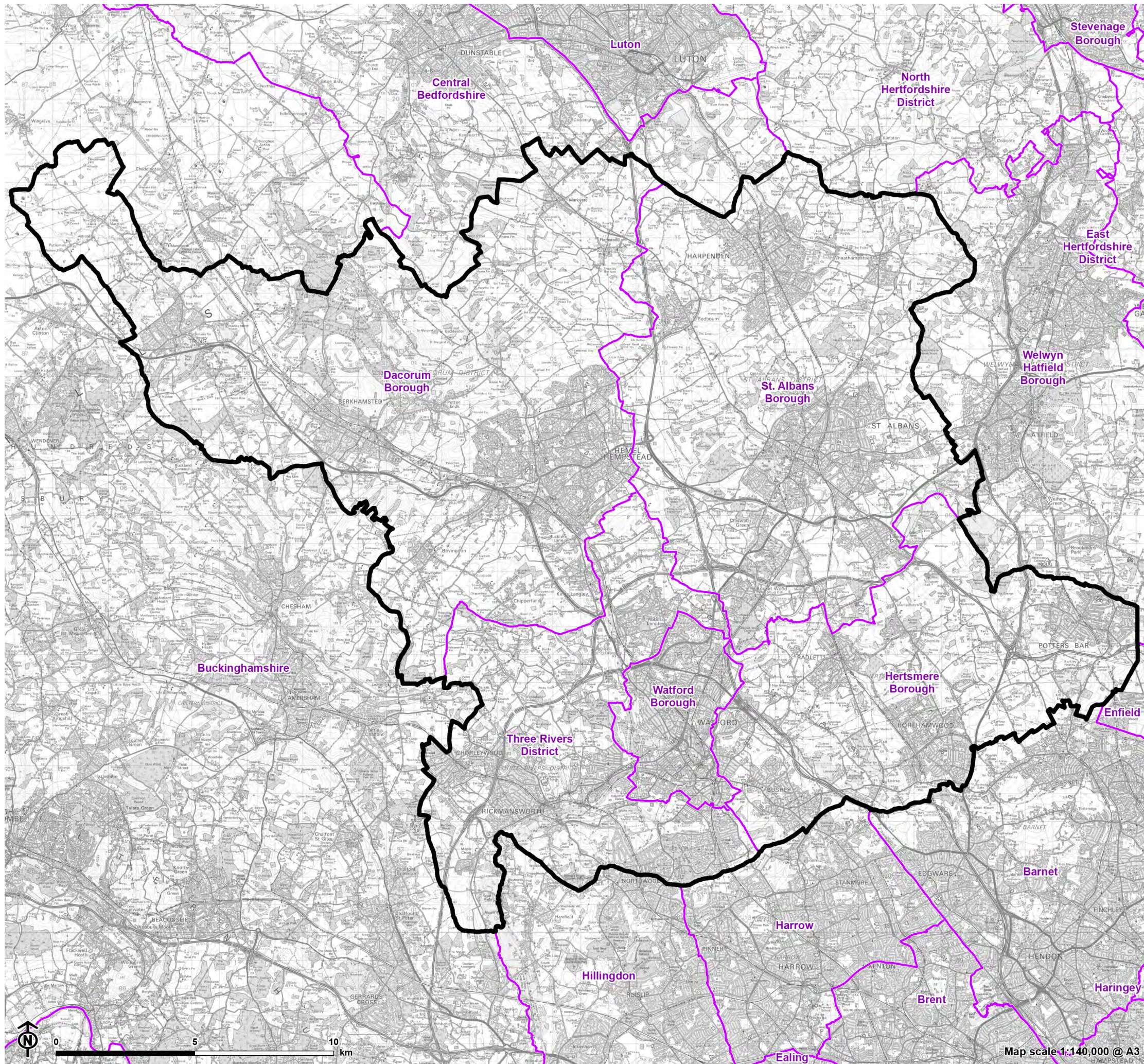
The Plan Area

1.4 SW Hertfordshire consists of the following five Local Planning Authorities: Dacorum, Hertsmere, St. Albans, Three Rivers and Watford (see **Figure 1.1**).

1.5 The area has a rich and varied natural and historic environment, which makes it an attractive place to live, visit and work. SW Hertfordshire is defined by its varied urban character and proximity to London as well as its rural character and access to the countryside. There is a diversity in character across the area, from rural villages to historic market towns and areas with more in common with outer London. SW Hertfordshire also contains important landscapes such as the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Colne Valley Regional Park.

1.6 The M1, West Coast Mainline and Midland Mainline all cut across the west of Hertfordshire, close to three of Hertfordshire's largest towns, Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans.

Figure 1.1: Joint Strategic Plan Area



South West Hertfordshire
Local Authority boundary

South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan

1.7 The five SW Hertfordshire authorities – Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St. Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council – have committed to producing a JSP for SW Herts, supported by Hertfordshire County Council.

1.8 The JSP will provide an integrated strategic planning framework and evidence base to support sustainable growth across SW Hertfordshire to 2050, including the planned delivery of new homes and economic development, and the anticipated supporting infrastructure needed with an overall focus on combating the climate crisis and enhancing the natural environment.

1.9 As part of the formation of the plan, the authorities are committed to ensuring there will be early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory bodies. A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been adopted and is supplemented by a more detailed Communications and Engagement Plan specifically covering the Issues and Options (Regulation 18) engagement.

1.10 The current programme anticipates that the JSP will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in mid-2024 and adopted in late 2024, subject to the examination process. The programme is, however, dependent on progress made on the current round of district-level Local Plans and any national changes that may be announced to the plan-making system.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.11 Under the amended Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 **[See reference 1]**, SA is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. For these

documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC) as transposed into law in England by the SEA Regulations [See reference 2], which remain in force despite the UK exiting the European Union in January 2020. Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the JSP to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

1.12 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process (as advocated in the national Planning Practice Guidance [See reference 3]), whereby users can comply with the requirements of the SEA Regulations through a single integrated SA process – this is the process that is being undertaken for SW Hertfordshire. From here on, the term ‘SA’ should therefore be taken to mean ‘SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Regulations’.

1.13 The SA process comprises a number of stages, with Scoping being Stage A as shown below.

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects.

Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Stage D: Consulting on the JSP and the SA Report.

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the JSP.

Health Impact Assessment

1.14 Although not a statutory requirement, Health Impact Assessment (HIA) aims to ensure that health-related issues are integrated into the plan-making process. The SA objectives will address health issues and the HIA of the JSP will be carried out as part of the SA. Recommendations will be made in relation to how the health-related impacts of the JSP can be optimised as the options are developed into detailed policies and broad locations for development.

Equalities Impact Assessment

1.15 The requirement to undertake formal Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) of development plans was introduced in the Equality Act 2010 but was abolished in 2012. Despite this, authorities are still required to have regard to the provisions of the Equality Act, namely the Public Sector Duty which requires public authorities to have due regard for equalities considerations when exercising their functions.

1.16 In fulfilling this duty, similar to the HIA, the SA objectives will address equality issues and the EqIA of the JSP will be carried out as part of the SA. Recommendations will be made in relation to how the equality-related impacts of the JSP can be optimised as the options are developed into detailed policies and broad locations for development.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

1.17 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the Habitats Regulations published for England and Wales in July 2007 and updated in 2010 and again in 2012 and 2017 [See reference 4]. The Regulations translate Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna

and Flora (Habitats Directive) and 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) into UK law and remain a legal requirement despite the UK exiting the European Union.

1.18 The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site.

1.19 The HRA will be undertaken separately but the findings will be taken into account in the SA where relevant (for example to inform judgements about the likely effects of potential broad development locations on biodiversity).

1.20 Recently the HRA for the emerging Dacorum Local Plan concluded that there may be likely significant effects on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC due to recreational impacts and therefore an Appropriate Assessment was required. The visitor survey and recreation impact assessment [\[See reference 5\]](#) published in March 2022 to inform the HRA of the emerging Local Plan includes the need for mitigation in the form of a 'development exclusion zone' of 500m around the European site. The same issues are likely to arise within the HRA that will be carried out for the emerging JSP.

Approach to Scoping

1.21 There are five tasks involved at the Scoping Stage:

Stage A1: Setting out the policy context for the SA of the JSP (i.e. key government policies and strategies that influence what the JSP and the SA need to consider).

Stage A2: Setting out the baseline for the SA of the JSP (i.e. the current and likely future environmental, social and economic conditions in SW Herts).

Stage A3: Drawing on A1 and A2, identify the particular sustainability problems and/or opportunities ('issues') that the JSP and SA should address.

Stage A4: Drawing on A1, A2 and A3, develop a framework for SA objectives and assessment criteria to appraise the constituent parts of the JSP in isolation and in combination.

Stage A5: Consultation on the scope of the SA.

1.22 This Scoping Report fulfils the requirements set out above with a view to establishing the likely significant effects of constituent parts of the JSP in isolation and in combination. In accordance with national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), published on-line by the Government, the Scoping Report should be proportionate and relevant to the JSP, focussing on what is needed to identify and assess the likely significant effects.

1.23 This report also includes an appraisal of the draft vision, objectives and high-level growth types as set out in the Regulation 18 consultation document (August 2022).

Meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations

1.24 The relevant sections of the Scoping Report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements are signposted below (the remainder will be met during subsequent stages of the SA of the JSP). Signposting information should be included in the full SA Report at each stage of the SA to show how the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met through the SA process.

1.25 The SEA Regulations require the responsible authority to prepare, or secure the preparation of, an 'environmental report', which in this case will comprise the SA report. The report shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of the following:

a. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.

■ Covered in Chapters 1 and 3 and Appendix A.

b. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.

■ Covered in Chapters 3 and 4.

c. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.

■ Covered in Chapter 3.

d. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.

■ Covered in Chapters 3 and 4.

e. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

■ Covered in Chapter 3 and Appendix A.

f. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and

archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects).

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

g. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

h. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

i. A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Reg. 17.

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

j. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Reg. 12(3)).

- This Scoping Report and the Environmental Reports will adhere to this requirement.

Authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Reg. 12(5)).

- This SA Scoping Report will be published for consultation with the three statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) for a minimum of five weeks.

Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Reg. 13).

- Public consultation on the Joint Strategic Plan and accompanying SA Reports will take place as the Plan develops.

Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Reg. 14).

- The JSP is not expected to have significant effects on other EU Member States.

Provision of information on the decision:

When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Reg. 14 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed:

- the plan or programme as adopted;
- a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report, the opinions expressed, and the results of consultations entered into have been taken into account, and the reasons for choosing the

plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and

- the measures decided concerning monitoring.
- To be addressed after the JSP is adopted.

Monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Reg. 17).

- To be addressed after the JSP is adopted.

Quality assurance: environmental reports should be of a sufficient standard to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations.

- This report has been produced in line with current guidance and good practice for SEA/SA and this section demonstrates where the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met.

Structure of the Scoping Report

1.26 This chapter describes the background to the production of the JSP and the requirement to undertake SA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this Scoping Report is structured into the following sections:

- **Chapter 2** describes the other plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the SA of the JSP.
- **Chapter 3** presents the baseline information which will inform the assessment of the JSP.
- **Chapter 4** identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues in SW Hertfordshire of relevance to the emerging JSP and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation.
- **Chapter 5** presents the SA framework that will be used for the appraisal of the JSP and the proposed method for carrying out the SA.

- **Chapter 6** presents an appraisal of the emerging Regulation 18 vision and objectives and alternative spatial growth scenarios presented within the JSP.
- **Chapter 7** describes the next steps to be undertaken in the SA of the JSP.

1.27 Appendix A sets out the international and national plans, policies and programmes which are of most relevance to the JSP.

Chapter 2

Policy Context for the Joint Strategic Plan

2.1 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires:

(a) “an outline of the contents and main objectives of the Plan and its relationship with other relevant plans or programmes” and

(e) “the environmental protection objectives established at International, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation”

Outline of the SW Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan

2.2 The SW Hertfordshire JSP will provide a strategic policy framework for SW Hertfordshire to 2050. It will consider cross boundary issues and will set out high level policies for SW Hertfordshire. The JSP will cover the south west portion of the county of Hertfordshire, and will be prepared jointly by:

- Dacorum Borough Council.
- Hertsmere Borough Council.
- St. Albans City and District Council.
- Three Rivers District Council.
- Watford Borough Council.

2.3 The JSP is being prepared in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, which has a key role given its responsibilities for the delivery of key infrastructure and services such as transport and education. It will also seek to address linkages to wider planning considerations.

2.4 In order to establish a clear scope for the SA it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental, social and economic objectives contained within international, national and local policies, plans and strategies that are of relevance to the JSP. Given the SEA Regulations requirements above, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between the JSP and other relevant plans, policies and programmes.

2.5 This chapter summarises the relationship of the JSP to the relevant international and national policies, plans and programmes which should be taken into consideration during preparation of the plan and its SA, as well as those plans and programmes which are of relevance at a County/sub-regional level. The objectives of these plans and programmes have been taken into account when drafting the SA framework in Chapter 5.

The Implications of Brexit

2.6 As of the end of January 2020 the UK has left the EU. As set out in the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments [[See reference 6](#)], the purpose of the Brexit amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the EU. No substantive changes are being made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime operates.

2.7 Relevant international plans and policy (including those at the EU level) are transposed into national plans, policy and legislation and these have been considered.

Relationships with other relevant plans or programmes

2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) **[See reference 7]** provides the national policy context for the JSP and it must be consistent with the NPPF requirements for local plan making. The JSP will then provide the spatial planning framework that will set the context for a future round of Local Plans to be prepared by the five SW Hertfordshire councils. This approach will allow those authorities to subsequently establish detailed planning policies and site allocations at a borough and district level. In doing so, it will also help to set the SW Hertfordshire planning policy framework for the preparation of neighbourhood local plans at the local community level. Other relevant national policies and plans are outlined in Appendix A.

2.9 Relevant plans and initiatives at the County and area level include:

Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2018 - 2031

2.10 The Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2018 - 2031 **[See reference 8]** sets out how transport can help deliver a positive future vision for Hertfordshire by having a major input into wider policies such as economic growth, meeting housing needs, improving public health and reducing environmental damage whilst also providing for safe and efficient travel. The plan also considers how future planning decisions and emerging technology might affect the way that transport needs to be provided in the longer term.

Hertfordshire's Rail Strategy

2.11 The Hertfordshire Rail Strategy **[See reference 9]** aims to demonstrate how the railway in Hertfordshire can support economic growth and development. The strategy sets out overall aspirations for the rail network in

Hertfordshire from improvements to local to long-distance services to achieving net zero emissions from all forms of transport by 2050.

South West Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan Prospectus

2.12 The Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) [\[See reference 10\]](#) is a new approach to sub-county transport planning. This report is the first of a suite of new GTPs which will cover different sub-areas of Hertfordshire with the intention of promoting modal shift to non-motorised and public transport, providing greater modal choice, and facilitating growth sustainably. The Plan sets out seven objectives to address the transport challenges across SW Hertfordshire.

South Central Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan

2.13 The Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) [\[See reference 11\]](#) sets out a vision and objectives for the south-central area of Hertfordshire with an emphasis on a connected, reliable and accessible transport network for the area.

Hertfordshire Public Health Service Strategy (2017-2021)

2.14 The Hertfordshire Public Health Service Strategy (2017- 2021) [\[See reference 12\]](#) outlines the Council's vision and principles for improving the health and wellbeing of people in Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire Adult Mental Health Strategy (2016-2021)

2.15 The Hertfordshire Adult Mental Health Strategy (2016-2021) [\[See reference 13\]](#) outlines the steps that need to be taken to ensure that people in

Hertfordshire can manage their own mental health and well-being, access treatment and help when they need it and recover, with support if required, and maximise the independence of Hertfordshire's residents.

Hertfordshire County Active Travel Strategy

2.16 The Hertfordshire County Council (2013) Active Travel Strategy **[See reference 14]** sets out how the County Council and its partners will identify, deliver and promote interventions to increase the number of people walking and cycling in Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire's Recovery Plan, 2020

2.17 Hertfordshire's Recovery Plan 2020 **[See reference 15]** outlines the short- and medium-term economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and defines recovery actions. The plan is structured around three main Delivery Packages:

- Enterprise and Innovation.
- Skills and Creativity.
- International Trade and Investment.

Perfectly Placed for Business Strategic Economic Plan 2017 - 2030

2.18 The Perfectly Placed for Business Strategic Economic Plan: 2017-2030 **[See reference 16]** outlines four key economic strategies for Hertfordshire, reflecting the changes to the wider political landscape and the uncertainties surrounding the UK's departure from the European Union for the County:

- Priority 1: Maintaining global excellence in science and technology.
- Priority 2: Harnessing Hertfordshire's relationships with London and elsewhere.

- Priority 3: Reinvigorating our places for the 21st Century.
- Priority 4: Foundations for growth.

Hertfordshire Air Quality Strategy

2.19 The Hertfordshire Air Quality Strategy [See reference 17] includes the County Council's strategic vision, aims and objectives for improving air quality for Hertfordshire. The aims are as follows:

- To gain a stronger understanding of the air quality issues within Hertfordshire.
- To ensure that air quality is an integral part of everything that the County Council do.
- To develop a productive relationship with partners, in particular the District and Borough Councils, to achieve positive air quality outcomes.
- To create clear leadership on air quality
- To establish a coherent workstream on air quality, including clarification on roles and responsibilities.

Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy

2.20 Following the County's Climate Emergency Declaration in July 2019, Hertfordshire County Council committed to developing a Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy [See reference 18] that sets out the initial policies and strategies needed to embed sustainability across all Council operations and services and throughout the county. The strategy covers areas such as energy and carbon, climate change and flooding, biodiversity and air quality.

National and International

2.21 At the international level, there is a wide range of plans and programmes which act to inform and shape national level legislation. Planning policy in England at a national and local level (i.e. the NPPF, the JSP and the individual authorities' Local Plans) should be aware of and in conformity with the relevant legislation. The main sustainability objectives of international plans and programmes which are of most relevance for the JSP and the SA are included in **Appendix A**.

Chapter 3

Baseline Information

3.1 Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely sustainability effects of a plan and helps to identify key sustainability issues and means of dealing with them.

3.2 The baseline information presented in the most recent SA Reports for each district and borough's Local Plan (listed below) has been drawn on to prepare this chapter (supplemented by more up to date sources as appropriate, which are referenced individually):

- Dacorum Borough Council – Interim SA Report for the Dacorum Local Plan (2020 – 2038) Emerging Strategy for Growth (November 2020) [**See reference 19**]
- Hertsmere Borough Council – SA report for the Draft Local Plan (October 2021) [**See reference 20**]
- St Albans City and District Council – SA Scoping Report for the St Albans City and District Local Plan 2020 to 2038 (January 2021) [**See reference 21**]
- Three Rivers District Council – Interim SA Report for the Regulation 18 Preferred Policy Options and Sites [**See reference 22**]
- Watford Borough Council – SA report for the Watford Final Draft Local Plan (January 2021) [**See reference 23**]

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

3.3 Climate change presents a global risk, with a range of different impacts that are likely to be felt within SW Hertfordshire across numerous receptors. The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identified a reduced

timeframe to act to keep world temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius before 2050 in line with the Paris Agreement [\[See reference 24\]](#).

3.4 Planning has a significant role to play in mitigating the effects of and adapting to the inevitable impacts of climate change. In the past this has focussed on reducing the need to travel but in the future buildings will need to be more energy efficient, use decentralised, low carbon or renewable energy sources and be designed and located to be resilient to more extreme weather events and increased risk of flooding. It should also be recognised that climate change is a cross cutting issue that can contribute to increasing the significance of effects related to other sustainability issues. Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan aims to improve the global environment by providing international leadership in tackling climate change.

3.5 Changes to the climate will bring new challenges to SW Hertfordshire's built and natural environments. Climate change estimates (at the 50% probability level) for the East of England between 2080 to 2099, based on medium emissions scenarios, predict an increase in winter mean temperature of approximately 2.5 degrees Celsius and an increase in summer mean temperature of approximately 3.8 degrees Celsius [\[See reference 25\]](#) Furthermore, winter mean precipitation is predicted to increase by 16% and summer mean precipitation is predicted to decrease by 27%.

3.6 Urban growth can contribute to the urban heat island effect. This is due to the land surfaces in towns and cities, which are made of materials like tarmac and stone, which absorb and store heat, that coupled with concentrated energy use and less ventilation than in rural areas, creates a heating effect [\[See reference 26\]](#). With an expected increase in population in SW Hertfordshire, urban heat island effect becomes an increasing stressor on the towns and cities.

3.7 Successfully adapting to climate change involves understanding the risks and quantifying the likely impacts, so that informed decisions can be taken about the costs and benefits of reducing those risks. Taking the impacts of a changing climate into account in all short, medium and long term planning is an

investment to save money. Actions to increase resilience help to maximise the capacity of all to adapt. Adaptation plans need to be kept under regular review as adaptation will become increasingly important if appropriate mitigation is not put in place in time [\[See reference 27\]](#)

3.8 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) declared a climate emergency in July 2019. Each of the councils within SW Hertfordshire have also declared climate emergencies. Following on from this, HCC developed a Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy which sets out initial policies and strategies needed to embed sustainability throughout the county. Furthermore, in January 2020, the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership was formed with the aim of co-ordinating positive climate action across the county. Additionally, the Hertfordshire Energy Strategy (2019) set a goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions to 80% of those in 2012/13 by 2025, with a longer-term ambition of achieving ‘net zero’.

3.9 **Table 3.1** sets out the per capita carbon dioxide emissions from each of the SW Hertfordshire authorities for 2019 and shows that the highest total emissions were from Hertsmere Borough. However, St Albans City and District has the highest transport emissions compared to the rest of SW Hertfordshire.

Table 3.1: Carbon dioxide emissions 2019 [\[See reference 28\]](#)

Borough/ District	Industry (kt CO2)	Commercial (kt CO2)	Public Sector (kt CO2)	Domestic (kt CO2)	Transport (kt CO2)	Total (t CO2 per person)
Dacorum	40.6	80.8	23.8	224.4	269.5	4.0
Hertsmere	46.4	65.3	16.2	164.7	354.3	6.1
Three Rivers	24.8	39.0	11.7	151.2	308.9	5.7
Watford	26.3	62.5	15.7	125.4	95.2	3.4
St Albans	32.6	57.4	13.8	230.5	534.9	5.8

3.10 The Green Alliance Trust has estimated the capacity for renewable energy generation across England and Wales for 348 local authorities. Out of the Boroughs and Districts within SW Hertfordshire, Dacorum has ranked highest in terms of renewable energy capacity and generation (**Table 3.2**).

Table 3.2: Renewable Energy Generation and Capacity [See reference 29]

Borough/District	Capacity (MW)	Rank	Generation (MWh)	Rank
Dacorum	21.8	184	23,789	244
St Albans	7.1	286	10,370	290
Watford	3.1	327	6,424	309
Three Rivers	3.2	325	5,044	316
Hertsmere	3.1	329	4,585	321

3.11 There are currently three commercial renewable energy facilities within SW Herts, in Three Rivers and Hertsmere. The RES wind facility at Kings Langley which has a capacity of 0.23MW and the co-firing biomass fossil facility at Maple Cross which has a capacity of 2.88MW are both located within the Three Rivers. Therefore, there is 3.11MW of installed commercial renewable energy capacity in Three Rivers [See reference 30]. There is also a solar farm within Potters Bar, Hertsmere which has a capacity of 5.0MW [See reference 31].

3.12 Communities and governments around the world must adapt and plan in the face of climate uncertainty, as it is not possible to know the exact extent to which our climate will change. Adaptation and mitigation plans must incorporate the full range of climate risks, take account of uncertainty over timing and severity and build climate resilience [See reference 32].

Flood Risk

3.13 Development within high flood risk areas, or the loss of greenfield land to development, could contribute to increased flood risk. Properties outside the floodplain are also susceptible to flooding due to an increase in surface water runoff and large development sites outside the floodplain may exacerbate surface water flooding issues further without appropriate mitigation. However, mitigation may be achieved through the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into the new development.

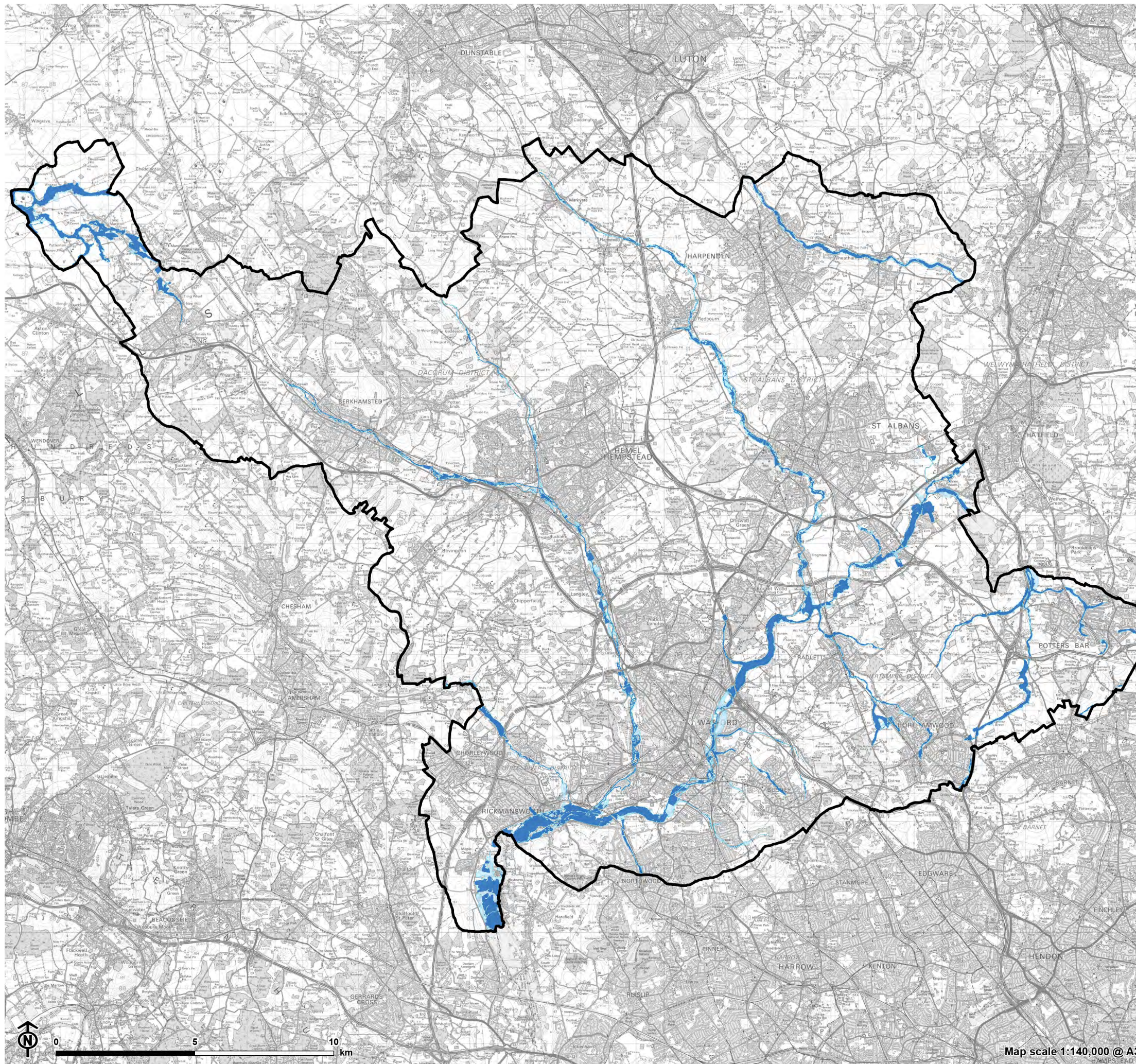
3.14 In Hertfordshire the main surfaces of flood risk are surface water, rivers and other watercourses (fluvial) and, less frequently, groundwater. The areas most at risk of surface water flooding are predominately within SW Hertfordshire, especially surrounding Watford. Surface water flooding is caused when local drainage capacity and infiltration is unable to cope with the volume of water experience during periods of sustained or heavy rainfall. The estimated numbers of properties for each SW Hertfordshire district/borough likely to be affected during a 1 in 30 year rainfall event and a 1 in 100 year rainfall event are shown in **Table 3.3** below. The risk of surface water flooding in the county is likely to increase as the extent of built-up areas and the area of impermeable surfaces increase.

Table 3.3: Number of properties shown to be at risk of surface water flooding [See reference 33]

Local Authority	1 in 30 (3.33% AEP)	1 in 100 (1% AEP)
Dacorum	4,188	8,213
St. Albans	3,667	7,661
Watford	2,167	4,886
Three Rivers	2,452	4,868
Hertsmere	3,347	6,665

3.15 Across the entire area of SW Hertfordshire, 3.6% falls within Flood Zone 2 and 2.7% falls within Flood Zone 3. These areas are shown in **Figure 3.1** below. Climate change is forecast to result in milder and wetter winters and more storms in summer months. Changes in farming practices can exacerbate overland flow due to the removal of hedgerows and trees and the issue is likely to become increasingly important due to climate change. Further development pressure will increase the pressure on existing sewer systems effectively reducing their capacity, leading to more frequent flooding.

Figure 3.1: Flood Risk (Flood Zones 2 and 3)



- South West Hertfordshire
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2

Population, Health and Wellbeing

3.16 SW Hertfordshire lies within the East of England, see **Figure 1.1**. The area is divided between five local planning authorities: Dacorum, Hertsmere, St. Albans, Three Rivers and Watford. The majority of the population of the area is spread across the following areas:

- Hemel Hempstead
- Watford
- St. Albans
- Rickmansworth
- Harpenden
- Radlett
- Borehamwood

3.17 Watford has the highest population density out of the five authorities.

3.18 The latest population forecasts for SW Hertfordshire predicts an increase in the number of residents of 16,645 between 2018 and 2040 as shown in **Table 3.4**, with the largest percentage increase of 6.5% expected in Dacorum.

Table 3.4: Projected growth in total resident population 2018 to 2040 [See reference 34]

District/Borough	2018	2040	% change
Dacorum	154,280	164,343	6.5
St. Albans	147,373	148,580	0.8
Watford	96,767	97,523	0.8
Three Rivers	93,045	93,739	0.7

District/Borough	2018	2040	% change
Hertsmere	104,205	108,130	3.7

3.19 Hertsmere has a higher than the area average proportion of those aged over 75 years, 6%, and this trend is predicted to continue. In 2019, those aged 65 and over represented 16.8% of SW Hertfordshire’s population. This is predicted to rise to 22.7% by 2041. An ageing population will increase demands for different types of housing as well as accessible healthcare and local facilities.

Health

3.20 There are a wide range of leisure, cultural and recreation facilities throughout SW Hertfordshire.

3.21 SW Hertfordshire tends to be relatively healthy compared with other parts of the country. The majority of the area has above average life expectancy compared to the rest of England; however Watford is below the England average as shown in **Table 3.5** below.

Table 3.5: Life expectancy in SW Hertfordshire [See reference 35]

Life expectancy	England	Dacorum	Three Rivers	St. Albans	Watford	Hertsmere
Males	79.6	81.4	81.5	82.0	79.1	81.0
Females	83.2	84.3	84.0	85.3	82.7	84.0

3.22 Open space and sports and recreation facilities in SW Hertfordshire provide residents with space in which they can undertake physical activity to the

benefit of public health. The UK Chief Medical Officers advise that for good physical and mental health, adults should aim to be physically active every day. Over the course of a week adults should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity; or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity day; or even shorter durations of very vigorous intensity activity; or a combination of moderate, vigorous and very vigorous intensity activity [See reference 36].

3.23 Hertfordshire contains a lower than average proportion of physically active adults (65.4% compared to 66.3% national average) and a very slightly higher than average proportion of adults over 18 with excess weight (62.1% compared to the national average of 62.%) [See reference 37]. Out of the five planning authorities within SW Hertfordshire, Watford is the only authority that is below the national average for physically active adults (60.5% compared to that national average 66.3%) and is above the national average for adults who are overweight with 67% compared to 62% nationally.

Access to green space

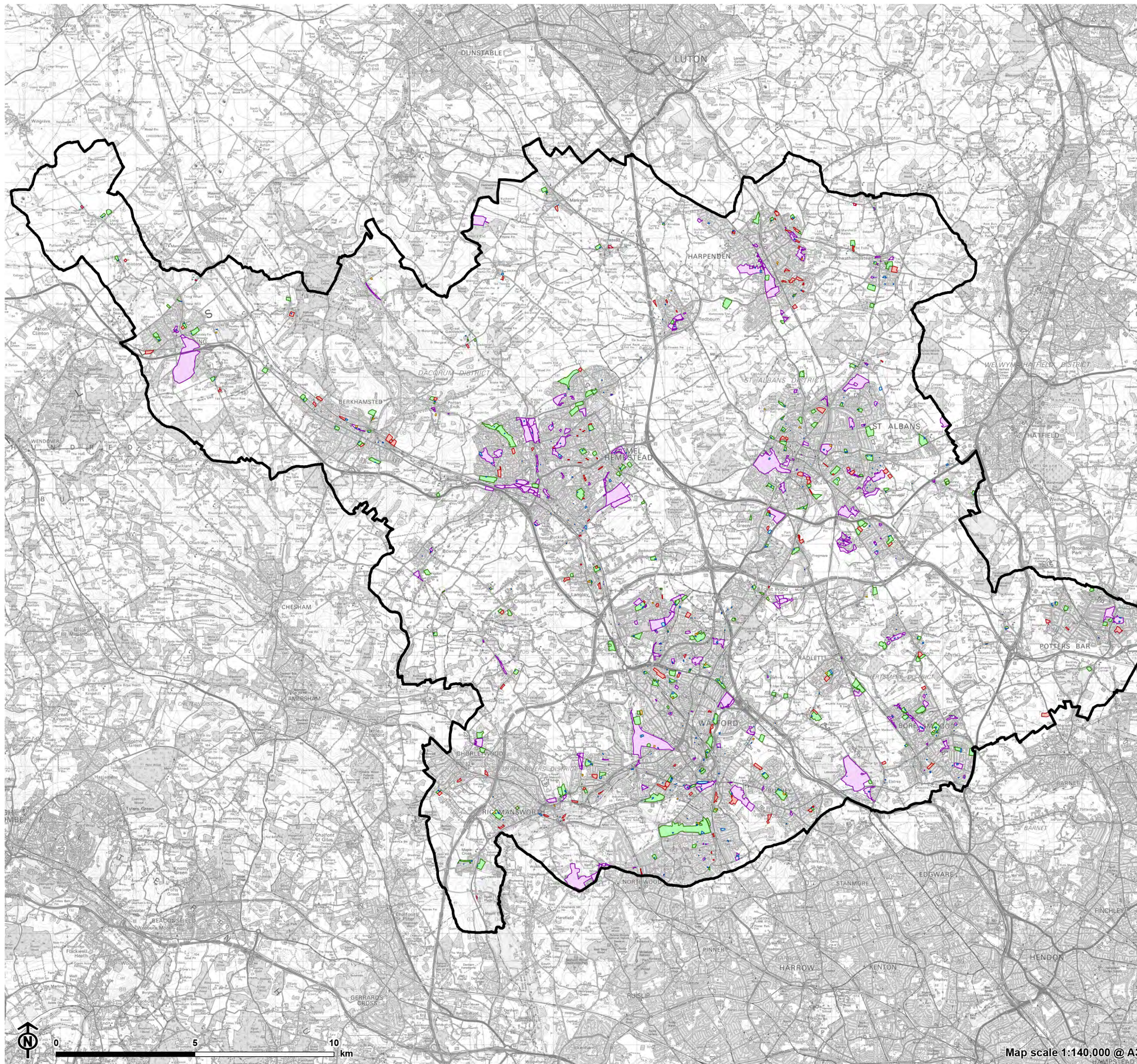
3.24 Access to the countryside via rights of way can provide an important recreation resource. Hertfordshire has a rich green infrastructure network encompassing parts of the Chilterns AONB, river valleys, chalk grasslands, farmlands, ancient woodland, designated historic landscape and parklands and urban greening assets. Part of the Chilterns AONB falls within SW Hertfordshire with the majority falling within Dacorum.

3.25 The Heartwood Forest, located within St. Albans, is the largest continuous new native forest in England. The Forest is 347-hectares which is made up of new and ancient woodland and has a network of paths, including a public footpath and two bridleways. The Colne Valley Regional Park also runs into Rickmansworth covering 43 square miles. Both of these green spaces are essential parts of SW Hertfordshire's green infrastructure network and provide a wide variety of benefits. However, the Regional Park in particular suffers from being poorly served by transport links.

3.26 An assessment of available green spaces within Hertfordshire against Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) concluded that the main areas of deficiency are within Hertsmere as it does not meet the ANGSt standards. However, Watford also has below average provision of accessible natural greenspace. There is a relatively high proportion of accessible natural greenspace within St Albans District. However, Ashridge, within Dacorum Borough, is the closest 500ha accessible natural greenspace. Dacorum and Three Rivers have the largest proportion of accessible natural greenspace provision throughout Hertfordshire. Green links to the west of the County could help alleviate deficiencies in greenspace elsewhere [See [reference 38](#)]. Linking many of the existing recreational routes (e.g. Hertfordshire Way and Chilterns Way) could serve to create an integrated network of green corridors providing easy access to many of the County's green infrastructure assets. Figure 3.2 below shows all of the accessible green spaces within SW Hertfordshire.

3.27 Three Rivers, Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans and Watford have all conducted their own Green Infrastructure Strategies, prepared in 2011 and 2012 (a new Green Infrastructure Strategy for Hertfordshire is currently being prepared). New and existing development has the potential to create additional green infrastructure or destroy the existing network, therefore affecting the area's resilience to climate change, biological and ecological networks and the health and wellbeing of residents.

Figure 3.2: Accessible Greenspace within South West Hertfordshire



- South West Hertfordshire
- Allotments Or Community Growing Spaces
- Bowling Green
- Play Space
- Playing Field
- Public Park Or Garden

Housing

3.28 The South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) [See reference 39] considers housing need in the South West Hertfordshire Housing Market Area (HMA). The HMA comprises the five local planning authorities within the area.

3.29 The National Planning Policy Framework in February 2019 introduced a new Standard Method for assessing local housing need. It draws on 2014 - based household projections and increases the local housing need based on local affordability. However, the new method is subject to review as part of the expected changes to the planning system due to be announced later this year. The average workplace-based mean affordability ratio in the HMA is 13.9, when using the prescribed formula, the local affordability ratio results in an average uplift of 61%. This means the latest local housing need projection for the area, as set out in the Local Housing Needs Assessment, has increased from 2,888 dwellings to 4,043 dwellings per annum from the period 2020 to 2030. If 4,043 dwellings per annum are provided this would likely result in an additional 122,682 people in the area, over the period 2020-2036, likely to be divided as follows:

- Dacorum: 31,724
- Hertsmere: 21,765
- St. Albans: 26,128
- Three Rivers: 18,294
- Watford: 24,771

3.30 In terms of housing mix, the LHNA recommends that the majority of market housing should be 3 or more bedrooms, whereas 1, 2 and 3 bedroom properties are more in demand for affordable homes (both to buy and to rent).

3.31 House prices in the area are impacted by its proximity to London, being, 82% above the national average, 13% above the county and just 7% below London's 2020 housing values. Over the last 20 years, housing values within

SW Hertfordshire have grown above both the national and regional equivalents but just below London's growth. As such, there are affordability pressures across the area.

Equalities

3.32 The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and seeks to protect people from discrimination on the basis of these characteristics. It presents three main duties: to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The nine protected characteristics identified through the Act are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion and belief;
- Sex; and
- Sexual orientation.

3.33 The potential effects of the plan on these nine 'protected characteristics' will be assessed separately to the SA. This work will comprise the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) which will be presented in an appendix to the SA.

3.34 While socio-economic status is not a characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010, the Council is committed to also considering the effects that the plan will have in this sense. The EqIA will therefore also consider the

potential effects on socio-economic groups not limited to but including the following:

- People on low incomes;
- Young and adult carers;
- People living in deprived areas/rural areas; and
- Groups suffering multiple disadvantages.

3.35 The population of SW Hertfordshire in mid-2020 was 600,834 compared to 565,499 in the 2011 Census. The population in the mid-2020s was 307,169 (51%) females and 293,665 (49%) males [\[See reference 40\]](#).

Age

3.36 The median age for SW Hertfordshire’s population based on mid-2020s figures was 40.5 years. For the 10-year period starting in mid-2010 there was an increase in average age of 1.3 years from 39.2 years. The median age for SW Hertfordshire’s population in the mid-2020 was slightly higher than the median age for both the UK (39.7 years) and for the county of Hertfordshire as a whole (39.7 years). Based on the latest figures, the age profile for SW Hertfordshire was broadly similar to that for England as a whole although as a proportion there were slightly more people in Hertfordshire aged 65 and older than in the national population. A more detailed breakdown of the estimated age makeup of the population for SW Hertfordshire in 2020 is provided in **Table 3.6** below.

Table 3.6: Estimated breakdown of SW Hertfordshire’s 2020 population by age group [\[See reference 41\]](#)

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
19 and younger	79,291	74,982	154,273
20-34	48,484	50,412	98,896

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
35-49	63,277	67,786	131,063
50-64	56,656	57,744	114,400
65 and older	45,957	56,245	102,202

3.37 It is expected that the ratio of those residents who are state pension age or older compared to those of working age will increase in the future throughout the UK. SW Hertfordshire has a similar old age dependency ratio (273.4) compared to Hertfordshire (274.8) - this indicates the number of people of state pension age per 1,000 people of working age. In SW Hertfordshire, this figure is expected to rise to 348 by 2043, while the Hertfordshire figure is expected to increase to a similar figure of 345.3 by this time [\[See reference 42\]](#).

Disability

3.38 The 2011 census presented figures on people with disabilities in the UK. Within SW Hertfordshire, the proportion of population reporting a disability that limits them a lot in their activities is as follows for each of the five local authorities: Dacorum (13.1%), Hertsmere (13.3%), St Albans (11.2%), Three Rivers (12.2%) and Watford (15%). The proportion of SW Hertfordshire’s population who were reported as being 'limited a lot' is below the average for England and Wales of 17.9% in all five districts [\[See reference 43\]](#).

Marriage and Civil Partnership

3.39 Based on the 2011 Census data, 37.3% of Hertfordshire’s population was married or in a same-sex civil partnership, with a further 9.8% cohabitating. 36.6% of the population was single and 9.7% were lone parents with dependant or non-dependant children. The remaining 6.5% of the population falls within other household types [\[See reference 44\]](#).

Pregnancy and maternity

3.40 In recent years, the number of births in the UK has decreased along with the fertility rate. For the fifth consecutive year, the number of live births in 2020 for England and Wales decreased to 613,936, the lowest since 2002. In 2020 there were 6,710 live births within SW Hertfordshire. Of these, 3,149 were to non-UK born mothers [See reference 45]. The average age of mothers at childbirth in 2020 remained the same as 2019, at 30.7 years following a gradual increase since 1973. The average fertility rate for SW Hertfordshire is 1.73 children per woman [See reference 46].

Race

3.41 The ONS publishes detailed population estimates by ethnic group for areas in England and Wales following each census. However, there are currently no reliable population estimates by ethnic group available at the local authority level for the years between censuses. Therefore, the most recent census data presents the most reliable overview of the likely ethnic makeup of SW Hertfordshire. 19.2% of Hertfordshire residents in 2011 were from an ethnic minority, equating to 214,056 residents. **Table 3.7** below shows the broad ethnic makeup within the five local authorities that comprise SW Hertfordshire.

Table 3.7: Broad Ethnic Makeup (%) of SW Hertfordshire

Area	Asian/ Asian British	Black/ African/ Caribbean /Black British	Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	Other ethnic group	White
Dacorum	4.7%	2.1%	2.1%	0.3%	90.8%
Hertsmere	7.4%	3.9%	2.6%	1.0%	85.0%
St Albans	6.4%	1.7%	2.8%	0.7%	88.4%

Area	Asian/ Asian British	Black/ African/ Caribbean /Black British	Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	Other ethnic group	White
Three Rivers	9.2%	1.8%	2.3%	0.5%	86.2%
Watford	17.9%	5.8%	3.4%	0.9%	71.9%

3.42 A significant majority of Hertfordshire’s resident population in 2011 (83.9% or 936,681 residents) were born in England. 3.7% (41,101) of the population were born in an EU country and 8.6% (96,025) of the population were born in a non-EU country [\[See reference 47\]](#).

3.43 Migration figures for SW Hertfordshire show that the area has experienced a small net inflow of both internal and international migration during most years from 2010 to 2020 (the exception being international migration for the period mid-2011 to mid-2012 when a small net outflow was experienced). Generally, internal migration outweighs international migration. During the most recent reporting period (mid-2019 to mid-2020) the inflow of long-term international migration was recorded as 3,220 individuals and the outflow was recorded as 2,755 individuals across SW Hertfordshire. During the same period the inflow of internal migration was recorded as 35,317 individuals and the outflow was recorded as 34,432 individuals [\[See reference 48\]](#).

Religion

3.44 In 2018 the majority of SW Hertfordshire’s total population (50%) considered themselves to be Christian. Those who reported to have no religion accounted for 36% of residents. A further 12% of residents were reported to follow other religions, with Hindu being the largest group (5% of residents). These figures demonstrate that for the five-year period beginning in 2013, the number of residents reporting to have no religion grew (from 184,800 to 217,397 residents) and the number of residents recorded as Christian fell slightly (from 309,272 to 297,625 residents). The breakdown of religion by the

five local authority areas within SW Hertfordshire is shown in **Table 3.8** below [See reference 49].

Table 3.8: Number of people following a religion in 2018

	Dacorum	Hertsmere	Three Rivers	Watford	St. Albans
No Religion	60,364	25,551	41,936	27,784	61,762
Christian	79,609	49,869	39,007	49,704	79,436
Buddhist	-	*	*	2,341	*
Hindu	4,127	6,352	5,266	10,352	2,558
Jewish	*	15,948	1,852	-	*
Muslim	5,483	3,145	2,628	6,316	1,535
Sikh	-	-	1,436	-	-
Other Religion	1,464	1,784	-	*	*

* Sample size too small to provide reliable estimates.

- No figures to report.

3.1 There is little baseline information available that is directly relevant to other protected characteristics under the Equality Act, including gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

Social Inclusion and Deprivation

3.2 The English Indices of Deprivation of 2019 (IMD) is a measure of multiple deprivation in small areas or neighbourhoods, Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) to measure deprivation at local authority and county level. The seven distinct domains of deprivation: Income; Employment; Health Deprivation and

Disability; Education and Skills Training; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living Environment. Each domain contains a number of indicators. The seven domains are combined to give a multiple deprivation score. There are 32,844 LSOAs nationally.

3.3 In 2019, the following rankings for overall deprivation were given to the five local authorities within Hertfordshire: Dacorum (240 out of 317); Three Rivers (291 out of 317); St Albans (306 out of 317); Watford (195 out of 317); and Hertsmere (224 out of 317) (1 being the most deprived). SW Hertfordshire overall performs particularly strongly in terms of measures relating to income, employment, education skills and training, health and disability, income deprivation affecting children and income deprivation affecting older people. The area performed less favourably in relation to barriers to housing and services and crime [\[See reference 50\]](#). Although the area is generally prosperous, there are pockets of deprivation, mostly focused within the larger centres of Watford, Hemel Hempstead and Borehamwood.

3.4 Three Rivers is one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England. 22 out of 53 LSOAs (42%) fall within the 10% least deprived areas. Only one LSOA (Three Rivers 012D) falls within the 20% most deprived areas. In relation to living environment, 42 out of 53 LSOAs (79%) fall within the least deprived areas [\[See reference 51\]](#). However, about 9.7% (1,620) children live in low-income families [\[See reference 52\]](#). Within Three Rivers, it was estimated that 4,053 out of 37,918 households were fuel poor in 2019, which equates to 10.7% of all households [\[See reference 53\]](#).

3.5 In 2019, Watford had four out of 53 LSOAs within the 20 - 30% most deprived areas while 33 out of 53 LSOAs fell within the least deprived areas. About 11.5% (2,305) children lived in low-income families. Since 2015, the number of LSOAs within the most deprived in relation to crime has increased from 18 to 35 in 2019. Within Watford, it was estimated that 5,417 out of 39,453 households were fuel poor in 2019, which equates to 13.7% of all households. Watford has the highest rate of fuel poverty in SW Hertfordshire.

3.6 St Albans is one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England. There is only one LSOA (St Albans 009A) in St Albans that falls within the 30% most deprived areas. 23 areas within St Albans are in the 10 - 30% most deprived in relation to barriers to housing and services. Approximately 44% of LSQA (38 out of 87) fall within 10% least deprived areas. About 8.5% (2,355) children live in low-income families. Within St Albans, it was estimated that 5,623 out of 60,507 households were fuel poor in 2019, which equates to 9.3% of all households.

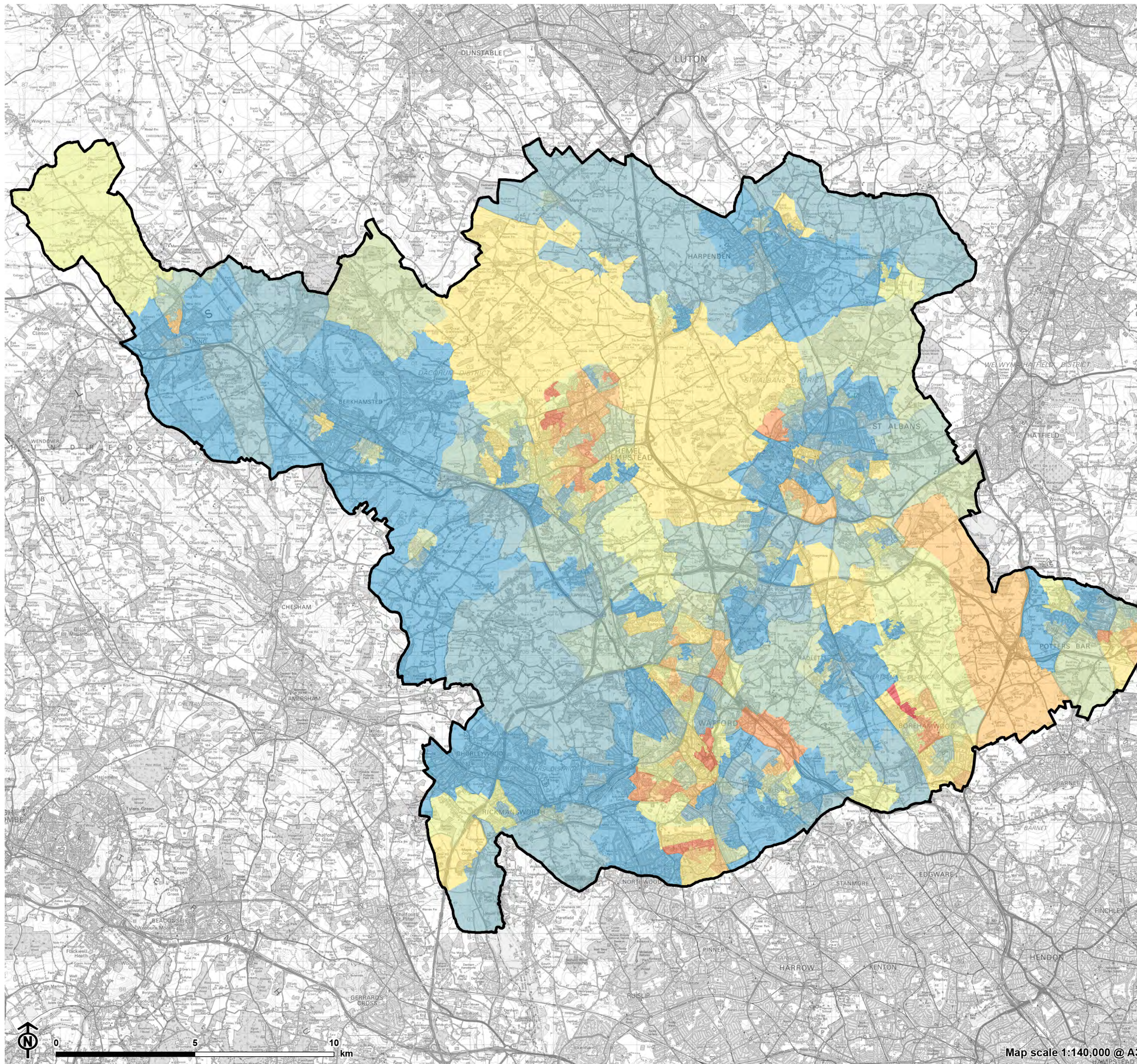
3.7 The majority of Hertsmere lies within the least deprived areas, with 19% of LSOAs falling within 10% least deprived. There is one LSOA (Hertsmere 006C within Borehamwood Cowley Hill ward) that lies within the 10% most deprived. Hertsmere performs relatively poorly in relation to barriers to housing and services with 51 out of 62 LSOAs (82%) falling within the most deprived areas. This may be due to Hertsmere's more rural setting. About 11.9% (2,380) of children live in low-income families. Within Hertsmere, it was estimated that 4,537 out of 42,914 households were fuel poor in 2019, which equates to 11.0% of all households.

3.8 Within Dacorum, only three LSOAs lie within the 20% most deprived areas. The majority of LSOAs (72%) are less deprived, with 24 LSOAs falling within the 10% least deprived domain. Dacorum ranks highest in relation to living environment with 68% of LSOAs falling within the least deprived. Crime is ranked the highest, however, with the majority of LSOAs falling within the most deprived. About 12.3% (3,450) children live in low-income families. Within Dacorum, it was estimated that 7,095 out of 64,610 households were fuel poor in 2019, which equates to 10.7% of all households.

3.9 New development near to deprived neighbourhoods can help to stimulate regeneration in those areas. Therefore, the location of the JSP growth types in relation to the most deprived neighbourhoods could influence the extent to which they can have positive effects on those areas. **Figure 3.3** shows the Indices of Multiples Deprivation for SW Hertfordshire.

3.10 Further information regarding unemployment levels and income is provided in the Economy section.

Figure 3.3: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)



South West Hertfordshire

IMD Decile

- 1 (Most deprived)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (Least deprived)

Educational Attainment

3.11 The quality of schools within the area is generally very good. In SW Hertfordshire, as of January 2017, only 2,143 pupils (out of a total of 48,868) are reported to attend primary schools that have been rated as 'requiring improvement' or 'inadequate' by Ofsted. Only 1,900 pupils (out of a total of 33,703) are reported to attend secondary schools that have been rated as 'requiring improvement' or 'inadequate' by Ofsted.

3.12 The percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in relation to attainment of primary pupils at Key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics for SW Hertfordshire is higher than the England average of 54%. The averages for the five local authorities are: Dacorum (57%), Hertsmere (56%), Three Rivers (62%), Watford (59%) and St Albans (68%).

3.13 Pupils in SW Hertfordshire perform more favourably than the national average for Attainment 8 scores for English and Mathematics. For English, the average score for SW Hertfordshire in 2015/16 was 11.4 compared to the national average of 10.6, while for Mathematics the average score for the area was 11 compared to the national average of 9.8.

3.14 SW Hertfordshire also reported a higher percentage (72.8%) of pupils attaining grades A to C in both English and Mathematics than the English average (63.3%) for the same period [\[See reference 54\]](#).

Economy

3.15 At a county level, the Local Industrial Strategy (2019) [\[See reference 55\]](#) sets out the economic priorities for the county and builds on Hertfordshire's Strategic Economic Plan [\[See reference 56\]](#). The Strategic Economic Plan for Hertfordshire sets out actions based around four priorities for the county: maintaining global excellence in science and technology, harness relationships with London and elsewhere, reinvigorate Hertfordshire's places for the 21st

Century and create foundations for long-term growth. Further to this, Hertfordshire's Clean Growth Strategy [See reference 57] sets out how it aims to support a transition to clean growth across the county. One action set out to achieve this will be by developing the green economy through the growth of the Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services sector.

3.16 The SW Hertfordshire economy has grown since 2011 with the growth of real gross value added (GVA) by around 4% per year [See reference 58]. The key sectors that are present in SW Hertfordshire are the life sciences, advanced engineering/manufacturing, agri-science and agri-tech, sustainable construction and creative industries (film, TV, digital sectors). A number of international businesses' headquarters are located within the area.

3.17 At the county level, residents have a far higher level of earning than the national average. The earnings are higher for residents than by workplace, reflecting the fact that many people commute into London to access higher paid jobs. In broad terms, out-commuters from Hertfordshire tend to be better qualified than in-commuters into the county [See reference 59].

3.18 As of 2017, at a county level, there are 58,000 enterprises, most of which are small, producing a wide array of different goods and services. These range from pharmaceutical products to accountancy services and sustainable construction techniques, and from logistics to advanced materials and satellites [See reference 60].

3.19 The county is home to many well qualified people, but still, over 40,000 working age residents have no qualifications at all. The average resident of St. Albans who is employed on a full-time basis earns weekly pay of around £684, while the average weekly pay on a full-time basis in Hertsmere is £525 showing that there are substantial differences across the SW Hertfordshire area [See reference 61]. According to the 2011 census, 12,688 people were registered as unemployed and an additional 93,148 were economically inactive, not claiming anything from the state, but wanting a job. Dacorum has the highest number of people in both categories and Watford has the least compared with the rest of SW Hertfordshire.

3.20 The South West Hertfordshire Economic Study (2019) [\[See reference 62\]](#) outlines key information about the economy in South West Hertfordshire, including:

- The previous 2016 study identified a Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) made up of Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford. This was based on evidence of strong commuting and migration relationships and shared leisure, retail and public sector catchment areas. The definition of FEMA is still relevant. The FEMA is thought to share strong relationships with other areas (London, Luton/Central Beds, and the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor) which could exert a growing influence on economic and labour market trends in SW Hertfordshire. It is uncertain how these relationships might change in the future; however it is suggested that:
 - The loss of employment floor space in London presents opportunities for SW Hertfordshire to attract jobs and businesses.
 - As the economies of SW Hertfordshire and Luton/Central Beds are sufficiently different, the expected employment and housing growth planned around Luton is anticipated to complement rather than compete with growth in the FEMA.
 - While any effects on SW Hertfordshire of the significant growth up to 2050 within the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor are expected to be long term, there may be a risk that the scale of development and new infrastructure investment could make this a more attractive investment location for certain sectors where there may be competition with SW Hertfordshire.

3.21 Given the high level of housing growth already planned through emerging Local Plans for SW Hertfordshire and continuing affordability challenges in London, it is likely that the strong in-migration and out-commuting flows between the FEMA and London will continue to grow. The loss of employment floorspace in London presents opportunities for SW Hertfordshire to attract jobs and businesses, although this is dependent on SW Hertfordshire authorities addressing the current undersupply of employment space.

3.22 Trends identified that employment was growing at a strong rate up until 2019, as levels of growth were much stronger (1.5 to 2.8% p.a. based on the average growth rate over the previous ten and five year periods) when compared to the long-term growth rate of 0.4% p.a.

3.23 Trends identified that productivity had fallen prior to COVID-19 and was lower than the UK average: average GVA per job fell by £1,000 and was 2% lower than the national average, having been 8% higher in 2001. Supporting the growth of established sectors (e.g. professional services, ICT and film and TV production) is thought to be key to addressing these productivity challenges. SW Hertfordshire has a large supply of highly skilled workers to support the growth of these sectors. The main barrier to growth has been a shortage of high quality business premises to attract investment and to support the growth of indigenous businesses.

3.24 Supply of employment space is at critically low levels – a combination of growth and the loss of existing premises has resulted in a significant reduction in the availability of employment space in SW Hertfordshire. This has the potential to act as a significant constraint on growth, particularly in those office-based sectors which are key to increasing productivity.

3.25 Public transport access and connections to London are key for high value office investors.

3.26 The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented economic upheaval across the world, including for SW Hertfordshire. Businesses have experienced significant financial pressure and those within town centres have experienced particularly acute challenges [See reference 63]. Hertfordshire's Economic Recovery Plan has been developed in response and is structured around three main Delivery Packages, which are concerned with Hertfordshire's businesses and workforce (existing and future), and focus on:

- Enterprise and innovation.
- Skills and creativity.
- International trade and innovation.

3.27 Hertfordshire's Economic Recovery Plan outlines the key challenges experienced by the Districts and Boroughs due to COVID-19 and what the future looks like. The future likely scenarios identified in this report for the five local planning authorities within SW Hertfordshire is outlined below:

- Dacorum – Looking ahead, the future of logistics will be important, given high levels of local concentration. The future of professional services will also underpin the pattern of recovery. Among the risks that will need to be considered local is the relatively large concentration of retail activity.
- Hertsmere – The London fringe economy of Hertsmere saw a sharp rise in the claimant count, those who claimed jobseeker's allowance and universal credit, to a rate that went above the country average. Hertsmere's economy is mixed in employment terms. The number of public sector and health jobs is small, so the future of the private sector is thought to be critical.
- Three Rivers – Saw a sharp rise in the claimant count although the rate was lower than the average for Hertfordshire. The uptake of the various government schemes to cushion the effects of the pandemic were similar to the county average. Looking ahead, the data suggests that the future performance of the business services will be critical; and the construction sector will also have a big influence.
- Watford – Appeared to see serious local economic effects linked to the pandemic. The uptake of furlough was high and the claimant count rose sharply; as a proportion of residents aged 16-64, it was among the highest in the county. Looking ahead, town centre functions could be vulnerable, and the high incidence of jobs linked to business administration and support services is a particular local feature. The resilience of those activities could be linked to head offices in Watford and elsewhere.
- St Albans – The uptake of the various government schemes was lower in St Albans than the rest of Hertfordshire, and the claimant count rate was also lower than elsewhere. These observations are thought to be explained by the high rate of professional, scientific and technical activities. They may also reflect the high rate of highly qualified people locally.

3.28 A number of districts within Hertfordshire have produced their own Economic Development Strategies to help address the adverse effects of COVID-19 on the local economy. Two of the SW Hertfordshire authorities have produced such strategies, Watford Economic Growth Strategy 2021-25 [See reference 64] and Dacorum Economic Recovery Plan [See reference 65]. Both set out priorities to create sustainable and lasting growth.

Transport, Air Quality and Noise

Transport

3.29 Significant housing growth is planned in future years and as a result Hertfordshire's population is forecast to grow by 21% by 2039, from 1.18million people in 2016 to 1.43million. This will fuel an increase in travel demand. Hertfordshire already has high levels of car ownership, good north-south links but relatively poor east-west connections, especially for public transport [See reference 66]. Existing problems, such as in Hertsmeres for example, are caused by road links being better than access to public transport, particularly in terms of east to west transportation, which is reflected in the high levels of car ownership and traffic congestion [See reference 67]. Hertfordshire also experiences high levels of cross-boundary commuting and complicated movement patterns due to the high number of medium-sized towns. This all results in congestion between and within towns, rail overcrowding, and air quality problems. Those who live in rural areas, people who have a disability or other mobility impairment, or people who do not have access to a car often struggle to access key services because alternatives to the private car are currently not realistic, affordable or convenient. Tackling these issues requires a combination of support for walking, cycling and passenger transport provision, behaviour change initiatives and traffic demand management [See reference 68].

3.30 The M1, West Coast Mainline and Midland Mainline all cut across the west of Hertfordshire, close to three of Hertfordshire's largest towns, Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans. These key transport routes are recognised for their

importance on the economic geography of the area [See reference 69]. The M1 corridor which cuts across the west of Hertfordshire includes the districts of Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers, Watford and St Albans. Although there are differences between these areas, their access to the M1 and connections northwards to Luton, Milton Keynes and the Midlands and southwards to London are shared locational strengths which will help to drive future economic growth [See reference 70]. **Figure 3.4** below shows the transport network across SW Hertfordshire.

3.31 Congestion is a major local concern in SW Hertfordshire [See reference 71]. The road network across SW Hertfordshire is currently under stress at key locations, and there is also stress on the strategic road network, particular the M25, such as within Three Rivers and Watford [See reference 72] [See reference 73]. Many congestion hotspots are where the strategic road network joins the local road network (e.g. in Hertsmere at Junction 23 of the M25 and Junction 5 of the M1, into and out of Hemel Hempstead to the M1 and within St. Albans City at peak times) [See reference 74]. Congestion is likely to continue to be an issue as forecasts predict a 25% increase in trips originating in Hertfordshire by 2036. Currently, car dependency in SW Hertfordshire is very high for local and longer trips. Nearly 9 out of 10 households own at least one car.

3.32 Rail links are relatively good across SW Hertfordshire, with many of the districts and boroughs having access to multiple stations and some to more than one lines [See reference 75]. As noted above, whilst rail links are good in a north-south direction across SW Hertfordshire they are much less so in the west-east direction. Additionally, rail overcrowding is common at peak times and is likely to increase with growing demand. A number of rail lines are forecast to be operating over capacity by 2031, specifically the Midland Main Line to St Pancras, West Coast Main Line suburban services and Great Northern services to Moorgate.

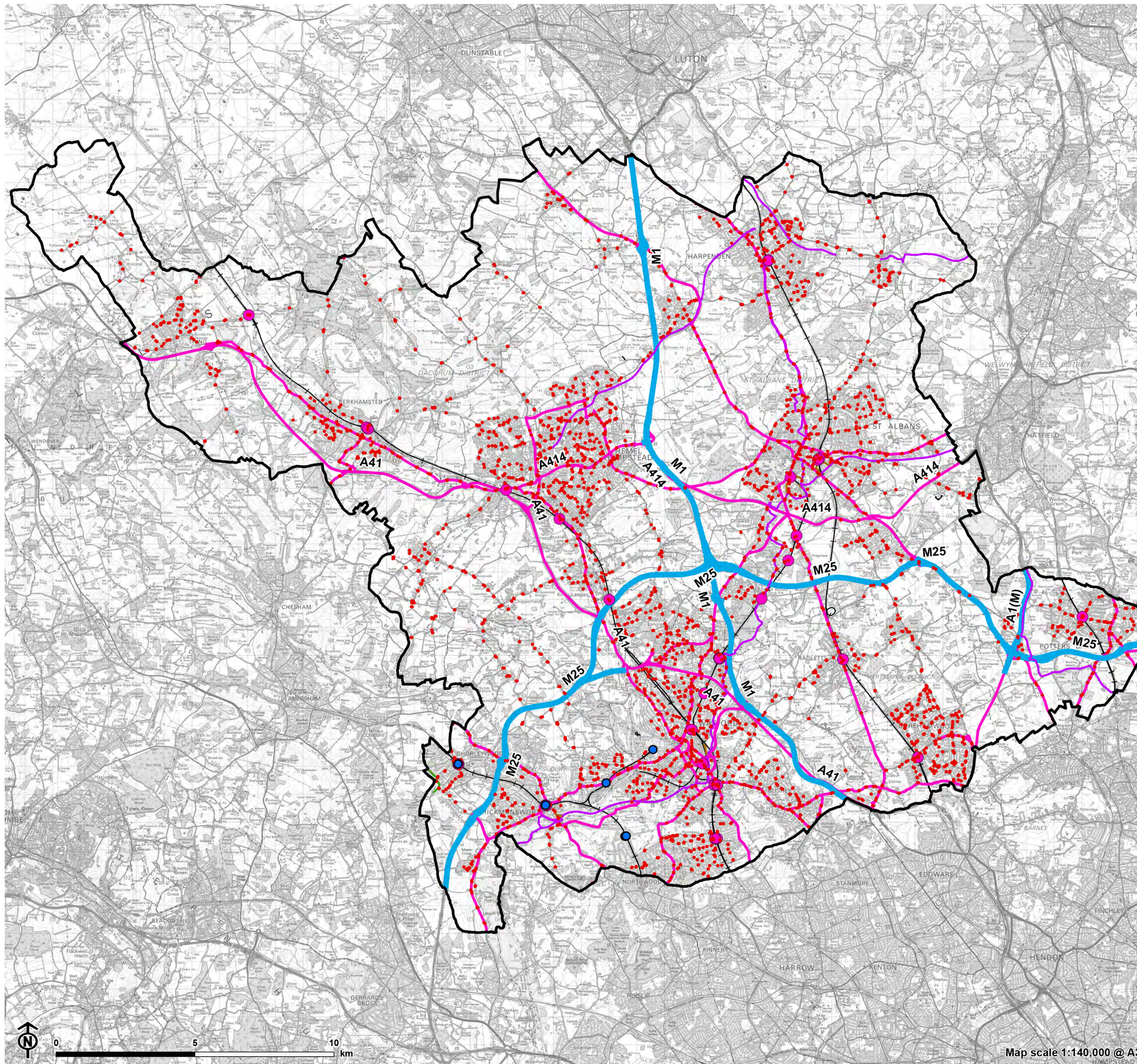
3.33 SW Hertfordshire has good access to air transport. Dacorum and St. Albans lie close to London Luton Airport; Watford has good transport links and is well placed at the intersection of the M25, M1 and A41 which provides good access to the major London airports of Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton;

Hertsmere also has good transport links to all the major London airports via the Thameslink rail service to Gatwick and the M1, A41 and the M25 and Three Rivers also has good access to Heathrow, Luton, City, Stansted and Gatwick Airports, with all being within 60 km of Three Rivers.

3.34 In general, access to bus services is good across SW Hertfordshire, particularly within the main built-up areas but there are localised challenges, particularly where provision and regularity of services is poorer in the more rural area and areas with lower housing density [See reference 76]. Bus networks and service frequency is shrinking in some areas across SW Hertfordshire - the impact that COVID-19 has had on this trend is currently unknown.

3.35 There are a number of cycle networks throughout the area including the Nickey Line that follows the route of former Harpenden to Hemel Hempstead Railway, the Ebury Way connecting Watford and Rickmansworth and other routes along the Grand Union Canal. However, there are only a few dedicated cycle routes between urban areas. The walking and cycling networks are considered to meet current demands in Dacorum and Three Rivers; however there are localised issues, such as congestion on some routes putting people off using those routes [See reference 77], and often the facilities for pedestrians are provided alongside roads, where high traffic levels adjacent may make walking a less attractive option [See reference 78]. However, Hertsmere Borough Council has recently approved plans for a cycle hire scheme to be introduced in Borehamwood and its adjoining areas to encourage active and sustainable travel in Borehamwood [See reference 79]. Furthermore, Watford Borough Council has recently produced a new travel strategy for the borough which is underpinned by six key themes including: increasing active travel opportunities, improving public transport for longer journeys, providing alternatives to petrol car, making the town centre more pedestrian and cycle friendly, supporting change and making moving goods more sustainable. Various actions to achieve the six themes include, but are not limited to, improved cycle and pedestrian routes with increased cycle parking throughout Watford [See reference 80]. Specific information about the adequacy of the walking and cycle networks in St. Albans is not available.

Figure 3.4: Transport Network within South West Hertfordshire



- South West Hertfordshire
- Motorway
- A Road
- Railway
- National Cycle Network (NCN)
- NCN Link
- Regional Cycle Network
- Tram/Metro station
- Rail station entrance
- Bus/Coach stop

Air Quality

3.36 Air pollution in Hertfordshire comes mainly from two sources; road transport and gas boilers (particularly in town centre locations). In total, there are 17 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across SW Hertfordshire, as listed in **Table 3.9** and mapped in Figure 3.5 below. Air quality has improved over the past ten years, such as within the Chorleywood NO2 AQMA in Three Rivers [[See reference 81](#)], however the county still exceeds legal limits in some areas, particularly near busy roads, such as within the St Alban’s AQMAs which have annual average nitrogen dioxide levels above the legal minimum [[See reference 82](#)].

3.37 Many of the districts/boroughs have adopted measures to improve the air quality within the AQMAs as well as the borough/districts as a whole, principally targeting reducing pollution from road traffic. Watford Borough Council, for example, has adopted a number of measures to improve local air quality including the installation of rapid car charging points at nine major car parks, the extension of the e-car scheme, introduction of more cycle routes and facilities and providing better infrastructure to make roads safer for pedestrians. In addition, major road improvements have been made in a bid to alleviate congestion on key roads with AQMAs [[See reference 83](#)].

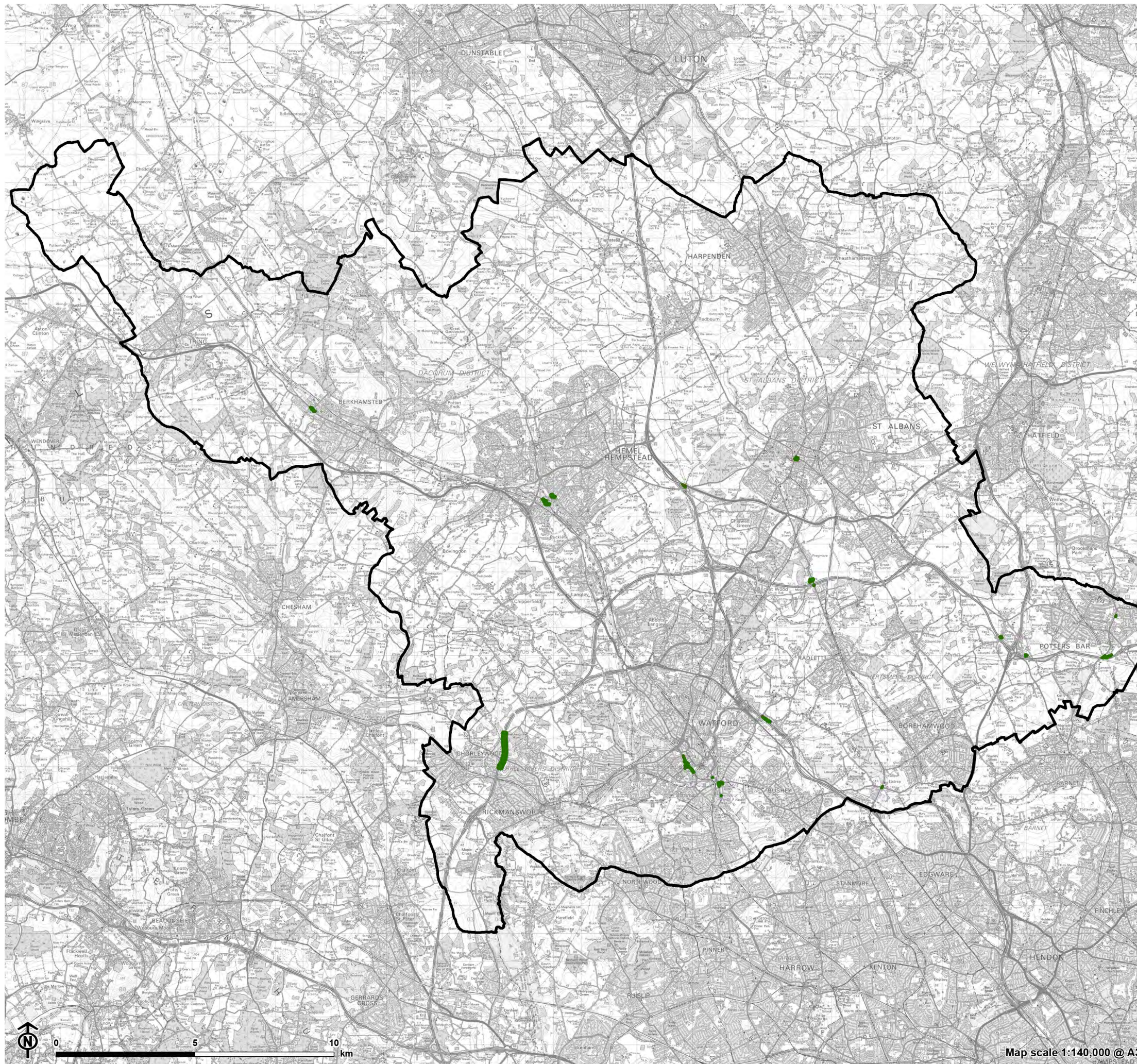
Table 3.9: Current AQMAs Declared by SW Hertfordshire Authorities

Borough/ District	AQMA
Dacorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQMA No 1 Lawn Lane, Hemel Hempstead. • AQMA No 2 London Road, Apsley. • AQMA No 3 High Street, Northchurch, Berkhamsted.
Hertsmere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQMA 1 – An area comprised of the properties at 23-27 Dove Lane and the caravan site Brookes Place off the A1000 Barnet Road, near the M25.

Borough/ District	AQMA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQMA 2 – An area comprised of Charleston Paddocks, St Albans Road, South Mimms, Potters Bar, near the M25. • AQMA 3 – An area comprised of properties 31-29 Blanche Lane South Mimms near the M25. • AQMA 4 – An area comprised of the domestic properties 12 Grove Place, Hartspring Lane and caravans numbered 1-4, 7-8, 55-59 and 60 within Winfield Caravan site, Hartspring Lane, near the M1 at Bushey. • AQMA 5 – An area encompassing a number of houses on the eastern side of Watling Street, either side of the junction with Barnet Road. • AQMA 6 – An area comprised of a number of domestic properties on the High Street, opposite the bus station Potters Bar.
Three Rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQMA - Chorleywood NO2 AQMA, situated at Junction 18 of the M25.
Watford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQMA 1: St Albans Road • AQMA 2: Vicarage Road • AQMA 3: Alderham Road/Chalk Hill • AQMA 4: A405/Horseshoe Road
St Albans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Albans AQMA No. 7 - The area comprising of odd numbers 1-7 London Road, 1-11c Holywell Hill and even numbers London Road, St Albans. • St Albans AQMA No. 2 - The area comprising of Beechtree Cottages, Hemel Hempstead Road, St Albans (adjacent to junction of M1 (J7) and M10). • St Albans AQMA No.7 - An area encompassing a number of domestic properties in Frogmore and Colney Street in the vicinity of the M25.

3.38 It should also be noted that the Habitat Regulations Assessment for the emerging Dacorum Local Plan has noted a variety of pressures on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, one of which is nitrogen deposition due to the highly travelled roads within Dacorum. Similar issues are likely to be identified through the HRA for the SW Herts JSP and will be explored through that process.

Figure 3.5: Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within South West Hertfordshire



- South West Hertfordshire
- Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

Noise

3.39 Complaints about noise in Hertfordshire have declined since 2009/10 with the rate of complaints about noise in 2014/15 being 5.2 per 1000 population [\[See reference 84\]](#) [\[See reference 85\]](#). Complaints received mainly relate to domestic noise (68.4% in 2015/16) and construction and commercial operations (20.4% in 2015/16) [\[See reference 86\]](#).

3.40 Hertfordshire is susceptible to noise from aircraft, due to its close proximity to the major airports of Stansted and Luton. In 2016 Hertfordshire residents raised 93% of aircraft noise complaints related to Luton and 10% related to Stansted Airport [\[See reference 87\]](#). However, noise pollution levels from aircraft are not an issue for all areas of SW Hertfordshire, as there are no scheduled flight paths over Three Rivers from the London airports of Heathrow, Luton, City, Stansted and Gatwick [\[See reference 88\]](#).

Land and water resources

3.41 In Hertfordshire, as elsewhere, there are conflicting pressures on land use. This is particularly true for housing and associated infrastructure which has to be balanced with the protection of the natural environment as well as the preservation of the Green Belt.

Geology and soils

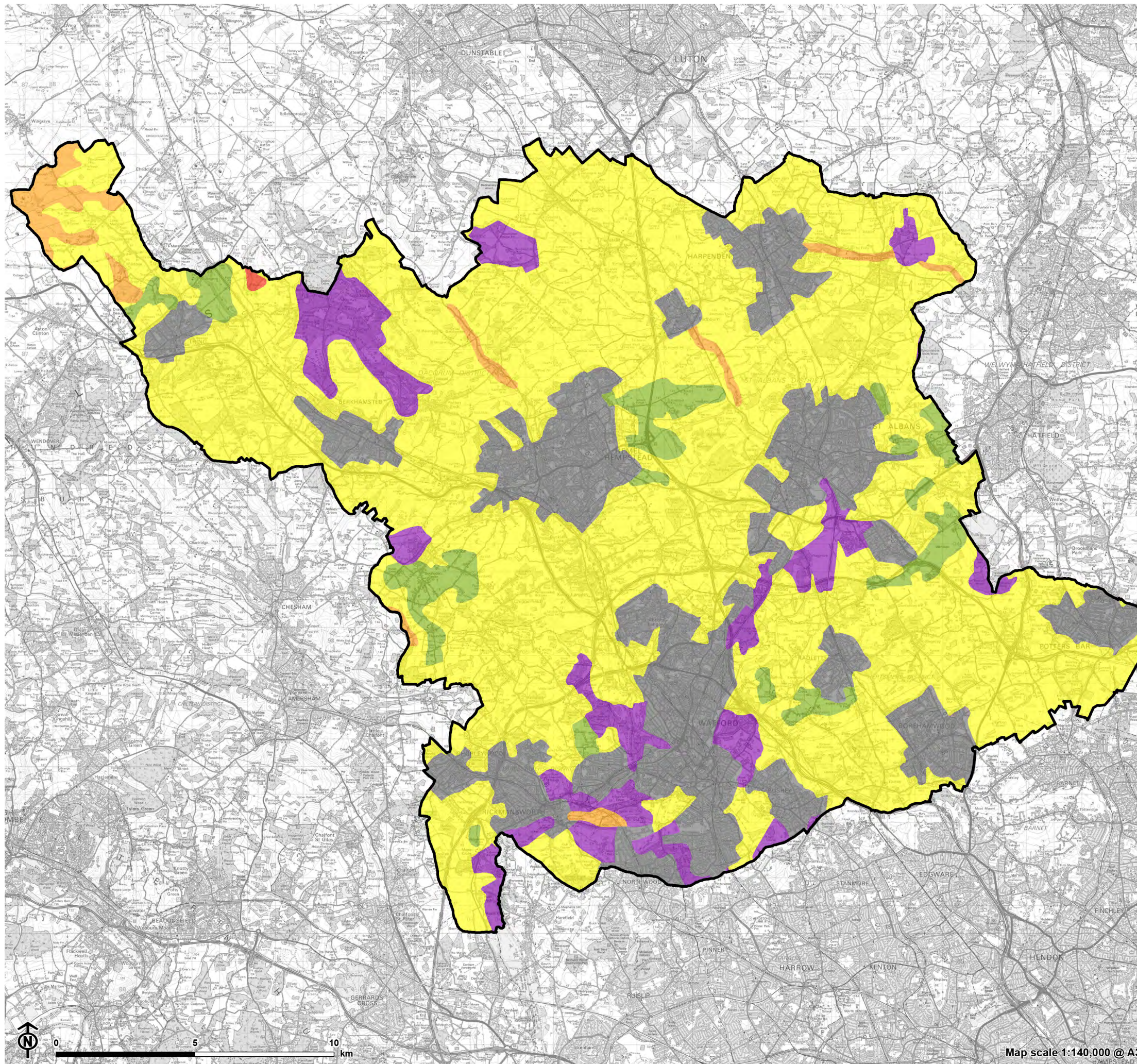
3.42 According to Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification, SW Hertfordshire consists of a mix of Grades 2, 3 and 4 agricultural land and urban areas. Figure 3.6 shows the agricultural land classification within SW Hertfordshire. Data is not available to show the split between Grades 3a and 3b (Grade 3a is considered to be high quality soil, while Grade 3b is not). The

majority of the soils within SW Hertfordshire are considered loamy. Specifically, loamy and clayey soils are found in the south and loamy and slightly clayey soils are found in the north.

3.43 Hertfordshire's geology is primarily chalk bedrock from the Cretaceous period, with a covering of London clay in the south of the County. Lying on top of the bedrock, there are superficial deposits of clay-with-flints covering a large proportion of western Hertfordshire, including the Chilterns dip slope. Sand and gravel is the most commonly worked mineral in Hertfordshire, with land-won sand and gravel providing the only source of soft sand and sharp sand. The sand and gravel resources are found in most parts of the County, although they are particularly concentrated in a belt sitting across the southern half of the County. This area entirely covers the local authority areas of Watford, Three Rivers, Hertsmere, Welwyn Hatfield and Broxbourne. Large parts of St Albans and East Hertfordshire are also covered along with a small part of Dacorum **[See reference 89]**.

3.44 Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, natural processes, landforms and soils that underlie and determine the character of our landscape and environment. Within Hertfordshire there are 19 sites designated as Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGs) which are the most important places for geology outside of statutorily protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). There are nine sites within SW Hertfordshire: four sites currently designated within Dacorum, three within Hertsmere and two within St. Albans.

Figure 3.6: Agricultural Land Classification



- South West Hertfordshire
- Grade 1 (Excellent)
- Grade 2 (Very good)
- Grade 3 (Good to moderate)
- Grade 4 (Poor)
- Grade 5 (Very poor)
- Non Agricultural
- Urban

Waste

3.45 Hertfordshire County Council is the waste disposal authority and the minerals and waste planning authority for the County. However, the authorities within SW Hertfordshire are responsible for waste collection. **Table 3.10** below sets out the total waste generated per household within each of the authorities within SW Hertfordshire for the years 2011/12 and 2018/19. This shows that there has been a decrease in the amount of residual waste across the area. However, the amount of development proposed through the various Local Plans within SW Hertfordshire could increase waste arisings.

Table 3.10: Total household waste generated in SW Hertfordshire (kilograms per household)

Year	Dacorum	Hertsmere	St. Albans	Watford	Three Rivers
2011/12	912	946	874	861	975
2018/19	851	863	838	810	864

3.46 The percentage of Local Authority Collected Waste that is recycled or composted in Hertfordshire was 51.7% in 2018/19, which is higher than the England average of 44.9%. Each planning authority within SW Hertfordshire increased its recycling rate except Dacorum which had a slight reduction for the year 2018/19 compared to 2017/18. Furthermore, St. Albans and Three Rivers achieved recycling rates above 62% for the same year. Hertfordshire County Council aims to reach 65% by 2035 [\[See reference 90\]](#).

Water

3.47 Water consumption in Hertfordshire is above average compared to the rest of the UK. At the Hertfordshire Water Summit in 2013, it was suggested that water consumption in Hertfordshire was 166 per capita consumption (pcc),

compared to the UK average of 150 pcc [See reference 91]. Furthermore, with lower than average annual rainfall, a growing population and water use 16% higher than the national average, Hertfordshire's water resource are under pressure and will continue to worsen due to climate change.

3.48 Hertfordshire County Council, in conjunction with nine Hertfordshire local authorities and Chiltern District Council, commissioned a Water Study in 2015 which was completed in early 2017 [See reference 92]. This involved collaborative working between the County and district councils, the Environment Agency, Hertfordshire LEP and the water companies that serve the area (Thames Water, Affinity Water and Anglian Water). The study describes the current environmental and infrastructure capacity with regards to water infrastructure and resources in the Hertfordshire area and considers solutions to any capacity issues identified over the period 2021 to 2051. This includes a provisional five-point action plan, including the following headline actions:

- Establish a water and sewerage infrastructure delivery partnership.
- Establish an integrated planning portal and single point of contact.
- Create a growth risk profile.
- Explore long term funding opportunities.
- Plan for AMP7 (2020-25) and the Price Review Mechanism (PR19) [See reference 93].

3.49 Thames Water covers most of Hertfordshire's drainage catchment split into two main catchments, each with a sewage treatment works (STW). Maple Lodge STW is located in Rickmansworth and serves the western portion of Hertfordshire. The Maple Lodge site serves Hemel Hempstead along with St Albans and Watford and given the future growth planned for this area will need to have upgrades in order to provide sufficient treatment capacity. There is also a smaller STW, Blackbirds, within Hertsmere to the west of Radlett. At present, Blackbirds is estimated to treat 17% of the total flow in the main trunk sewer, which comprises foul flows from St Albans, London Colney, Hatfield, Potters Bar and Borehamwood [See reference 94].

3.50 The River Colne is a river and tributary of the River Thames with over half its course within southern Hertfordshire. The river is under various pressures such as flow, physical modification, diffuse pollution and climate change. The River Colne has a Water Framework Directive (WFD) classification of moderate in the upstream section, but this falls to poor in the middle and downstream sections. All three sections are failing for flow and phosphates, the phosphate fluctuate slightly through the Colne starting as bad in the upstream section, which improves to moderate in the middle section but then drops to poor in the downstream section [\[See reference 95\]](#).

3.51 There are three chalk streams that run through SW Hertfordshire, the Rivers Bulbourne, Gade and Ver. These are globally rare habitats that are at risk of over abstraction. The Chilterns Chalk Streams Project [\[See reference 96\]](#) has been created to improve river habitats, improve access and enjoyment and promote the sustainable use of water within the Chilterns.

Minerals

3.52 Where development takes place within areas of mineral resources, this may result in the sterilisation of minerals, meaning that potentially useful mineral resources will no longer be available for extraction and use in the future.

3.53 Hertfordshire contains three main types of naturally occurring worked minerals: sand and gravel, chalk and brick clay, which can be seen in **Figure 3.7** below. Sand and gravel are the major aggregate minerals worked within the County.

3.54 Sand and gravel deposits are found in most parts of Hertfordshire although they are concentrated in an area south of a line between Bishops Stortford in the east and Hemel Hempstead in the west (often referred to as the sand and gravel belt). This area includes the entirety of the District Council areas of Three Rivers, Watford and Hertsmere, large parts of St Albans and a small part of Dacorum. Currently there are seven operational sand and gravel quarries in

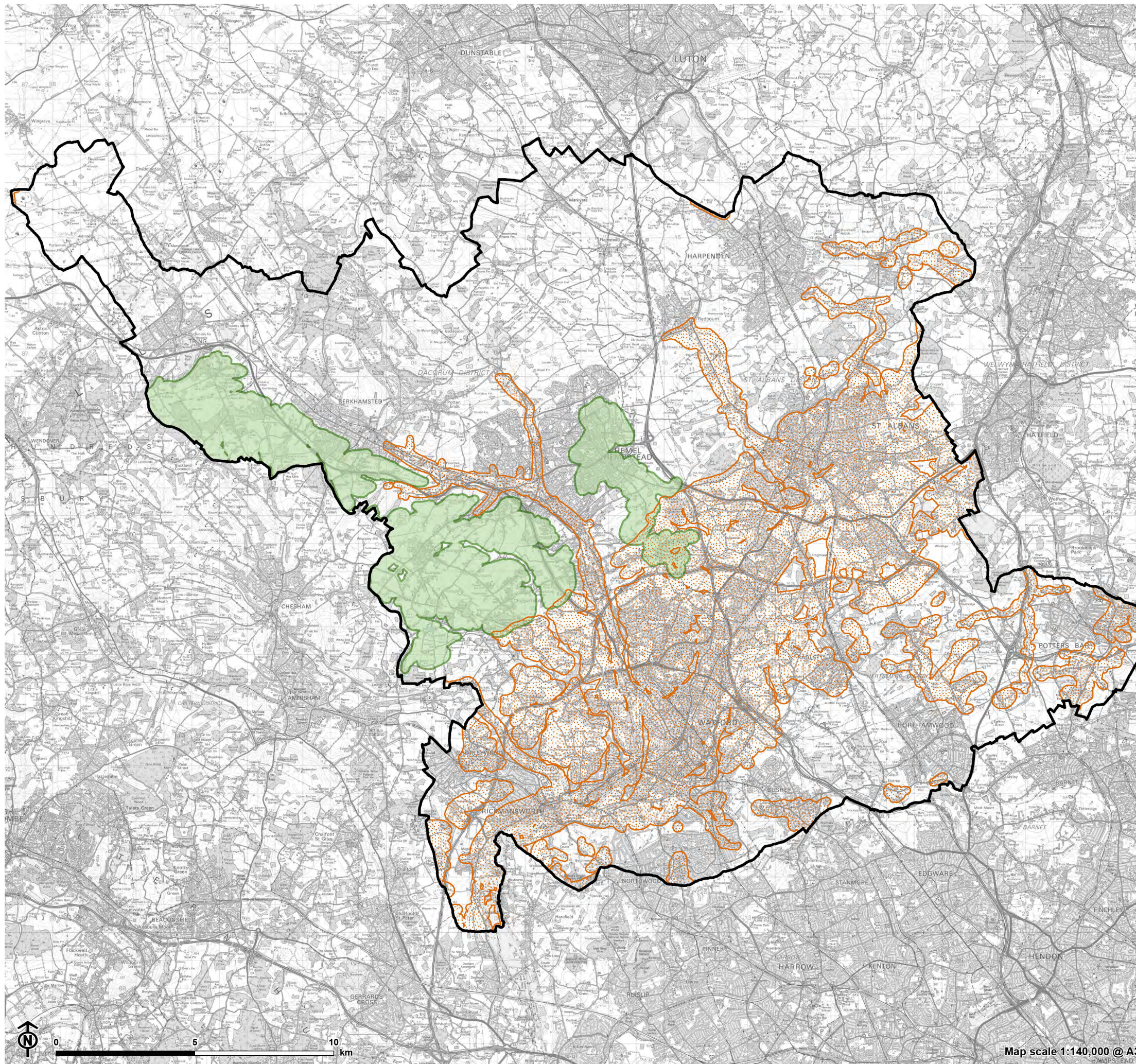
Hertfordshire, but of the seven sites, sand and gravel extraction is only taking place at three sites:

- Thorley Hall Farm;
- Tyttenhanger Quarry, Colney Heath; and
- Hatfield Quarry with the linked Symondshyde extraction site.

3.55 The remaining four sites are no longer extracting sand and gravel and are either in the process of infill/restoration or are not currently operating. An additional site (Coopers Green Land, Hatfield Quarry) has received planning approval subject to S106 agreements [\[See reference 97\]](#). There are also some areas of small-scale clay extraction linked to the last remaining local brick makers in Bovingdon, Dacorum.

3.56 Of the total land-won sand and gravel sales from quarries in Hertfordshire (1,170,985 tonnes) as reported in the Aggregate Minerals Survey 2014, 59% was used within Hertfordshire. Of this figure, 95% was transported by road and 5% by rail. The remaining sand and gravel was exported to West London (12%), East of England (12%), Bedfordshire (8%), East London (5%) and Essex, Southend and Thurrock (3%) [\[See reference 98\]](#).

Figure 3.7: Minerals Safeguarding Areas within South West Hertfordshire



- South West Hertfordshire
- Mineral Safeguarding Area - Brick and Clay
- Mineral Safeguarding Area - Sand and Gravel

Biodiversity

3.57 Across the UK, protected species have declined by 60% over the last 50 years due to the adverse impacts of climate change. There has been a 13% decline in average species abundance and 5% decline in average species distribution. 15% of species were found to be currently threatened with extinction from the UK and 2% have already gone extinct since 1970 [See reference 99].

3.58 In the last 50 years, 76 species (1% of those assessed) became extinct in Hertfordshire; more than three species every two years. Of these, 35 were invertebrates, 26 were plants, 13 were vertebrates and two were lichens. 1,446 species (19% of those assessed) are currently threatened with extinction in Hertfordshire. This includes over 1,000 invertebrates and 260 plants [See reference 100].

3.59 In response to these challenges, Hertfordshire County Council produced a Local Biodiversity Action Plan to identify priorities and actions for improving biodiversity within the county. The Action Plan seeks to ensure that national targets for species and habitats are implemented in a Hertfordshire context. Hertfordshire County Council has also implemented a Pollinator Strategy (2019-2024) to optimise the use of county council owned land, allocating areas for beehives and installing and maintaining 'bee hotels' within suitable green spaces.

3.60 At the European level, the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation applies to two areas of Chiltern Beechwoods in Dacorum. The largest area is at Ashridge, with a smaller area on the western boundary of the Borough, around Stubbings Wood which lies within Tring Park. This large site is protected for its beech forests, semi-natural dry grasslands and scrub, and its population of stag beetles.

3.61 There are a total of 14 Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) in SW Hertfordshire which are designated for either their biological or geological

interest. There are also 27 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) across SW Hertfordshire. The County Council owns and manages two woodland areas which fall within National Nature Reserves in Hertfordshire. Figure 3.8 shows the locations of biodiversity designations within SW Hertfordshire.

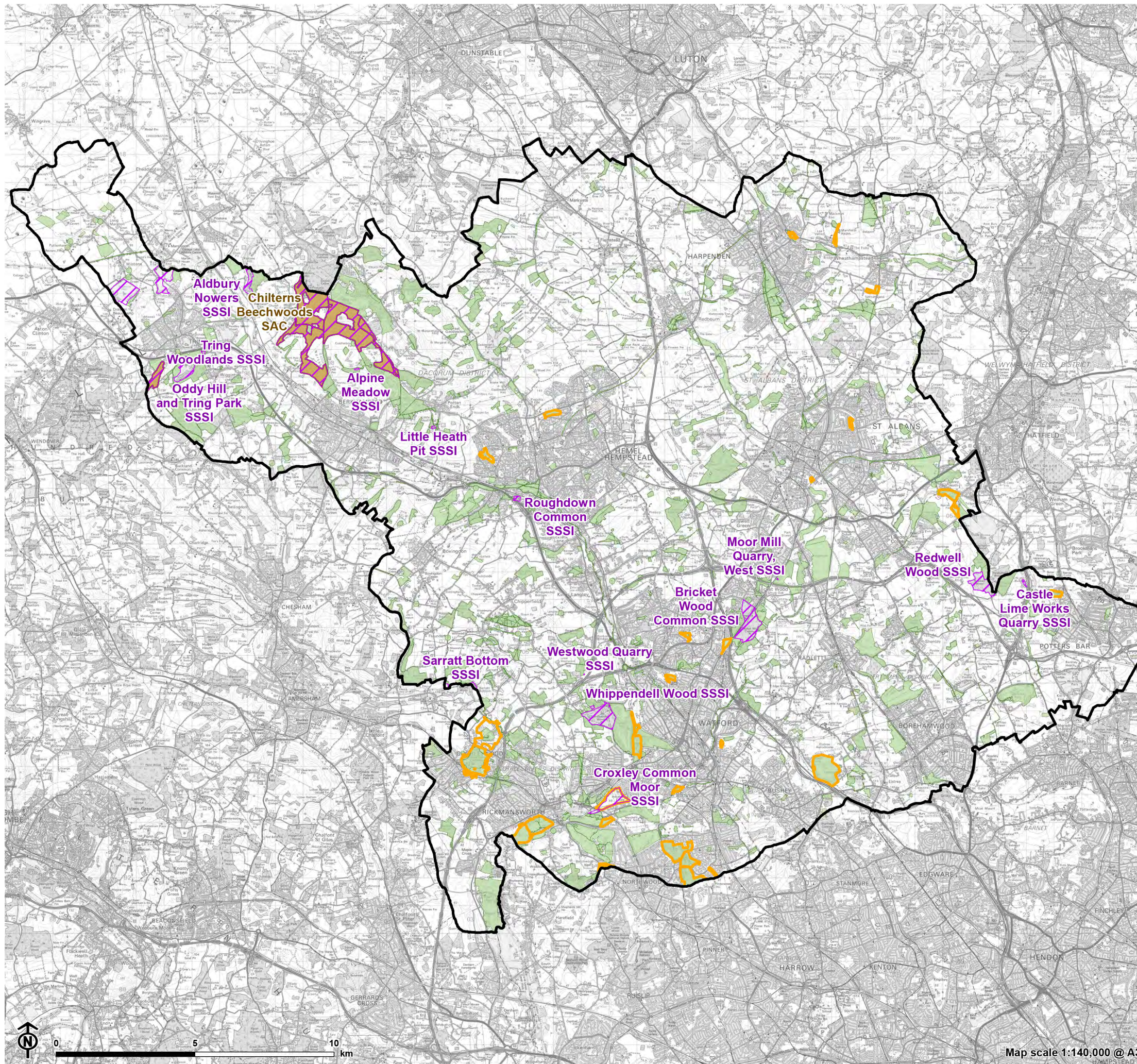
3.62 SW Hertfordshire contains seven priority habitats: Chalk Rivers, Lowland Meadow, Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Lowland Heath, Traditional Orchards and Deciduous Woodland. The area also contains numerous patches of Ancient Woodland scattered throughout the area. Notably, chalk streams are important habitats for wildlife and support a range of plants and animals and are a key characteristic of the Chilterns landscape.

3.63 The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan [\[See reference 101\]](#) identified 12 Key Biodiversity Areas in SW Hertfordshire ranging from wetlands and heath to woodlands and chalk grassland. These areas are to be prioritised for conservation action as they represent concentrations of important habitats.

3.64 Many of the older towns within SW Hertfordshire are historic market towns with relatively high development density. Therefore, tree cover within the public realm is quite limited. It covers occasional areas of street tree planting except in lower density leafy suburbs, such as in parts of St. Albans, Harpenden and Rickmansworth, or where mature woodland have become absorbed within larger settlement growth [\[See reference 102\]](#).

3.65 Recently the HRA for the emerging Dacorum Local Plan concluded that likely significant effects on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC were possible due to recreational impacts, so a full Appropriate Assessment was required. The mitigation strategy includes a 'development exclusion zone' of 500m around the European site.

Figure 3.8: Biodiversity designations within South West Hertfordshire



- South West Hertfordshire
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Area of Conservation
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site

Historic Environment

3.66 There are many historic and heritage designations within SW Hertfordshire, including 103 Conservation Areas, 2,504 listed buildings, 12 Registered Parks and Gardens and 58 Scheduled Monuments. Figure 3.9 below shows the locations of the designated heritage assets within the area. At present, there are five heritage assets included on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register within SW Hertfordshire [See reference 103]. **Table 3.11** below summarises the number of heritage designations across the five authorities, including the number of heritage assets at risk.

Table 3.11: Summary of cultural heritage designations

District/Borough	Listed Buildings	Conservation Areas	Scheduled Monuments	Registered Parks and Gardens	Heritage Assets at Risk
Dacorum	911	25	32	4	2
Three Rivers	349	22	3	2	1
Hertsmere	317	23	4	4	0
Watford	92	10	0	1	1
St. Albans	857	19	19	2	1

3.67 There are no registered battlefields or World Heritage Sites within Hertfordshire, but there are six National Trust properties within SW Hertfordshire. There are also a number of locally listed Historic Parks and Gardens within the area [See reference 104].

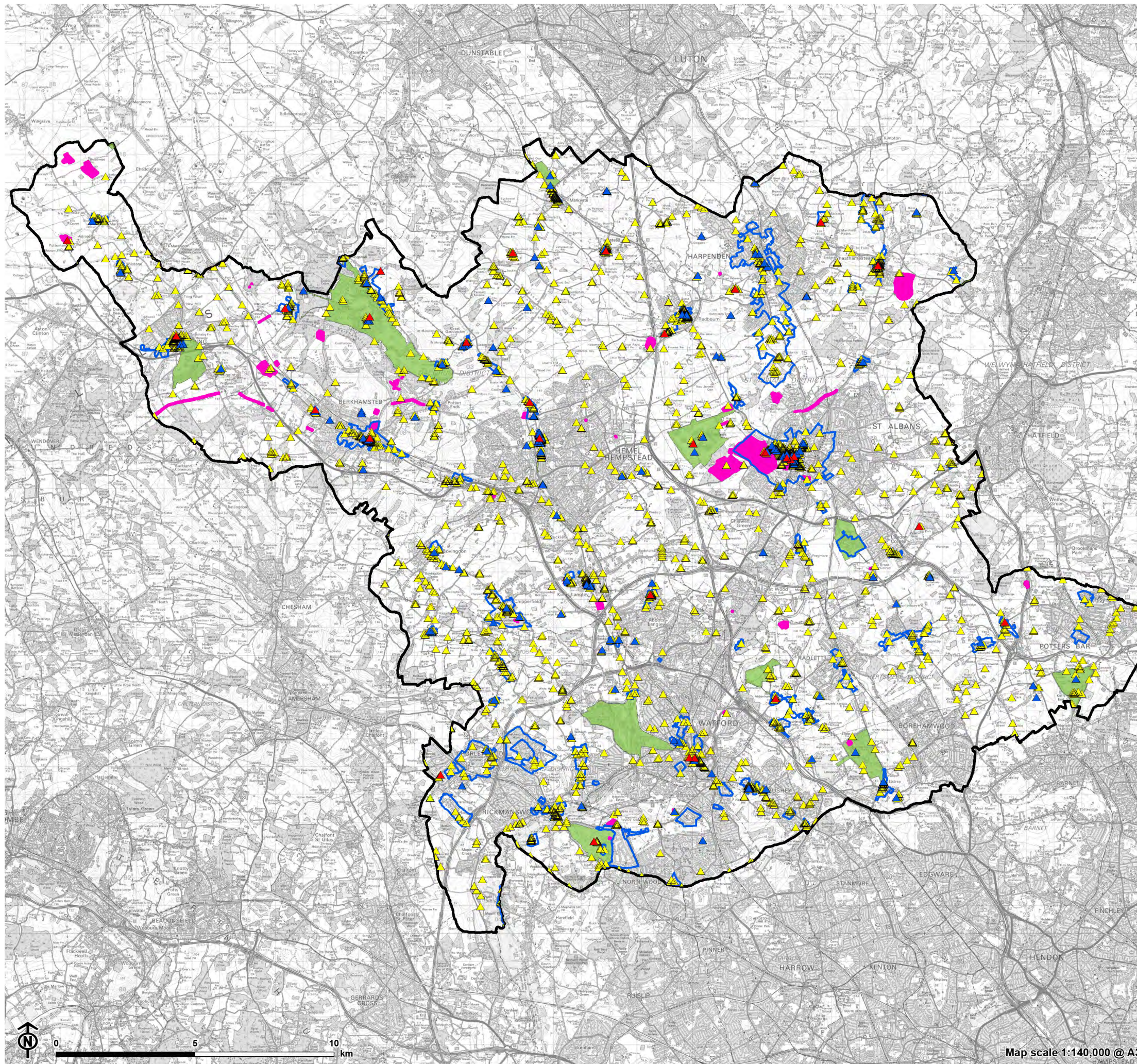
3.68 Development can affect both designated and undesignated heritage assets either directly or as a result of impacts on the setting of these assets. As well as listed buildings and scheduled monuments, consideration will also need to be

given to areas of archaeological potential which could be affected by new development.

3.69 The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) contains information on historic buildings, archaeological remains, historic sites and military remains. It can be used to identify significant historic remains and contains information on surveys and archaeological excavations undertaken in Hertfordshire.

3.70 Proximity to London and the rapid growth in development pressures in the 20th century have resulted in the growth of suburban development in the southern part of Hertfordshire. This in turn led to the designation of a large proportion of the county as Green Belt. Hertfordshire's built environment is generally low rise, including in SW Hertfordshire. Guidance from Hertfordshire County Council [See reference 105] states that historic buildings need to adapt and manage change to remain viable. It also encourages new development to respect historic buildings, but not to replicate them. Much of Hertfordshire is characterised by traditional (mainly pre 1850s) building materials related to its geology and landscape. However, Hemel Hempstead New Town differs from the rest of SW Hertfordshire as it was developed in the late 1940s. The town is compact and is divided into residential neighbourhoods each with their own service centre. Much of the town's features are modernist, but it includes distinctive landscape features such as the Grand Union Canal and the Gade and Bulbourne Valleys.

Figure 3.9: Designated Heritage Assets within South West Hertfordshire



- South West Hertfordshire
- Listed Building (by grade)**
 - I
 - II*
 - II
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Conservation area

Landscape

3.71 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) falls within SW Hertfordshire, as shown in **Figure 3.10** below. **Figure 3.10** also shows the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and other SACs within a 10km buffer of SW Hertfordshire for context.

3.72 The Chilterns contain an important diversity of habitats ranging from chalk grassland and to the country's most extensive areas of beech woodland. Over 11% of the AONB lies within a total of almost 500 Local Wildlife Sites [See reference 106]. Chalk streams are a characteristic and attractive feature of the Chilterns landscape. The Chilterns AONB Management Plan [See reference 107] sets the framework for protecting and enhancing the Chilterns. It outlines that many of the wildlife and plant species present in the Chilterns are in long-term decline due to:

- changes in land management practices,
- lack of wildlife habitat management, environmental and ecological change
- impact of people and dogs; and
- habitat fragmentation.

3.73 England has been divided into 159 separate National Character Areas (NCAs), each of which are regarded as distinct natural areas. A unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity defines each area in question. The boundaries of each NCA relate to how these elements have combined to form the landscape and do not relate to administrative boundaries.

3.74 SW Hertfordshire is split between four NCAs, as shown in Figure 3.11:

- Chilterns is an extensively wooded and farmed landscape which is underlain by chalk bedrock that rises up from the London Basin to form a north-west facing escarpment offering long views over the adjacent vales.

- Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands is a broad, gently undulating, lowland plateau dissected by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east.
- Northern Thames Basin contains a diverse range of semi-natural habitats including ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh.
- Thames Valley is a mainly low-lying, wedge-shaped area, widening from Reading, which includes Slough, Windsor, the Colne Valley and the southwest London fringes. The River Thames provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings.

3.75 Hertfordshire is particularly wooded in some areas. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present. Mixed farming is characteristic of the Thames basin, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux.

3.76 The southern portion of the county is mostly acidic and has a highly distinctive character, extending down into much of Middlesex. This is the most wooded part of Hertfordshire and also contains the majority of the county's remaining heathland and acid grassland. The west of the county also holds a number of chalk rivers, chalk grassland and acidic areas [\[See reference 108\]](#).

3.77 The Green Belt, whilst a planning rather than a landscape designation, plays an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preserving the setting and special character of the area's historic settlements and assisting in urban regeneration. In Hertfordshire, an area of 84,640 hectares of land is designated as Green Belt, making up 51.5% of the county and around 70% of SW Hertfordshire, as shown in **Figure 3.12**.

Figure 3.10: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Areas of Conservation within and outside of South West Hertfordshire

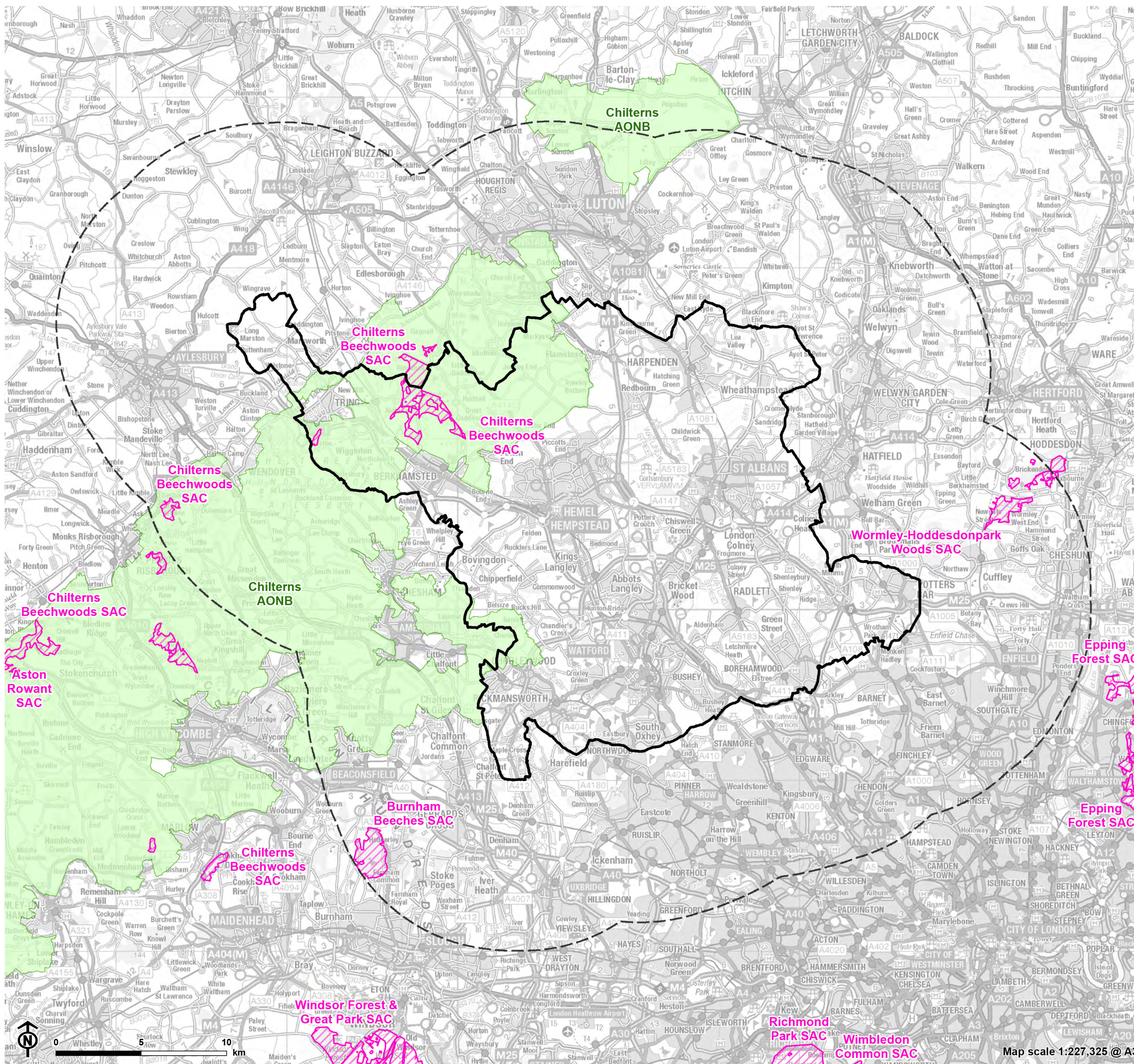
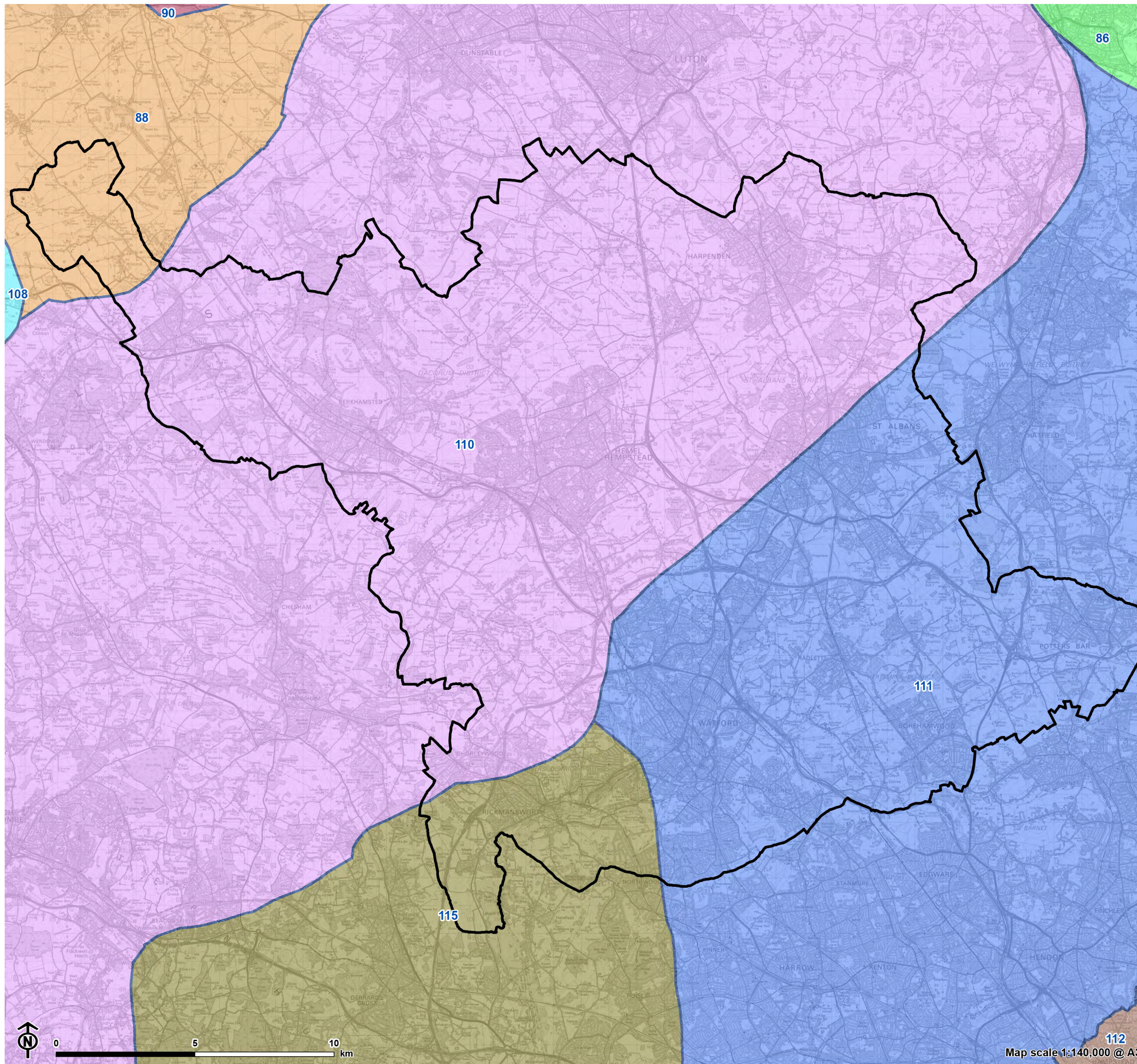
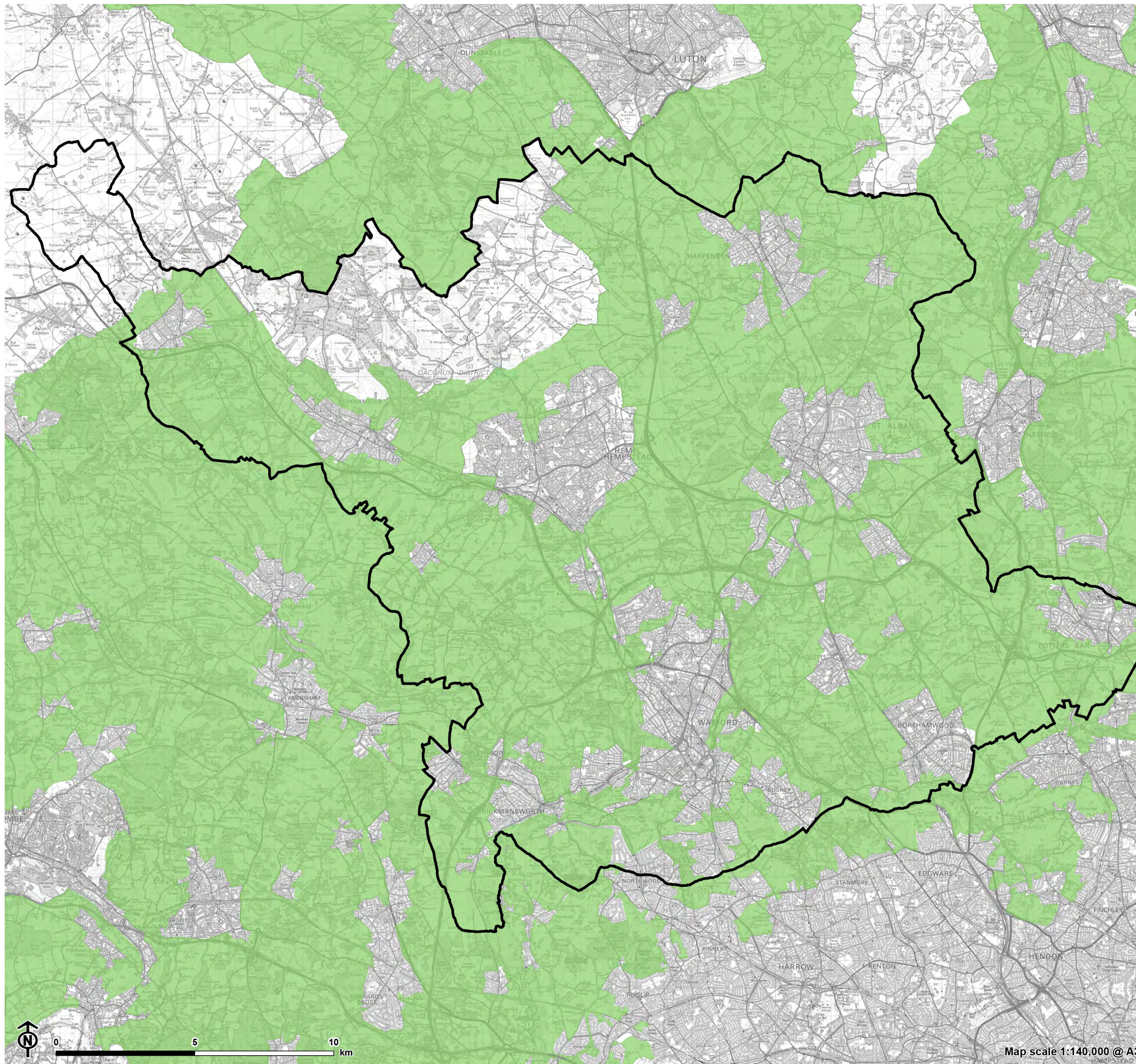


Figure 3.11: National Character Areas within South West Hertfordshire



- South West Hertfordshire
- 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
- 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands
- 90: Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge
- 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales
- 110: Chilterns
- 111: Northern Thames Basin
- 112: Inner London
- 115: Thames Valley

Figure 3.12: Green Belt within South West Hertfordshire



South West Hertfordshire
Green Belt

Chapter 4

Key Sustainability Issues and Likely Evolution without the Plan

4.1 Analysis of the baseline information has enabled a number of key sustainability issues facing SW Hertfordshire to be identified. Identification of the key sustainability issues and consideration of how these issues might develop over time if the JSP is not implemented help to meet the requirements of Annex 1 of the SEA Directive to provide information on:

“the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan; and any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan.”

4.2 Key sustainability issues for SW Hertfordshire, as identified through the baseline information, are presented below.

4.3 It is also a requirement of the SEA Directive that consideration is given to the likely evolution of the environment in the plan area (in this case SW Hertfordshire) if the new JSP was not to be implemented. This analysis is presented below each of the key sustainability issues.

Key Sustainability Issues and their Likely Evolution without the JSP

Sustainability Issue 1: Impacts of climate change including temperature rises and an increase in extreme weather events

- Without the emerging JSP, it is likely that the impacts of climate change will still be mitigated against. National Policy will continue to seek to reduce carbon emissions through encouraging the switch to renewable energy, and more efficient use of energy and reduce the risk of flooding. The Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy (2020) sets out the county council's vision for tackling climate change, detailing policies and initiatives. Therefore, this is likely to continue without the JSP and will be encouraged through the District and Borough Local Plans.
- However, the JSP provides the opportunity to strengthen the area's policy framework and provide regional guidance to encourage energy efficient development within SW Hertfordshire, to reduce the need to use the car through planning and support active and public transport options and presents an opportunity for the five Councils to work together alongside the Environment Agency to locate development in sustainable locations that would be significantly impacted by flooding and to mitigate the effects of potential future flooding. The JSP will help to guide future plans and strategies by setting out high-level policies on climate change mitigation and energy use.

Sustainability Issue 2: High house prices and affordability issues

- Without the emerging JSP, it is likely that housing and services and facilities would still be delivered through each of the District and Borough Local Plans, but without a strategic approach it may be more difficult to

keep pace with demand. Without the JSP it is likely that house prices will continue to rise within the area. As highlighted in the South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA), there are affordability pressures within the South West Hertfordshire Housing Market Area (HMA), and without a strategic approach it will be difficult for affordable housing delivery. The JSP offers the opportunity to facilitate and expedite the delivery of affording housing across the area.

Sustainability Issue 3: Inadequate access to natural green space in various parts of SW Hertfordshire

- The JSP presents an opportunity to help address any existing deficiencies in accessible greenspace and to consider the multi-functionality of the green infrastructure network at a more strategic level to ensure there is connectivity between the walking, cycling and bridleway network as well additional greenspace.

Sustainability Issue 4: Health issues including excess weight in adults

- The JSP could further contribute to tackling issues of health and wellbeing and general health disparities through policies that strongly support uptake of active modes of transport. access to green space, community facilities, improved public realm and other recreation opportunities, an in particular in more deprived areas.

Sustainability Issue 5: Ageing population

- Without the emerging JSP, it is possible that the diverse and distinct nature of socio-economic challenges occurring across SW Hertfordshire will remain.

- As the JSP encourages more collaborative working between the five SW Hertfordshire Councils, the JSP offers the opportunity to ensure that appropriate resources are being targeted to areas with the greatest specific needs.

Sustainability Issue 6: Pockets of deprivation within an otherwise affluent area

- As above, the JSP offers the opportunity to ensure that appropriate resources are being targeted to areas with the greatest specific needs. As the JSP encourages more collaborative working between the five SW Hertfordshire Councils, it could result in opportunities for economic growth and development, which can help to reduce inequality.

Sustainability Issue 7: Critically low amount of available employment space

- The JSP provides the opportunity to focus planning and investment on key economic sectors and strategic corridors and locations, supported by sufficient infrastructure to provide the conditions to attract investment and support the growth of SW Herts indigenous businesses to help promote a competitive economy across the area.

Sustainability Issue 8: Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic including drop in productivity

- The JSP offers the opportunity to promote the Local Industrial Strategy and district level recovery plans, where published, throughout the area to promote employment and productivity focusing directly on strategic employment need, supporting the growth of established sectors to target productivity challenges, especially within communities in need of economic investment.

Sustainability Issue 9: Poor public transport linkages

- The JSP provides additional opportunity to improve the public transport choices within SW Hertfordshire through the promotion of alternative travel modes to the motorised vehicle, in line with wider county and national policy aspirations. Additionally, through collaborative working between the five Councils, the JSP could help to deliver and better fund essential local transport links to discourage car dependency and encourage modal shift.

Sustainability Issue 10: Congestion and stress on the road network across SW Hertfordshire

- Recent national policies and the emergence of new technologies (such as improved electric vehicles, e-bikes and cleaner fuels/energy sources) are likely to help reduce the release of air pollutants. The JSP presents the opportunity to address issues associated with congestion through providing clarity for infrastructure providers at the same time as promoting a joined-up strategic approach to transport planning, integrated with the delivery of housing and economic development. Additionally, the JSP provides opportunities to support a modal shift and discourage car dependency.

Sustainability Issue 11: Pressure on water resources

- The JSP provides the opportunity to create a framework at a localised scale to ensure that strategic development is located to take into account the sensitivities of the water resources and provide an opportunity to encourage better and more sustainable use of water resources.

Sustainability Issue 12: Loss of biodiversity.

- Ongoing development, in addition to pollution and intensive recreational use, produce ongoing pressures that the JSP can help to address at a strategic scale, seeking to safeguard and improve not only designated sites, but the ecological networks and supporting habitats that support them and their species. Additionally, the JSP provides the opportunity to coordinate the provision of alternative SANGs to alleviate recreational pressure at designated biodiversity sites.

Sustainability Issue 13: Potential harm to the local landscape, specifically the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- The JSP provides a further opportunity to ensure that the character and quality of the landscape is taken into account in the siting of strategic development, whilst maximising any opportunity for the protection and enhancement of the landscape.

Chapter 5

Sustainability Appraisal Framework

5.1 The development of a set of SA objectives (known as the SA framework) is a recognised way in which the likely environmental and sustainability effects of a plan can be described, analysed and compared.

5.2 The proposed SA framework for the new JSP is presented in Table 5.1. The framework has been developed from the analysis of international, national and local policy objectives, the baseline information, and the key sustainability issues identified for the Plan area.

5.3 It comprises a series of SA objectives against which the sustainability of the JSP will be appraised. The appraisal of the JSP options and policies against these SA objectives will be guided in part by the appraisal questions accompanying each objective. The questions included in the framework are not exhaustive, and some may be more relevant to certain Plan elements than others.

5.4 All of the topics specifically required by the SEA Regulations (set out in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations) are addressed by the SA objectives.

SA Framework for the SW Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan

SA Objective 1: To minimise SW Hertfordshire's contribution to climate change and build resilience for adaptation to the changing climate

Appraisal Questions:

- Promote climate change resilience through sustainable siting, design, landscaping and infrastructure?
- Promote energy efficient approach and sustainable construction?
- Encourage the provision of renewable energy infrastructure?

SA Objective 2: To support meeting SW Hertfordshire's housing needs

Appraisal Questions:

- Provide opportunities to deliver the range of housing types and tenures and the affordable homes needed over the Plan period?
- Support addressing the housing needs of an ageing population?
- Enable the delivery of housing where it is most needed?
- Promote high quality housing?

SA Objective 3: To improve the health and wellbeing of SW Hertfordshire's population

Appraisal Questions:

- Promote access to healthcare facilities?
- Maintain, connect and create multifunctional open spaces and green infrastructure?
- Provide access to recreation and sports facilities?
- Encourage and facilitate walking and cycling?
- Put healthy placemaking at the core of the plan?

SA Objective 4: To reduce inequalities within SW Hertfordshire

Appraisal Questions:

- Reduce the disadvantage faced by those with protected characteristics?
- Assist in the reduction of health inequalities?
- Reduce poverty and social exclusion in the areas most affected?
- Promote developments that benefit SW Hertfordshire's most deprived areas?

SA Objective 5: To sustain and create vibrant and safe communities with good access to services and facilities

Appraisal Questions:

- Facilitate the integration of new communities with existing communities?
- Ensure access to a range of services and facilities?
- Help create places that address safety, crime and the fear of crime, and disorder?

SA Objective 6: To support the development of SW Hertfordshire's economy and achieve high and stable levels of employment

Appraisal Questions:

- Support the provision of a sufficient range, type and location of employment land to meet local needs?
- Allow for sufficient flexibility to respond to uncertainties and changing economic circumstances?
- Support opportunities for the expansion and diversification of business and inward investment?
- Support opportunities for new and improved education and training facilities?
- Support the diversification of employment types?

SA Objective 7: To reduce the need to travel by car

Appraisal Questions:

- Promote the delivery of integrated, compact communities (15 minute neighbourhoods) made-up of a complementary mix of land uses?
- Support the maintenance and expansion of high-quality public transport networks?
- Enhance connectivity of the sustainable transport network?
- Support the provision of new cycling and walking infrastructure?

SA Objective 8: To minimise air and noise pollution in SW Hertfordshire

Appraisal Questions:

- Minimise increases in polluting traffic, and its impact on Air Quality Management Areas?
- Reduce congestion, particularly involving HGVs?
- Support the take up of low / zero emission vehicles?
- Help reduce air pollution from commercial and industrial sources?
- Help minimise exposure to noise pollution?

SA Objective 9: To maintain and enhance water quality and quantity

Appraisal Questions:

- Minimise inappropriate development in Source Protection Zones?
- Ensure there is sufficient waste water treatment capacity to serve SW Hertfordshire?
- Ensure there are sufficient water resources to support existing and new development?
- Support efficient use of water in new development?
- Help safeguard the water quality and ecological integrity of waterbodies?

SA Objective 10: To reduce the risk from all sources of flooding in SW Hertfordshire

Appraisal Questions:

- Minimise built development in areas prone to flooding?
- Help promote the use of SuDS and flood resilient design?
- Help promote the use of Natural Flood Management techniques?

SA Objective 11: To protect SW Hertfordshire's soils and ensure efficient use of land

Appraisal Questions:

- Prioritise the development of brownfield land over greenfield land?

- Avoid development on best and most versatile agricultural land?
- Take an appropriate approach to remediating contaminated land?
- Promote nutrient neutral development?

SA Objective 12: To safeguard SW Hertfordshire's mineral resources

Appraisal Questions:

- Avoid sterilising mineral resources?
- Promote the appropriate restoration of sites that are no longer used?

SA Objective 13: To conserve and enhance SW Hertfordshire's biodiversity and geodiversity

Appraisal Questions

- Safeguard and enhance SW Hertfordshire's internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity assets?
- Safeguard and enhance SW Hertfordshire's ancient woodlands, chalk grasslands and other characteristic habitats?
- Help to conserve, connect and enhance ecological networks?
- Achieve overall net gains in biodiversity?
- Provide and manage opportunities for people to come into contact with resilient wildlife places whilst encouraging respect for and raising awareness of the sensitivity of such locations?
- Protect SW Hertfordshire's designated geodiversity sites?

SA Objective 14: To protect and enhance the significance of SW Hertfordshire's historic environment

Appraisal Questions:

- Conserve and enhance SW Hertfordshire's designated and undesignated heritage assets, including their setting?
- Encourage the conservation, management and enhancement of the region's heritage assets, particularly heritage at risk and historic landscapes?
- Help raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of, and access to, the historic environment?

SA Objective 15: To protect and enhance SW Hertfordshire's landscape character and quality

Appraisal Questions:

- Protect and enhance the character of the Chilterns AONB including its setting?
- Avoid development that would have adverse effects on sensitive landscapes?
- Safeguard the character and distinctiveness of SW Hertfordshire's settlements?

Use of the SA Framework

5.5 The SA should be undertaken in close collaboration with the officers responsible for drafting the new JSP in order to fully integrate the SA process with the production of the plan.

5.6 The findings of the SA will be presented using matrices, with a colour coded symbol showing for the likely effect of the option or policy on each of the SA objectives along with a concise justification for the effect identified, where appropriate.

5.7 The use of colour coding in the matrices will allow for likely significant effects (both positive and negative) to be easily identified, as shown in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: Key to symbols and colour coding to be used in the SA of the SW Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan

Symbol and Colour Coding	Description
++	The option or policy is likely to have a significant positive effect on the SA objective(s).
+	The option or policy is likely to have a positive effect of the SA objective(s).
0	The option or policy is likely to have a negligible or no effect on the SA objective(s).
-	The option or policy is likely to have a negative effect on the SA objective(s).
--	The option or policy is likely to have a significant negative effect on the SA objective(s).
?	It is uncertain what effect the option or policy will have on the SA objective(s), due to a lack of data.

Symbol and Colour Coding	Description
+/-	The option or policy is likely to have a mixture of positive and negative effects on the SA objective(s).

5.8 The dividing line between sustainability effects is often quite small. Where significant effects are distinguished from more minor effects this is because, using the appraisal questions and criteria and applying professional judgement, the effect of the option or policy in question on an SA objective will be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect compared with other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

5.9 In determining the significance of the effects of the options for potential inclusion in the JSP it will be important to bear in mind its relationship with the other components of the planning system such as the NPPF, as these may provide additional safeguards or mitigation for potentially significant adverse effects.

Health Impact Assessment

5.10 Health Impact Assessment (HIA) aims to ensure that health-related issues are integrated into the plan-making process. As described in Chapter 1, the HIA will be incorporated into the SA. SA objective 3 directly addresses health issues, while achievement of SA objectives 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14 and 15 would also indirectly benefit people’s health. The high level growth types and policy options for the JSP will all be assessed against these objectives as part of the SA. The SA Report will make recommendations for how the health-related impacts of the JSP can be optimised as the options are developed into more detailed policies.

Equalities Impact Assessment

5.11 There are three main duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, which public authorities, including the five planning authorities within SW Hertfordshire, must meet in exercising their functions:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.
- To foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.12 The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and seeks to protect people from discrimination on the basis of these characteristics. Socio-economic status (people on low incomes, young and adult carers, people living in deprived areas/rural areas, groups suffering multiple disadvantages etc.) is not a characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010. However, the SW Herts Councils are committed to also considering the impact that the JSP will have on these groups. As described in Chapter 1, the EqIA will be incorporated into the SA - SA objective 4 directly addressed equality issues.

Chapter 6

SA Findings for the Vision, Objectives and Growth Types

6.1 The initial JSP Vision for 2050 represents the overarching goal for the area. The vision is an aspirational, crosscutting statement and as such is not itself suitable for appraisal, but the following six draft pillars that support the vision are appraised below. It should be noted that the vision and set of pillars/objectives may change as a result of the feedback received from the consultation.

1. Living green in a healthy natural environment
2. Growing opportunities to work locally
3. Living in healthy, thriving local communities
4. Moving easily in well-connected places
5. Building homes and places that people are proud of
6. Delivering robust and sustainable infrastructure

6.2 Table 6.1 summarises the SA findings for these six draft pillars, which are explained below the table.

Table 6.1: SA Scores for the Six Draft Pillars

SA objectives	Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4	Pillar 5	Pillar 6
SA1 – Climate change	++	0	0	+	0	+
SA2 - Housing	0	0	+	0	++	0
SA3 - Health	+	+	++	+	+	0
SA4 - Inequalities	+	+	+	0	+	0
SA5 - Communities	+	+	++	0	++	0
SA6 - Economy	+	++	0	0	0	+
SA7 - Travel	0	0	0	++	+	0
SA8 - Pollution	+	0	0	+	0	0
SA9 - Water	0	0	0	0	0	0
SA10 - Flooding	++	0	0	0	0	0
SA11 - Soils	0	0	0	0	0	0
SA12 - Minerals	+	0	0	0	0	+
SA13 – Biodiversity & Geodiversity	++	-?	0	0	-?	-?
SA14 – Historic Environment	0	-?	0	0	-?	-?

SA objectives	Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4	Pillar 5	Pillar 6
SA15 - Landscape	0	-?	0	0	-?	-?

Pillars and associated Objectives

Living green in a healthy natural environment

6.3 Pillar 1 aims to ensure that all new development is net zero carbon, carbon negative and incorporates nature-based solutions to build climate resilience. As such, a significant positive effect is expected for SA objectives 1 (climate change) and 10 (flooding). Pillar 1 also seeks to protect, enhance and connect new and existing biodiversity and ecological networks; therefore a significant positive effect is expected in relation to SA objective 13 (biodiversity and geodiversity). A minor positive effect is also expected for SA objective 12 (Minerals) as the reuse and recycling of construction materials could reduce the consumption of mineral resources.

6.4 Adapting to and mitigating against the impacts of climate change will also have minor positive effects on SA objectives 3 (Health), 4 (Inequalities), 5 (Communities), 6 (Economy) and 8 (Pollution) as this may help protect people from extreme weather events as well as the associated economic costs, increase job opportunities and minimise air pollution.

Growing opportunities to work locally

6.5 Pillar 2 promotes targeted investment into the local economy and workforce, supports the provision of education and training facilities and aims to diversify local job prospects thereby making the local economy more resilient. As such, a significant positive effect is expected in relation to SA objective 6 (Economy).

6.6 Minor positive effects are expected in relation to SA objectives 3 (Health), 4 (Inequalities) and 5 (Communities) as an increase in training opportunities and the provision of local facilities will help to support local communities and reduce deprivation in the areas most affected.

6.7 It is possible that the delivery of new workspaces could have negative effects on the environmental SA objectives, e.g. SA objectives 13 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 14 (Historic Environment) and 15 (Landscape); however this is uncertain until the precise location and design of any such development is known.

Living in healthy, thriving local communities

6.8 Pillar 3 seeks to provide healthy places that are inclusive, safe and interactive. This could increase levels of pedestrian activity and outdoor interaction; therefore significant positive effects are expected in relation to SA objectives 3 (Health) and 5 (Communities). Additionally, this pillar aims to create homes that provide opportunities for healthy and supported living, therefore minor positive effects are expected in relation to SA objectives 2 (Housing) and 4 (Inequalities).

Moving easily in connected places

6.9 Pillar 4 seeks to give people the opportunity for active and healthy living through the improved provision of public transport and active travel options. As such, significant positive effects are expected in relation to SA objective 7 (Travel). Minor positive effects are also expected for SA objectives 1 (Climate change), 3 (Health) and 8 (Pollution) as an improvements to the cycling and walking network can benefit physical and mental health and minimise the greenhouse gas emissions and air and noise pollution associated with vehicle traffic.

Building homes and places that people are proud of

6.10 Significant positive effects are recorded for SA Objective 2 (Housing) because this pillar aims to create homes and places that will fit the current and future needs of the local residents. It also seeks to create high quality public spaces creating sustainable communities. Therefore, a significant positive effect is expected for SA objective 5 (Communities). Additionally, the homes will be flexible, adaptable and built in sustainable locations; therefore minor positive effects are expected for SA objectives 3 (Health), 4 (Inequalities) and 7 (Travel).

6.11 It is possible that the delivery of new residential development could have negative effects on the environmental SA objectives, e.g. SA objectives 13 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 14 (Historic Environment) and 15 (Landscape); however this is uncertain until the precise location and design of any such development is known.

Delivering robust and sustainable infrastructure

6.12 Pillar 6 aims to deliver key infrastructure to meet local needs and adapt to climate change. To do this, this pillar promotes local renewable energy generation, the reuse and recycling of materials and access to fast digital networks for all. As such, minor positive effects are expected in relation to SA objectives 1 (Climate change), 6 (Economy) and 12 (Minerals).

6.13 It is possible that the delivery of new infrastructure could have negative effects on the environmental SA objectives, e.g. SA objectives 13 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), 14 (Historic Environment) and 15 (Landscape); however this is uncertain until the precise location and nature of any such infrastructure is known.

Growth Types

6.14 Table 6.2 presents the SA findings for the seven potential growth types identified in the SW Hertfordshire JSP Regulation 18 Issues and Options document. These are broad and conceptual development types and not linked to an overall spatial scenario at this stage:

- a. **Growth within existing large settlements** – a continued focus on the existing city, towns and large villages, through a combination of more dense development than traditionally seen in SW Herts and maximising redevelopment opportunities.
- b. **Outward growth of existing large settlements** – the outward growth of existing city, towns and large villages through urban extensions.
- c. **New settlements** – the creation of completely new communities. These would need to be large enough to ensure they can provide key local facilities.
- d. **Growth of groups of settlements** – expanding the size of a number of existing communities which are located near to one another. These would need to be large enough in total to ensure they can provide key local facilities.
- e. **Growth along sustainable transport corridors** – locating growth where there is potential to create new connected and improved public transport corridors, particularly those running east-west through the area.
- f. **Growing the best-connected places** – a focus on areas that already have, or have the potential for, good access to railway stations, high frequency bus routes, high quality cycle routes and good pedestrian accessibility.
- g. **Scattered growth** – growth across the whole area, in all sizes of settlements, from large to small.

Table 6.2: SA findings for Growth Types

SA Objective	Growth Type a	Growth Type b	Growth Type c	Growth Type d	Growth Type e	Growth Type f	Growth Type g
SA1 – Climate change	++?	++?	-	-	++?	++?	+/-?
SA2 - Housing	++?	++?	++?	++?	++?	++?	++?
SA3 - Health	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
SA4 - Inequalities	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
SA5 - Communities	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
SA6 - Economy	++	++	+?	+?	++	++	+/-
SA7 - Travel	++?	++	-	-	++	++	+/-?
SA8 - Pollution	-?	-?	-	-	-?	-?	+/-?
SA9 - Water	-	-	-	-	-	-	--?
SA10 - Flooding	-	-	-	-	-	-	--?
SA11 - Soils	+/-?	+/-?	--?	--?	+/-?	+/-?	--?
SA12 - Minerals	0?	0?	0?	0?	0?	0?	0?
SA13 - Biodiversity	-	-	--?	--?	-	-	--?
SA14 - Historic Environment	-	-	-	-	-	-	--?
SA15 - Landscape	-	-	-	-	-	-	--?

6.15 There is limited variation between the likely effects identified for Growth Types a, b, e and f as they all would result in some or all new development being either within or close to existing towns and cities, along sustainable transport corridors and/or around strategic transport hubs, which means all would offer more alternatives to private vehicle use including more active travel modes, and generally better access to jobs, services and facilities. Growth Types c, d and g are likely to have the most potential negative effects because they may result in more new growth across the more rural areas of the area, where environmental assets are more likely to be adversely affected and where accessibility may be less good and levels of car use higher.

6.16 For the purposes of this initial appraisal it is assumed that the same scale of growth would occur under each growth type. However, as the Issues and Options document explains, it is likely that a number of growth types would ultimately make up the spatial strategy for the plan. Given that the overall scale of growth to be planned for has yet to be determined and will be established later in the plan making process, all growth types have been identified as having potential but uncertain significant positive effects on SA objective 2 (Housing) at this stage. Although all growth types have the potential to deliver a significant number of new homes, their affordability is unknown. The same general assumption has been made with regards to the provision of employment land; however the spatial pattern of existing employment opportunities has offered greater scope to draw out variations in likely effects of the growth types to SA objective 6 (Economy), which are described in more detail below.

6.17 Growth Types a, b, e and f are considered likely to have similar effects across all the SA objectives, because concentrating development in and around existing settlements and areas of good public transport connectivity is assumed to mean that development would be located mostly within SW Hertfordshire's existing towns and cities. These growth types would all have significant positive effects in relation to SA objective 6 (Economy) because development would take place in areas where there are already employment and educational facilities, allowing economic clusters to form and providing access to local employment opportunities. Employment opportunities could be more easily accessed by walking, cycling and public transport, potentially resulting in '20 minute neighbourhoods', in part because development would be intensified in

existing urban areas, resulting in significant positive effects on SA objective 7 (Travel). Minor positive effects are expected for SA objective 11 (Soils) because development within existing settlements could result in the use of brownfield land thereby minimising the loss of greenfield land, particularly land which is in agricultural use. However, this is uncertain at this stage.

6.18 Denser development in urban areas and/or around sustainable transport nodes would make district heating easier and use less energy per dwelling than lower density communities. This, combined with the reduced need to travel, would likely result in significant positive effects from Growth Types a, b, e and f on SA objective 1 (climate change). It is uncertain whether a range of services, facilities and infrastructure would be developed alongside new housing under these Growth Types, therefore uncertainty is attached to the likely effects on SA objectives 1 (climate change), 7 (travel) and 8 (pollution) as the use of private vehicles may still be needed, particularly in the early stages of development. Minor negative effects are expected from these Growth Types in relation to SA objective 8 (pollution) as there are currently 17 Air Quality Management Areas within SW Hertfordshire, many of which lie within existing settlements; therefore focussing new development in these areas would place more people in close proximity to these air quality issues, and potentially exacerbate them as a result of new traffic generation, including from HGVs in the short to medium term during the construction phase.

6.19 Growth Types a, b, e and f would have mixed minor positive and negative effects on SA objectives 3 (Health), 4 (Inequalities) and 5 (Communities). Existing towns and cities tend to have the highest concentration of existing healthcare facilities which could be accessed by new residents; however concentrating new development in those areas could also place existing facilities under increased pressure and would miss opportunities to potentially stimulate improved services in more rural areas. Existing residents are likely to feel negative impacts from a large increase in population, although new residents are likely to benefit from the existing services (e.g., leisure and retail facilities).

Although Growth Type e in particular may result in the development of greenfield land along existing transport corridors, Growth Types a, b, e and f are

all based on a principle of maximising development in and around existing centres. This has the potential to help minimise negative effects on biodiversity assets and achieve the more efficient use of land. However, Growth Type b in particular is still likely to result in large urban extensions at existing settlements, resulting in the loss of greenfield land. Furthermore, the densification of existing centres could result in fewer green spaces in and around urban areas, with associated losses of biodiversity. Therefore, a minor negative effect is expected for SA objective 13 (Biodiversity). Minor negative effects are also expected on SA objectives 9 (water), 10 (Flooding), 11 (Soils), 14 (Heritage) and 15 (Landscape) because some key existing settlements such as Watford are mostly in/near the floodplain therefore additional development in those areas could increase the risk of flooding. Additionally, existing settlements tend to have a higher number of designated heritage assets and attractive and distinctive townscapes, which would be affected by significant quantities of new development.

6.20 Growth Types d and g are considered likely to have broadly similar effects across the SA objectives as they would involve more dispersed growth across the area. The expansion of existing settlements could lead to the creation of new service centres able to support new healthy and vibrant communities, but it is likely that, at least in the short term, additional residents could put pressure on existing services and facilities. Therefore, mixed minor positive and minor negative effects are recorded against SA objectives 3 (Health), 4 (Inequalities) and 5 (Communities).

6.21 Growth Types d and g could result in growth within the rural areas of SW Hertfordshire away from the main service centres. As such, it is likely these Growth Types will utilise more greenfield land for development compared to the other Growth Types, resulting in less efficient use of land and greater potential for the loss of habitats. In addition, there are many Local Wildlife Sites, patches of Ancient Woodland, Local Nature Reserves and SSSIs that could be adversely impacted by development in the rural areas of the area, resulting in the potential for significant negative effects on SA objectives 11 (soils) and 13 (biodiversity). However, uncertainty is attached to the effects of Growth Type g because development could be directed to larger existing settlements which

could provide opportunities for the development of brownfield land over greenfield land.

6.22 Although new service centres would be created in new settlements and growth of groups of settlements, they are unlikely to be of a scale to be able to support significant new and improved local service centres of a scale needed for the level of growth likely to be required in the area, resulting in the need for more commuting to larger centres in existing and larger settlements. Growth Types d and g would therefore likely increase greenhouse gas emissions, traffic congestion and use of the private car resulting in minor negative effects on SA objectives 1 (climate change), 7 (travel), and 8 (pollution). However, uncertainty is attached to the effects of Growth Type g as development could be directed to larger existing settlements which are likely to be in closer proximity to sustainable methods of transport.

6.23 Additional development throughout the area including within the rural areas could result in more rural infrastructure which would open up new opportunities within the rural economy and encourage residents to stay within the rural areas for work, resulting in minor positive effects in relation to SA objective 6 (economy). For example, there is potential for an innovative rural economy with regard to farming practices in response to climate change and policy changes, as well as more home working. However, the long-term viability and capacity of these practices is currently uncertain.

6.24 With the potential greater loss of open countryside resulting from Growth Types d and g, development could result in the loss of permeable land thereby increasing the risk of flooding. Development could also result in the deterioration of the water supply. As such, minor negative effects are expected on SA objectives 9 (water) and 10 (flooding). Although the density of development outside of the main settlements would likely be lower, it would have to be more dispersed across SW Hertfordshire, which could potentially affect the setting and special character of the area's historic and landscape character. Therefore, minor negative effects on SA objectives 14 (historic environment) and 15 (landscape) are expected. However, uncertainty is attached to Growth Type g as development could be directed to larger existing

settlements and therefore could have less of a negative impact on the landscape.

6.25 Growth Type c would involve creating new settlements within the area which would provide key local facilities alongside housing. As such, the new settlements could promote the cohesion of new communities through provision of social infrastructure and could provide communities in surrounding areas with additional services and facilities. Therefore, minor positive effects are expected in relation to SA objectives 3 (Health), 4 (Inequalities) and 5 (communities). However, the additional social infrastructure that will be provided by new settlements may not provide easy access for existing residents and could be quite remote from existing service centres, introducing a risk that some new communities become commuter suburbs, acting as dormitories for local workers. In addition, new settlements can take a long time to deliver, which means that additional infrastructure may not be provided in the early years of the plan period but only once the settlement reaches a size large enough to support them. As such, minor negative effects are also expected in relation to SA objectives 3 (Health), 4 (Inequalities) and 5 (communities).

6.26 In addition to social infrastructure, new settlements are likely to provide additional local job opportunities, however it may take some time to attract businesses to invest in new settlements. Therefore, mixed minor positive and negative effects are expected in relation to SA objective 6 (economy). Mixed effects are also expected in relation to SA objectives 1 (climate change), 7 (travel) and 8 (pollution) as new settlements would provide services and facilities on site; however this may not be the case in the short term, so increased use of the private car is likely, thereby increasing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. New settlements could be masterplanned and sensitively planned to reduce the need for travel through good site layout and the creation of '20-minute neighbourhoods'; however the design and layout is unknown at this stage.

6.27 Similar to Growth Types d and g, Growth Type c is likely to utilise more greenfield land for new settlements compared to the other Growth Types, resulting in less efficient use of land and greater potential for the loss of habitats. Additionally, the conversion of greenfield land to impermeable surfaces

through development could increase the risk of flooding within the area. Therefore, under the precautionary principle, uncertain significant negative effects are identified in relation to SA objectives 10 (flooding), 11 (soils), 13 (biodiversity), 14 (heritage) and 15 (landscape).

6.28 All of the Growth Types are considered to have likely negligible effects on SA objective 12 (minerals) on the assumption that safeguarded minerals within allocated areas would be recovered before development occurred.

6.29 These growth types will be reassessed within future SA reports when it is clear how they will be configured as part of the overall growth/spatial strategy for SW Hertfordshire.

Chapter 7

Next Steps

7.1 In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the views of the three statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) are being sought in relation to the scope and level of detail to be included in the SA Report. In particular, consultees are in particular requested to consider whether:

- The scope of the SA is appropriate considering the role and priorities of the SW Herts JSP.
- The plans, policies or programmes referenced comprehensively cover those relevant to the SA of the SW Herts JSP.
- The baseline information provided is robust and comprehensive and provides a suitable baseline for the SA of the SW Herts JSP.
- All known significant sustainability issues of relevance to SW Herts and the JSP have been accurately represented.
- The defined SA framework is fit for purpose and includes a suitable set of SA objectives for assessing the effects of the SW Herts JSP and reasonable alternatives.

7.2 Responses from all consultees (both statutory and non-statutory) will be reviewed and appropriate amendments made to the Scoping Report, including to the baseline, policy context and SA framework where necessary. This may be addressed during the preparation of the first iteration of the full SA report.

Appendix A

Review of Relevant International and National Plans and Programmes

Population, health and wellbeing

International

A.1 The United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development

(Johannesburg Declaration) (2002) sets the broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

A.2 United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the 'Aarhus Convention') (1998):

Establishes a number of rights of the public (individuals and their associations) with regard to the environment. The Parties to the Convention are required to make the necessary provisions so that public authorities (at national, regional or local level) will contribute to these rights to become effective.

A.3 Other topic based international policies relating to human health and wellbeing are described under the relevant topics below:

National

A.4 The NPPF includes as part of its social objective the promotion of “strong, vibrant and healthy communities” by:

- *“ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and*
- *by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural wellbeing.”*

A.5 Ultimately planning policies and planning decision making should “*aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places*”.

A.6 The document states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for: housing (including affordable housing) ... *[as well as] community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure).*” Policies should reflect “*the size, type and tenure of housing needed*”. This policy approach is to include but should not be limited to housing requirements relating to affordable homes, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, those who rent their homes and people wishing to commission the construction of their own homes. Major developments that involve the provision of new housing planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be delivered for affordable home ownership subject to conditions and exemptions.

A.7 To help to diversify opportunities for builders, promote the development of a good mix of sites, local planning authorities should identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved.

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A.8 Where there is an identified need, development of sites not already allocated for housing to provide entry-level homes suitable for first-time buyers is to be supported by local planning authorities unless such need is already to be met at other locations within the authority area. These sites should comprise of entry-level homes that offer one or more types of affordable housing.

A.9 The document also promotes a theme of enhancing healthy and safe communities which is to be achieved by creating places which *“promote social interaction (and) enable and support healthy lifestyles.”*

A.10 To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should :

- plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
- take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;
- guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
- ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

A.11 Plan making through the guidance of the NPPF recognises the important role of access to open spaces and other facilities which provide opportunities for sport and physical activity has in terms of health and wellbeing of communities. The importance of delivering a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities is also recognised in the document and

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local planning authorities should take a *“proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement”*.

A.12 The **NPPF** also sets out that the standard method provided in national planning guidance should be used to undertake a local housing need assessment identifying the minimum number of homes needed. **The Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book [See reference 109]** provides this standard method allowing for calculation of objectively assessed housing need using government household forecasts adjusted for local house prices and local earnings. Unmet need from neighbouring areas will also need to be taken into account as part of the calculation.

A.13 National Design Guide [See reference 110] : sets out the Government’s priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

A.14 Fair Society, Healthy Lives [See reference 111] investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is “overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities”.

A.15 Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report Ready for Ageing? [See reference 112]: warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report states “longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises”. The report highlights the under provision of specialist housing for older people and the need to plan for the housing needs of the older population as well as younger people.

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A.16 Laying the foundations: a housing strategy for England [See reference 113] : Aims to provide support to deliver new homes and improve social mobility.

A.17 Homes England Strategic Plan 2018 to 2023 [See reference 114] : Sets out a vision to ensure more homes are built in areas of greatest need, to improve affordability, and make a more resilient and diverse housing market.

A.18 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites [See reference 115] sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

A.19 Planning for the Future White Paper [See reference 116]: Sets out a series of potential reforms to the English planning system, to deliver growth faster. The White Paper focuses on the following:

- Simplifying the role of Local Plans and the process of producing them.
- Digitising plan-making and development management processes.
- Focus on design, sustainability and infrastructure delivery.
- Nationally determined, binding housing requirements for local planning authorities to deliver through Local Plans.

A.20 The Housing White Paper 2017 (Fixing our broken housing market) [See reference 117]: sets out ways to address the shortfall in affordable homes and boost housing supply. The White Paper focuses on the following:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places – Higher densities in appropriate areas, protecting the Green Belt while making more land available for housing by maximising the contribution from brownfield and surplus public land, regenerating estates, releasing more small and medium-sized sites, allowing rural communities to grow and making it easier to build new settlements.

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- Building homes faster – Improved speed of planning cases, ensuring infrastructure is provided and supporting developers to build out more quickly.
- Diversifying the Market – Backing small and medium-sized house builders, custom-build, institutional investors, new contractors, housing associations.
- Helping people now – supporting home ownership and providing affordable housing for all types of people, including the most vulnerable.

A.21 Public Health England, PHE Strategy 2020-25 [See reference 118] : identifies PHE’s priorities upon which to focus over this five-year period to protect people and help people to live longer in good health.

A.22 Healthy Lives, Healthy People [See reference 119]: Our strategy for public health in England : Sets out how our approach to public health challenges will:

- Protect the population from health threats – led by central government, with a strong system to the frontline.
- Empower local leadership and encourage wide responsibility across society to improve everyone’s health and wellbeing, and tackle the wider factors that influence it.
- Focus on key outcomes, doing what works to deliver them, with transparency of outcomes to enable accountability through a proposed new public health outcomes framework.
- Reflect the Government’s core values of freedom, fairness and responsibility by strengthening self-esteem, confidence and personal responsibility; positively promoting healthy behaviours and lifestyles; and adapting the environment to make healthy choices easier.
- Balance the freedoms of individuals and organisations with the need to avoid harm to others, use a ‘ladder’ of interventions to determine the least intrusive approach necessary to achieve the desired effect and aim to make voluntary approaches work before resorting to regulation.

A.23 The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out goals for improving the environment over the next 25 years. It details how the Government will work with communities and businesses to leave the environment in a better state than it is presently. The document identifies six key areas upon which action will be focused. Those of relevance to the topics of population growth, health and wellbeing are using and managing land sustainably; and connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing.

Economy

International and National

A.24 There are no specific international economic policy agreements relevant to the preparation of the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan, although there are a large number of trading agreements, regulations and standards that set down the basis of trade within the European Union (subject to changes post-Brexit) and with other nations.

A.25 The **NPPF** contains an economic objective to *“help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.”*

A.26 It also requires that planning seeks to *“create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt”* with policies required to *“set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth”*. Policies addressing the economy should also seek *“to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment.”*

A.27 Of particular relevance to South West Hertfordshire is the requirement for planning policies to *“recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of*

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knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.”

A.28 Planning policies are also required specifically to address support for the rural economy. Sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas should be supported, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings, while the diversification of the rural economy and promotion of sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments is also supported.

A.29 The **NPPF** also supports the role of town centres as functioning at the heart of local communities. This support is required to provide for a *“positive approach to [town centres’] growth, management and adaptation.”* Included within this support is a requirement to *“allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development needed, looking at least ten years ahead.”*

A.30 **The Local Growth White Paper (2010)** [See reference 120] highlights the importance of economic policy that focusses on the delivery of strong, sustainable and balanced growth of income and employment over the long-term, growth which is broad-based industrially and geographically to provide equality of access and opportunity and build businesses that are competitive internationally.

A.31 **Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth** [See reference 121]: Sets out a plan to ‘build back better’ tackling long-term problems to deliver growth that delivers high-quality jobs across the UK while supporting the transition to net zero. This will build on three core pillars of growth: infrastructure, skills and innovation.

A.32 **The Ten Point Plan for Green Industrial Revolution** [See reference 122] outlines the national strategy for accelerating the UK’s transition to a net zero carbon economy. A key theme running through the document is the opportunity to ‘build back better’ through investing in strategies to mitigate and

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adapt to climate change. The Government has committed to investing a total of £12 billion in various programmes and estimates this will leverage up to £36 billion of private investment and create up to 250,000 new 'green' jobs by 2030.

A.33 The Agriculture Act 2020 [See reference 123] sets out a framework for the Government to establish new regulations for farming in the UK following Brexit. These include: financial assistance, multi-annual support and reporting programmes, food security, fair dealing in the supply chain and the reform of agricultural tenancies.

A.34 Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 [See reference 124] aims to achieve a renewed agricultural sector where farms are profitable and economically sustainable and where farming contributes to environmental goals such as addressing climate change.

A.35 National Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016-2021) [See reference 125] sets out the government's plans for economic infrastructure over a five year period with those to support delivery of housing and social infrastructure.

A.36 UK Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future (2018) [See reference 126] lays down a vision and foundations for a transformed economy. Areas including: artificial intelligence and big data; clean growth; the future of mobility; and meeting the needs of an ageing society are identified as the four 'Grand Challenges' of the future.

Transport

International

A.35 The Trans-European Networks (TEN) was created by the European Union by Articles 154-156 of the Treaty of Rome (1957), with the stated goals of the creation of an internal market and the reinforcement of economic and social cohesion. These include the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T), which includes High Speed 1, and the Trans-European Telecommunications Networks (eTEN).

National

A.36 The **NPPF** requires that *“transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making”*. The scale, location and density of development should reflect *“opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure”*. To help reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health the planning system should focus significant development *“on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.”*

A.37 The framework also requires that planning policies support an appropriate mix of uses across an area to further help reduce the need to travel as well as the provision of high quality walking and cycling network. While the framework promotes the use and development of sustainable transport networks it also requires that *“where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development”* should be identified and protected.

A.38 The Road to Zero [See reference 127] sets out new measures towards cleaner road transport, aiming to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles. It explains how cleaner air, a better

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environment, zero emission vehicles and a strong, clean economy will be achieved. One of the main aims of the document is for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040.

A.39 Transport Investment Strategy [See reference 128]: Sets out the four objectives that the strategy aims to achieve:

- Create a more reliable, less congested, and better connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it.
- Build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities.
- Enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

A.40 Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration [See reference 129] : Focuses on four core areas which need to be addressed so that people can be confident in choosing greener modes of transport. There are as follows:

- Accurate, accessible and reliable information about different transport options.
- Convenient and affordable tickets.
- Regular and straightforward connections at all stages of the journey and between different modes of transport.
- Safe and comfortable transport facilities.

A.41 The strategy also includes details on how the Government is using behavioural change methods to reduce or remove barriers to the use of sustainable transport and working closely with stakeholders to deliver a better-connected transport system.

A.42 Department for Transport, Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020) [See reference 130] sets out the strategic priorities for a new Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), to be published later in 2020, will set out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. This document acknowledges that while there have been recently published strategies [See reference 131] to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in individual transport modes, transport as a whole sector needs to go further and more quickly, therefore the TDP will take a coordinated, cross-modal approach to deliver the transport sector's contribution to both carbon budgets and net zero.

A.43 Department for Transport, Decarbonising: A Better, Greener Britain [See reference 132] sets out the government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It includes:

- the pathway to net zero transport in the UK.
- the wider benefits net zero transport can deliver.
- the principles that underpin our approach to delivering net zero transport.

A.44 The plan follows on from Decarbonising transport: setting the challenge, published in March 2020, which laid out the scale of additional reductions needed to deliver transport's contribution to legally binding carbon budgets and delivering net zero by 2050. This plan takes into account the changes in transport demand following the pandemic.

Air, land, and water quality

National

A.45 The **NPPF** states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued soil and the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Policies should also prevent new and existing development from *“contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution.”*

A.46 The document also requires that strategic policies should seek to make the most effective use of land in meeting local requirements making as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land. Furthermore policies should *“support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land”*.

A.47 Environmental Protection Act 1990 [See reference 133]: makes provision for the improved control of pollution to the air, water and land by regulating the management of waste and the control of emissions. Seeks to ensure that decisions pertaining to the environment are made in an integrated manner, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, non-governmental organisations and other persons.

A.48 Building Regulations [See reference 134]: requires that reasonable precautions are taken to avoid risks to health and safety cause by contaminants in ground to be covered by building and associated ground.

A.49 National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) [See reference 135]: Key planning objectives are identified within the NPPW, requiring planning authorities to:

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- Help deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy.
- Ensure waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns.
- Provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste.
- Help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment.
- Ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management.

A.50 The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations [See reference 136]

provides for the designation of land as nitrate vulnerable zones and imposes annual limits on the amount of nitrogen from organic manure that may be applied or spread in a holding in a nitrate vulnerable zone. The Regulations also specify the amount of nitrogen to be spread on a crop and how, where and when to spread nitrogen fertiliser, and how it should be stored. It also establishes closed periods during which the spreading of nitrogen fertiliser is prohibited.

A.51 The Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations [See reference 137]

protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water discharges and certain industrial sectors, notably domestic and industrial waste water. The regulations require the collection of waste water and specifies how different types of waste water should be treated, disposed and reused.

A.52 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations

[See reference 138] protect inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater, and outlines the associated river basin management process

A.53 The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations [See reference 139]

focus on the quality of water for drinking, washing, cooking and food

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preparation, and for food production. Their purpose is to protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring it is wholesome and clean.

A.54 The Environmental Permitting Regulations [See reference 140]

streamline the legislative system for industrial and waste installations into a single permitting structure for those activities which have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment. They set out how to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment and human health.

A.55 The Air Quality Standards Regulations [See reference 141] set out limits on concentrations of outdoor air pollutants that impact public health, most notably particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). It also sets out the procedure and requirements for the designation of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

A.56 The Environmental Noise Regulations [See reference 142] apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at work places; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

A.57 The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations [See reference 143] amend a range of legislation to prevent waste generation and to monitor and assess the implementation of measures included in waste prevention programmes. They set out requirements to justify not separating waste streams close to source for re-use, recycling or other recovery

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operations, prohibit incineration and landfilling of waste unless such treatment process represent the best environmental outcome in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The Regulations set out when waste management plans and in waste prevention programmes are required. The Regulations focus on the circular economy as a means for businesses to maximise the value of waste and waste treatment.

A.58 Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England [See reference 144]

sets out how England's soils will be managed sustainably. It highlights those areas which Defra will prioritise and focus attention in tackling degradation threats, including: better protection for agricultural soils; protecting and enhancing stores of soil carbon; building the resilience of soils to a changing climate; preventing soil pollution; effective soil protection during construction and; dealing with contaminated land.

A.59 The Water White Paper [See reference 145] provides out the Government's vision for the water sector including proposals on protecting water resources and reforming the water supply industry. It outlines the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

A.60 National Policy Statement for Waste Water [See reference 146]: sets out Government policy for the provision of major waste water infrastructure. The policy set out in this NPS is, for the most part, intended to make existing policy and practice in consenting nationally significant waste water infrastructure clearer and more transparent.

A.61 Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England [See reference 147] : Sets out how the Government wants the water sector to look by 2030, providing an outline of steps which need to be taken to get there. These steps include: improving the supply of water; agreeing on important new infrastructure such as reservoirs; proposals to time limit abstraction licences; and reducing leakage. The document also states that pollution to rivers will be tackled, whilst discharge from sewers will be reduced.

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A.62 The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland [See reference 148] sets out a way forward for work and planning on air quality issues by setting out the air quality standards and objectives to be achieved. It introduces a new policy framework for tackling fine particles, and identifies potential new national policy measures which modelling indicates could give further health benefits and move closer towards meeting the Strategy's objectives. The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Further improve air quality in the UK from today and long term.
- Provide benefits to health quality of life and the environment.

A.63 The Road to Zero [See reference 149] sets out new measures towards cleaner road transport, aiming to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles. It explains how cleaner air, a better environment, zero emission vehicles and a strong, clean economy will be achieved. One of the main aims of the document is for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040.

A.64 The UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations [See reference 150] provides the Government's ambition and actions for delivering a better environment and cleaner air, including £1 billion investment in ultra-low emission vehicles (ULESvs), a £290 million National Productivity Investment Fund, a £11 million Air Quality Grant Fund and £255 million Implementation Fund to help local authorities to prepare Air Quality Action Plans and improve air quality, an £89 million Green Bus Fund, £1.2 billion Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and £100 million to help improve air quality on the National road network.

A.65 Of the key areas in the **25 Year Environment Plan** around which action will be focused, those of relevance to the South West Hertfordshire in terms of the protection of air, land and water quality are: using and managing land sustainably; recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes; and increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste:

- Using and managing land sustainably:

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- Embed a 'net environmental gain' principle for development, including natural capital benefits to improved and water quality.
- Protect best agricultural land.
- Improve soil health, and restore and protect peatlands.
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes:
- Respect nature by using our water more sustainably.
- Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste.
- Reduce pollution by tackling air pollution in our Clean Air Strategy and reduce the impact of chemicals.

A.66 Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England (2018) [See [reference 151](#)] aims to increase resource productivity and eliminate avoidable waste by 2050. The Strategy sets out key targets which include: a 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020, a 75% recycling rate for packaging by 2030, 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035 and municipal waste to landfill 10% or less by 2035.

A.67 Clean Air Strategy 2019 [See [reference 152](#)]: This strategy sets out the comprehensive action that is required from across all parts of government and society to meet these goals. New legislation will create a stronger and more coherent framework for action to tackle air pollution. This will be underpinned by new England-wide powers to control major sources of air pollution, in line with the risk they pose to public health and the environment, plus new local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem. These will support the creation of Clean Air Zones to lower emissions from all sources of air pollution, backed up with clear enforcement mechanisms. The UK has set stringent targets to cut emissions 2030. The goal is to reduce the harm to human health from air pollution by half.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

International

A.68 United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015) is an international agreement to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

National

A.69 The Climate Change Act 2008 (amended 2019) [See reference 153] sets targets for UK greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 80% by 2050 and CO₂ emission reductions of at least 26% by 2015, against a 1990 baseline. An update to the act was made in 2019 which sets a new target for UK greenhouse gas emissions of 100% by 2050.

A.70 Planning and Energy Act (2008) [See reference 154]: enables local planning authorities to set requirements for carbon reduction and renewable energy provision. It should be noted that while the Housing Standards Review proposed to repeal some of these provisions, at the time of writing there have been no amendments to the Planning and Energy Act.

A.71 The **NPPF** contains as part of its environmental objective a requirement to mitigate and adapt to climate change, “*including moving to a low carbon economy*”. The document also states that the “*planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change.*” To achieve these aims new development should be planned to ensure appropriate adaptation measures are included (including green infrastructure) and should be designed, located and orientated as to help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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A.72 The revised framework also requires that development is directed away from areas which are at highest existing or future risk of flooding. Where development is required in such areas, the “*development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.*”

A.73 In relation to coastal change in England planning policies and decisions should take account of the UK Marine Policy Statement and marine plans. Furthermore, plans should “*reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbating the impacts of physical changes to the coast*”.

A.74 The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations [See reference 155] seek to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, reducing their carbon emissions and lessening the impact of climate change. The Regulations require the adoption of a standard methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance, reported through Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Certificates.

A.75 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy [See reference 156] describes out the ways in which we will tackle climate change by reducing our CO₂ emissions through the generation of a renewable electricity, heat and transport technologies.

A.76 The Energy Efficiency Strategy [See reference 157] aims to realise the wider energy efficiency potential that is available in the UK economy by maximising the potential of existing dwellings by implementing 21st century energy management initiatives on 19th century homes.

A.77 The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan: National Strategy for Climate and Energy [See reference 158] : sets out a five point plan to tackle climate change. The points are as follows: protecting the public from immediate risk, preparing for the future, limiting the severity of future climate change through a new international climate agreement, building a low carbon UK and supporting individuals, communities and businesses to play their part.

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A.78 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 [See reference 159]: sets out six priority areas needing urgent further action over the next five years.

These include:

- flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure,
- health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures,
- shortages in public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry with impacts on freshwater ecology,
- natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity,
- domestic and international food production and trade and
- new and emerging pests and diseases and invasive non-native species affecting people, plants and animals.

A.79 Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk [See reference 160]: published by the Committee on Climate Change as an independent assessment of the UK's climate risk. It will feed into the UK's third National Adaptation Programme when it is published later in 2022. As such it represents the latest thinking in terms of the level of risk that the UK faces in relation to climate change. One of the key findings of this report is that there is new evidence to suggest that the gap between the level of risk we face and the level of adaptation underway has widened since the publication of the previous National Adaptation Programme in 2018.

A.80 The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting [See reference 161] sets out visions for the following sectors:

- People and the Built Environment – “to promote the development of a healthy, equitable and resilient population, well placed to reduce the harmful health impacts of climate change...buildings and places (including built heritage) and the people who live and work in them are resilient and organisations in the built environment sector have an increased capacity to

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address the risks and make the most of the opportunities of a changing climate.”

- Infrastructure – “an infrastructure network that is resilient to today’s natural hazards and prepared for the future changing climate”.
- Natural Environment – “the natural environment, with diverse and healthy ecosystems, is resilient to climate change, able to accommodate change and valued for the adaptation services it provides.”
- Business and Industry – “UK businesses are resilient to extreme weather and prepared for future risks and opportunities from climate change.”
- Local Government – “Local government plays a central in leading and supporting local places to become more resilient to a range of future risks and to be prepared for the opportunities from a changing climate.”

A.81 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 [See reference 162] and The Flood and Water Regulations [See reference 163] sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes: incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

A.82 Understanding the risks, empowering communities, building resilience: The national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England [See reference 164] This Strategy sets out the national framework for managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. It sets out the roles for risk management authorities and communities to help them understand their responsibilities. The strategic aims and objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Manage the risk to people and their property.
- Facilitate decision-making and action at the appropriate level – individual, community or local authority, river catchment, coastal cell or national.
- Achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

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A.83 The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out policy priorities with respect to: responding to climate change are using and managing land sustainably; and protecting and improving our global environment. Actions that will be taken as part of these two key areas are as follows:

- Using and managing land sustainably:
- Take action to reduce the risk of harm from flooding and coastal erosion including greater use of natural flood management solutions.
- Protecting and improving our global environment:
- Provide international leadership and lead by example in tackling climate change and protecting and improving international biodiversity.

A.84 The Ten Point Plan for Green Industrial Revolution [See reference 165] outlines the national strategy for accelerating the UK's transition to a net zero carbon economy. A key theme running through the document is the opportunity to 'build back better' through investing in strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Government has committed to investing a total of £12 billion in various programmes and estimates this will leverage up to £36 billion of private investment and create up to 250,000 new 'green' jobs by 2030.

Biodiversity

International

A.83 International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) (1976) is an international agreement with the aim of conserving and managing the use of wetlands and their resources.

A.84 European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (1979) aims to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats, to

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increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to regulate the exploitation of those species (including migratory species).

A.85 International Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) is an international commitment to biodiversity conservation through national strategies and action plans.

A.86 United Nations Declaration on Forests (New York Declaration) (2014) sets out international commitment to cut natural forest loss by 2020 and end loss by 2030.

National

A.87 A requirement of the **NPPF's** environmental objective is that the planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural environment including helping to improve biodiversity, and using natural resources prudently. In support of this aim the framework states that Local Plans should “*identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks*” and should also “*promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.*”

A.88 The framework requires that plans should take a strategic approach in terms of “*maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries*”.

A.89 The Environment Act 2021 [See reference 166] introduces a requirement that all applications for the development of land will have to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain above the ecological baseline for the application site. The Act also introduces Local Nature Recovery Strategies which will guide the delivery of biodiversity net gain projects. The requirements of the Environment Act will come into force in 2023 following a two-year transition

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period to enable local planning authorities, developers and others to prepare for the proposed requirement.

A.90 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations [See reference 167] protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, including birds. The Regulations lay down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species, including how adverse effects on such habitats and species should be avoided, minimised and reported.

A.91 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 [See reference 168] places a duty on public bodies to conserve biodiversity.

A.92 England Biodiversity Strategy Climate Change Adaptation Principles [See reference 169] : sets out principles to guide adaptation to climate change. The principles are: take practical action now, maintain and increase ecological resilience, accommodate change, integrate action across all sectors and develop knowledge and plan strategically. The precautionary principle underpin all of these.

A.93 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services [See reference 170] guides conservation efforts in England up to 2020 by requiring a national halt to biodiversity loss, supporting healthy ecosystems and establishing ecological networks. The Strategy includes 22 priorities which include actions for the following sectors: Agriculture, Forestry, Planning & Development, Water Management, Marine Management, Fisheries, Air Pollution and Invasive Non-Native Species.

A.94 Biodiversity Offsetting in England Green Paper [See reference 171] sets out a framework for offsetting. Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to compensate for residual losses.

A.95 The key areas of the **25 Year Environment Plan** of relevance in terms of the protection and promotion of biodiversity are recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes; securing clean, productive and biologically

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diverse seas and oceans; and protecting and improving our global environment. Actions that will be taken as part of these three key areas are as follows:

- Develop a Nature Recovery Network to protect and restore wildlife, and provide opportunities to re-introduce species that have been lost from the countryside.
- Achieve a good environmental status of the UK's seas while allowing marine industries to thrive, and complete our economically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas.
- Provide international leadership and lead by example in tackling climate change and protecting and improving international biodiversity.
- Support and protect international forests and sustainable agriculture.

Heritage

International

A.95 United Nations (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention (1972) :

promotes co-operation among nations to protect heritage around the world that is of such outstanding universal value that its conservation is important for current and future generations.

A.96 European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985): defines 'architectural heritage' and requires that the signatories maintain an inventory of it and take statutory measures to ensure its protection. Conservation policies are also required to be integrated into planning systems and other spheres of government influence as per the text of the convention.

A.97 Valletta Treaty, formerly the European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (1992): agreed that the conservation and enhancement of an archaeological heritage is one of the goals of urban and

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regional planning policy. It is concerned in particular with the need for co-operation between archaeologists and planners to ensure optimum conservation of archaeological heritage.

National

A.98 Of relevance to the approach of the planning system to the historic environment the **NPPF** contains an environmental objective to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the built and historic environment. The document also sets out a strategy to seek “*the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay and other threats.*” Such a strategy is required to take into consideration the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and bringing them into viable use.

A.99 It should also be considerate of the wider benefits of conserving the historic environment, the contribution new development can make in terms of character and distinctiveness and the opportunity for the historic environment to contribute to this character and distinctiveness. Local authorities should also maintain or have access to a historic environment record which is to be supported by up to date evidence.

A.100 Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 [See reference 172] : a law passed by the UK government to protect the archaeological heritage of England & Wales and Scotland. Under this Act, the Secretary of State has a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of ancient monuments of national importance, in order to help preserve them. It also creates criminal offences for unauthorised works to, or damage of, these monuments.

A.101 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [See reference 173] : An Act of Parliament that changed the laws for granting of planning permission for building works, with a particular focus on listed buildings and conservation areas.

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A.102 Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 [See reference 174] : An Act of Parliament that makes provision for the compilation of a register of gardens and other land (parks and gardens, and battlefields).

A.103 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England [See reference 175] sets out the Government's vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. It includes reference to promoting the role of the historic environment within the Government's response to climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda.

A.104 The Heritage Statement [See reference 176] describes out how the Government will support the heritage sector and help it to protect and care for our heritage and historic environment, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.

A.105 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, Historic England Advice Note 8 [See reference 177] : Sets out Historic England's guidance and expectations for the consideration and appraisal of effects on the historic environment as part of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

Landscape

International

A.106 The European Landscape Convention (2002) : promotes landscape protection, management and planning. The Convention is aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes and raising awareness of the value of a living landscape.

National

A.107 The South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan will be required to have consideration for the conservation and enhancement of landscape character in the District. The **NPPF** includes as part of its approach to protecting the natural environment, recognition for the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits to be secured from natural capital. Importantly, great weight is to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A.108 As part of the approach to achieving well-designed places the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments “*are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.*”

A.109 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 [See reference 178] : An Act of Parliament to make provision for National Parks and the establishment of a National Parks Commission; to confer on the Nature Conservancy and local authorities powers for the establishment and maintenance of nature reserves; to make further provision for the recording, creation, maintenance and improvement of public paths and for securing access to open country.

A.110 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2010 [See reference 179] : An Act of Parliament to make new provision for public access to the countryside.

A.111 England National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 [See reference 180]: provides updated policy guidance on the English National Parks and Broads. It also sets out a vision for 2030 and the key outcomes the Government is seeking over the next five years to ensure early progress towards the vision.

A.112 The key area in the **25 Year Environment Plan** of relevance in terms of the conservation and enhancement of landscape character is recovering nature

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and enhancing the beauty of landscapes. Actions that will be taken as part of this key area are as follows:

- Working with AONB authorities to deliver environmental enhancements.
- Identifying opportunities for environmental enhancement of all England's Natural Character Areas, and monitoring indicators of landscape character and quality.

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Report produced by LUC

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Bristol

12th Floor, Beacon Tower, Colston Street, Bristol BS1 4XE
0117 929 1997
bristol@landuse.co.uk

Edinburgh

Atholl Exchange, 6 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG
0131 202 1616
edinburgh@landuse.co.uk

Glasgow

37 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JJ
0141 334 9595
glasgow@landuse.co.uk

London

250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD
020 7383 5784
london@landuse.co.uk

Manchester

6th Floor, 55 King Street, Manchester M2 4LQ
0161 537 5960
manchester@landuse.co.uk

landuse.co.uk

Landscape Design / Strategic Planning & Assessment
Development Planning / Urban Design & Masterplanning
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SW Herts JSP

Regulation 18: Issues and Options: Communications and Engagement Plan

Introduction

The purpose of this communications and engagement plan is to set out our suggested approach to cross authority engagement over the coming months to help develop and promote a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire.

A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out the broad approach to engagement has been prepared and consulted on and the team are currently reviewing comments. This plan is intended to provide more detail specifically in relation to the statutory Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation planned for August – September 2022.

To ensure a diverse response to engagement, there are two strands of work planned, the core engagement hosted via the dedicated SW Herts engagement website and the digital engagement work planned using the latest available engagement software as part of the secured PropTech fund. The PropTech fund work is intended to supplement the wider engagement and target a younger audience.

Background and Summary of Work to Date

1. The five local planning authorities within South West Herts (Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council, and Watford Borough Council) are working in collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council to develop a JSP, with the intention to proactively plan for growth up to and beyond 2050.
2. The JSP will be a formal statutory Development Plan Document, providing the overarching strategic planning framework for the five Local Planning Authority areas.
3. The JSP team recognises the importance of ensuring that the JSP is not developed in isolation and that in order to help smooth the path of its development, ultimately allowing it to be a successfully adopted planning document, early, diverse and meaningful engagement with the wider community and stakeholders is pivotal.

SW Herts, Your Future, Digital Engagement

4. To commence early engagement with the community, a widespread digital engagement exercise was undertaken between February and May 2020, asking residents across the 6 authorities about issues that were important to them. This resulted in 3,270 members of the community interacting and providing nearly 15,000 pieces of individual feedback. The community also provided over 2,000 pieces of 'free text' written feedback, in addition to the poll questions. The overall outcomes of the initial engagement have been written up in full, both from a qualitative and quantitative basis and includes:
 - An even spread of ages of respondents, from under 25's to over 65's;
 - A clear emerging consensus on community priorities;
 - A strong basis for ongoing engagement; and
 - Over 700 people willing to be engaged during the next stage of work.

SW Herts, Realising our Potential, Vision Workshops

5. Building on the success of the initial consultation exercise and to enable a draft vision for the JSP to be created, a series of workshops were undertaken during 2021 and early 2022 involving a youth group, council officers, local councillors, and key stakeholders. The workshops helped build a greater understanding of the opportunities and challenges currently facing the area, whilst anticipating changes and trends that may inform how we live, work, move, and play in the future.
6. The results of the workshops are available on the dedicated SW Herts engagement website www.swhertsplan.com and have informed the preparation of a Vision report. This vision will form the basis of the first iteration of the JSP that we plan to consult on as part of the Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation from August – September 2022.

Aims and Objectives of the Regulation 18 Engagement

7. The aims of the ongoing engagement are to:
 - Build awareness, understanding and generate interest in the process, resulting in greater participation in the future; and
 - Inform the technical work, providing information related to priorities, issues and opportunities.

The objectives of the ongoing engagement are to:

1. Engage with young people and record their views on key issues;
2. Establish and expand a dialogue with key stakeholders to become actively involved in the development of the plan; and
3. Communicate the benefits of working together and the vision and objectives of the JSP to residents and businesses in SW Herts, through our own and paid channels and by enabling and empowering local authorities to promote and share digital resources on their channels

Engagement Next Steps: Regulation 18 Consultation

8. The table below outlines how it is intended to continue joint engagement at a strategic level to meet the aims and objectives. The table includes potential additional engagement that could be undertaken at a more local level for each authority to carry out directly.
9. Building insight and transparency into the process over time will support both the key stages of JSP work and promote the benefits of joint working. It will be important to grow the audience at each stage and evaluate ongoing success, alongside recording quantitative and qualitative findings to inform the work.
10. All work will be in line with the Statement of Community Involvement and reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis.
11. Proposed engagement activities are as follows:

SW Herts JSP

Regulation 18: Issues and Options: Communications and Engagement Plan

Stage	Area of work	Related Objective	Time scale	Suggested engagement activity
Preparation	JSP Programme support from communication officers	2	Now	Continue monthly communication officer meetings across the 6 authorities to coordinate engagement activity and consider how it can be built into existing workstreams. Embed JSP programme within wider communication plans for each authority. Map Local Plan timescales and other key events locally and regionally that may impact on the JSP Reg 18 engagement programme.
	Officers and members involved in JSP work	2	Now	Continue Council officer and member sessions (Strategic Planning Members Group, Steering Group and Strategic Planning Officers Group) to brief on JSP progress and upcoming engagement work.
	Wider officer and members	2	Now	Update members and officers not directly involved in JSP process through briefing notes or otherwise, to raise awareness and understanding. Consider extending this to statutory consultees.
	Youth Forum	1	Now	Establish Youth Forum meetings between April and September, with a view to undertaking 3 meetings, growing attendees each time. Agree overarching Terms of Reference, plus purpose and output for each meeting in advance, including asking the group to support the PropTech digital engagement exercise, given its emphasis on the 18-25 demographic.
	Website	3	Ongoing	Regularly update website based on above scope – key messaging, FAQs, timescales, ‘one pager’ etc. Track website traffic by webpage to see which areas are the most successful, and by geographic location if possible, to highlight any blind spots.
	Integration with wider collaborations	2	Ongoing	Update and integrate the Reg 18 engagement with wider workstreams, particularly those associated with collaboration (e.g. Hertfordshire Growth Board). Ensure through regular reviewing

				and communication that the engagement in relation to the JSP fits within any wider collaboration work to ensure consistency in messaging and approach.
Communications Protocol	3	April – May		Refresh communications protocols to ensure consistent messaging across the multiple authority areas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website and social media updates - Key messaging framework - Joint media protocol, including statement from Leaders once engagement goes live - Suite of document templates to support the engagement programme - Member briefings
FAQ	3.	April – May		Disseminate website FAQs amongst officers within each authority, including those not directly involved in the process to increase awareness, understanding and maximise opportunities. Update on rolling basis.
One pager	3.	April – May		Disseminate ‘one pager’ briefing note which serves as a public facing guide to the JSP including updating officers and members not directly involved in the process. The note would set out the benefits of the JSP, who is involved and how the work is developing with key next steps.
PropTech Fund	1.	April – May		Develop PropTech fund digital engagement exercise including marketing collateral and consultation questions Explore potential for social media ‘influencer’ to promote engagement process.
Meetings and networks	2	April – May		Map existing meeting network across the areas and consider attendance during summer months to promote consultation e.g., LEP meetings, relevant Parish Council meetings, Chamber of Commerce, heritage groups, environmental groups etc.
Database contacts	3	End May		District Councils to give everyone on their Local Plan consultation databases the option to ‘opt in’ to receive direct notification of the JSP engagement (in accordance with GDPR rules).
External press	1,2 &3	April - June		Agree approach to external press in relation committee cycle process and formal engagement launch. Options are

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No proactive media approach, but ensure we have 'if-asked' lines prepared to share with district/borough comms officers should they get media enquiries, mainly drawn from the FAQs on the JSP website - Proactive media approach, which would involve a template press release shared with district and borough comms teams, for them to issue after their individual council committee meeting, should it be approved that the plan can move forward for engagement.
	Toolbox	3	April – June	<p>Create 'toolbox' of engagement collateral to enable each authority to promote and directly undertake consultation at a local level, linked to meetings and networks above, initial ideas <i>for discussion</i> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QR codes on business cards for circulation including at stations/ high streets/ library's/council buildings etc. • Digital signage adverts in stations and/ or bus stops • Radio advert • Email bulletins • Existing e-newsletters and residents magazines. • JSP-branded social media for use on own channels, potentially with a view to paid-for promotion.
	Interactive content	2.	May – June	<p>Consider interactive content to build online presence in lead up to consultation stage – for example explanatory video from Youth Forum or others in relation to forthcoming consultation, to be hosted on the engagement website.</p>
During	Commence consultation	1,2 & 3	Aug – to run for 8 weeks	<p>Commence Formal Regulation 18 consultation in line with draft SCI, including notifying all relevant consultees in writing and placing hard copies of document and associated questionnaire in local libraries and deposit points as per requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost through individual council websites.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update JSP website to coincide with the start of the formal consultation. – to include launch of interactive consultation document, associated background information and initial explainer video including explanation in relation to JSP/ Local Plan relationship. • Encourage electronic engagement wherever possible. • Supply JSP-branded social media content to promote the start of the consultation period, and support district councils to update their social media channels. • Issue joint press release to launch JSP consultation, noting we are particularly keen to hear from young people. • Direct notification of contacts on JSP database – including those who responded to ‘Your Future’ engagement and those who have ‘opted in’ following contact from district Local Plan databases.
Continual review	1,2 &3	Aug – Sept	<p>Consider supporting engagement work to maximise response rate and ensure a diverse range of views are sought, for instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise virtual briefings and invite Parish Council representatives and members, one briefing per authority. • Encourage local stakeholders to use networks to notify people consultation is live • Contact (by email) existing networks including the 700 interested residents who said they would like to be involved as part of the earlier digital engagement exercise to complete the consultation. 	
Monitoring	3.	Aug – Sept	Measure and report on success with weekly monitoring of feedback by geographical position where possible	
	3.	Aug – Sept	Weekly monitoring of press and social media reach and engagement for paid-for posts. To be provided by comms teams via a secure, online, shared document, where possible.	

	Initiate Protech work	1.	Early Aug	Commence Built ID adverts with key questions linked to consultation, with a particular focus on engaging with the 18-25 demographic and other groups that tend not to take an interest in planning policy matters.
		1.	During August	Review build ID feedback on weekly basis
	Announce end of consultation	3.	Sept	Issue press release to mark the end of the consultation and highlight next steps, update social media channels & all references on websites. A template press release and messages will be provided by the JSP comms resource which each council comms team can adapt/use to their borough/district.
Post Consultation	Review and evaluate process	3.	Mid – Sept	<p>Commence review of feedback once consultation ends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure lessons learnt are recorded for PropTech fund write up. • Capture and evaluate user data to measure interaction including geographic and demographic analysis where possible, building on the 'Your Future' digital engagement in 2022 • Review results with Youth Forum group. • Update officers and Members. • Review how the results and engagement from this consultation can be used to build engagement and reach for the next stages of consultation in order to support JSP progression.

Evaluation and measuring success

We will be using simple mechanisms to capture and evaluate user data, which will include demographic and geographic distribution analysis.

The results for this second round of consultation on the South West Hertfordshire will look to build upon the results of the first 'Your Future' digital activity, which saw responses from an even spread of age ranges and across all five districts and boroughs.

We would expect some changes in the amount and richness of engagement.