

16. BUNTINGFORD

16.1 Introduction

16.1.1 Buntingford, with a population of approximately 5,000, is located astride Ermine Street, the old Roman Road, at a point where it crosses the River Rib. It is surrounded by open countryside.

16.1.2 The settlement is centred around a long, straight, narrow High Street, which has remained substantially unaltered over the last century and has many fine buildings dating back over 500 years.

16.1.3 The centre of Buntingford was substantially improved in the late 1980's by the opening of the A10 bypass and through a programme of enhancement works. This has created a more pleasant and inviting atmosphere for people living, visiting, and shopping in the town.

16.1.4 In respect of passenger transport, a limited local bus network exists from Buntingford to and from, Stevenage, Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Ware, Hitchin, Royston, Harlow, and villages surrounding Buntingford.

16.1.5 This chapter sets out the planning issues and policies specific to Buntingford. These will seek to retain the existing character of the settlement, whilst making provision for appropriate development to meet the needs of the foreseeable future. The aims and objectives of the Local Plan for Buntingford are as follows:

Aims

- A. To maintain and enhance Buntingford as a pleasant place in which to live, grow up, work, shop, and spend leisure time.
- B. To make appropriate provision for the necessary needs of the present and future generations, in a way which is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

Objectives

1. To ensure a sufficient supply of housing land is identified for Buntingford during the plan period, in accordance with the District Housing Provision Strategy, contained in Chapter 3 (Housing).
2. To ensure development meets the principles of sustainable development, as set out in Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (Sustainable Development) of this Local Plan.
3. To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the commercial centre, by encouraging a range of shops and services, and preventing erosion or dilution of its retail and service function.
4. To maintain and encourage employment opportunities for local people, by retaining sufficient employment land and designating Employment Areas for such purposes.
5. To protect and enhance the River Rib and encourage its use for nature conservation and other appropriate uses.

16.2 Settlement Limits

16.2.1 Buntingford lies within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. This policy designation covers approximately the northern two-thirds of the District's area.

16.2.2 The main development strategy of the Structure Plan is to concentrate and direct development to the main named settlements. In the case of East Hertfordshire these are the towns of Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Ware, and Sawbridgeworth. The Structure Plan allows for other settlements to be selected in Local Plans, within and beyond the Green Belt, where limited development may be appropriate to maintain the vitality of the area.

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16.2.3 Buntingford is identified as such a settlement (see Policy SD2 in Chapter 2 - Sustainable Development). The settlement limits of Buntingford have been defined in this Plan and are illustrated on the Proposals Map by the outer extent of the existing built up area of the town, plus a recognition of committed development and new allocations as part of this Plan Review. The boundary of the settlement has been drawn using, whenever possible, physical features existing on the ground, thus providing a clearly identifiable and defensible boundary.

16.2.4 The overriding planning objective of defining settlement limits is the prevention of urban sprawl and the coalescence with nearby settlements, and the protection of the settlement's special character.

16.3 Housing

16.3.1 Based on the Housing Provision Strategy, as detailed in Chapter 3 (Housing), Buntingford need to make provision for an additional 109 net dwellings, on sites of a size capable of accommodating five or more dwellings, between 1999 and 2011. These dwellings will cater for the

housing needs of the settlement and a proportion of the surrounding hinterland. It is expected that affordable housing will be provided in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4 of Chapter 3 (Housing).

16.3.2 Despite efforts to limit the amount of greenfield land take, the District Council found little scope within Buntingford for further housing to be accommodated on previously developed ('brownfield') sites or through urban regeneration. In order to provide sufficient land for housing, therefore, a small amount of greenfield land has been allocated for residential development. The release of these sites will be in accordance with Policy HSG1 in Chapter 3 (Housing).

16.3.3 Sites identified in the Deposit Version of the Local Plan, completed between April 1999 and March 2003, have been removed from Policy BUN1 and are detailed in Table 16.1 below.

16.3.4 The remaining Buntingford provision will come from the other allocated sites listed in Policy BUN1.

Table 16.1 Completed Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2 (b) in Chapter 3, Housing)

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
R/O 57 High Street	325	Brownfield	N/A	8	0	8
Adam & Eve Service Station	326	Brownfield/ Greenfield	N/A	14	0	14

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BUN1 Housing Allocations - Buntingford

In accordance with Policy HSG2 (II), the following sites (as identified on the Proposals Map) are allocated for residential development:

(I) In Phase 1:

Remaining Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2 (h) in Chapter 3 (Housing))

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Land East of Bowling Green Lane, West of the allotments	38	Greenfield	N/A	8	0	8
Park Farm Employment Area extension	64 Part	Brownfield/ Greenfield	BUN6	7	0	7
Land West of St Francis Close, London Road	85	Brownfield/ Greenfield	BUN2	18	12	30
			TOTAL	33	12	45

(II) In Phase 2:

Remaining Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2 (h) in Chapter 3 (Housing))

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Land Between London Road and A10 Bypass	82 Part	Greenfield	BUN3	31	21	52
			TOTAL	31	21	52

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16.4 Housing - Site Specific Proposals

16.4.1 Although the number of dwellings allocated to specific sites is given in Policy BUN1, there are certain sites which the District Council considers would benefit from specific policies, in order to guide future development and provide information for interested parties.

16.5 Land West of St Francis Close

16.5.1 It is proposed that the site be developed for residential purposes, including affordable housing, together with open space and tree planting. The development of the site is expected to be subject to a Development Brief, prepared or approved by the District Council to include the adjacent Site 82 (part). Although the sites are in different phases, it is in the interests of the proper planning of this area to ensure that the development of the two sites is co-ordinated as far as possible to ensure a satisfactory outcome in design terms. The Council will seek to ensure that the proposals for each site provide a complementary physical form and through the layout encourage movement throughout the sites.

BUN2 Land West of St Francis Close

Land west of St Francis Close, as defined on the Proposals Map, is to be developed for residential purposes, in accordance with Policies HSG2 and BUN1 and is expected to meet the following criteria:

- (a) provision of up to 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4;
- (b) provision of open space, co-ordinated with the adjacent Site 82 and possibly in conjunction with (g) below;
- (c) retention of as many of the mature trees as possible;
- (d) substantial tree planting to the west of the site to enhance existing screening;
- (e) careful consideration to the southern boundary of the site where it adjoins Site

82 to ensure a comprehensively planned and integrated development;

- (f) non-vehicular access should be provided to the footpath running on the former railway line;
- (g) the retention of a pre-school or similar operation within the site, though not necessarily in the same location as the existing operation.

16.6 Land between London Road and A10 bypass

16.6.1 It is proposed that the part of the site shown on the proposals map be developed for residential purposes, including affordable housing, together with open space and tree planting. The development of the site is expected to be subject to a Development Brief, prepared or approved by the District Council to include the adjacent Site 85.

16.6.2 Due to the fact that the site is greenfield land and is located to the south of Site 85, the District Council considers it should be released for development in Phase 2 of the Plan.

BUN3 Land between London Road and A10 bypass

- (I) Favourable consideration will be given to the development of land between London Road and A10 bypass, as defined on the Proposals Map, for residential purposes, in accordance with Policies HSG2 and BUN1.
- (II) The development of the site is expected to be in accordance with the following site-specific criteria:
 - (a) provision of up to 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4;
 - (b) provision of open space, co-ordinated with Site 85;
 - (c) retention of as many mature trees as possible, especially those to the west and south of the site;

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- (d) substantial tree planting to the west of the site, to enhance existing screening;
- (e) careful consideration of the boundary where it adjoins Site 85 to ensure a comprehensively planned and integrated development;
- (f) non-vehicular access should be provided to the footpath running on the former railway line;

16.7 Economic Development and Employment

16.7.1 The main designated Employment Areas in Buntingford are located as follows:

- (a) The Park Farm Industrial Estate to the north;
- (b) The Watermill Industrial Estate to the south-west;
- (c) The Former Sainsbury Distribution Depot to the south-east; and
- (d) The Former Sunnyside Nursery site to the west.

16.7.2 The District Council considers it important to retain and encourage local employment opportunities, where appropriate, as outlined in Chapter 6, (Economic Development and Employment). A re-evaluation of the previously designated Employment Areas has not resulted in amendments to the designated areas in this Plan review, other than an extension northwards of the Park Farm Industrial Estate. The Employment Land Study 2004 updated this evaluation and the recommendations of the Study have been incorporated into the Plan.

BUN4 Existing and new Employment Areas

In accordance with Policy EDE1 the Watermill Industrial Estate, the Former Sunnyside Nursery site and the site adjoining the former Sunnyside Nursery site, as defined on the Proposals Map, are reserved for industry comprising B1 Business and B2 General Industrial Uses.

BUN5 The Former Sainsbury Distribution Depot

In accordance with Policy EDE1, the Former Sainsbury Distribution Depot is primarily reserved for B8 Storage and Distribution Uses.

Proposals for the alternative use and/or development of the site will be considered against the recommendations of the latest Employment Land Study for East Hertfordshire.

In the event that the retention of the whole or part of the site for B8 Storage and Distribution Use has been explored fully without success evidence must be supplied to the satisfaction of the District Council to demonstrate this.

Any proposed alternative use and/or development of the site will be expected to be subject to a Development Brief prepared or approved by the District Council.

BUN6 Park Farm Industrial Estate

The Park Farm Industrial Estate is split into two areas, as defined on the Proposals Map. Proposals for development are expected to conform to the following guidance:

- (a) the larger area to the south and west is, in accordance with Policy EDE1, primarily reserved for industry comprising B1 Business and B2 General Industrial Uses;
- (b) the smaller area to the north-east, fronting Ermine Street, is reserved for live/work units. Careful planning and attention to detail is expected to prevent any cause for bad neighbour nuisances to arise. A condition and/or planning obligation is likely to be required to prevent the separation of the residential element from its employment element on this site;
- (c) improved or introduced landscaping features are expected on the northern edges of both parts of the site.

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16.7.3 In respect of the Watermill Industrial Estate, part of Aspenden Road approaching the site is narrow in width and poor in alignment. It is therefore considered that it would be detrimental to the safety of persons and vehicles using the road to allow further significant expansion of the site without improvements having been made to this access. The findings of the East Hertfordshire Employment Land Study 2004 confirmed this view.

BUN7 Watermill Industrial Estate - Improvement to Aspenden Road

No further planning permission for significant traffic generating developments will be granted on the Watermill Industrial Estate until improvement works have been carried out on Aspenden Road.

16.7.4 Where proposals arise for employment development outside identified Employment Areas, these will be appraised on their individual merits, taking into account sustainability criteria and the impact on neighbouring occupiers and the local area, as set out in Policy EDE3.

16.7.5 It is important that space is available for a variety of firms at different stages of their development, including new businesses. Within Buntingford there are a number of smaller sites that are not specifically designated for primarily employment purposes, but which would be suitable (and are used) for such purposes. Such sites can and do provide for a diversity of uses that should, wherever appropriate, be retained.

16.8 Settlement Centre/Environment

16.8.1 The environment of Buntingford has been considerably improved since the opening of the A10 bypass and the completion of town centre enhancements works in the late 1980's.

16.8.2 In order to generally preclude a dilution of the shopping functions in Buntingford and to add to the overall vitality and viability of the town, proposals for development or changes of use from shop (A1) to non-shop (non-A1) uses in the main commercial frontages as defined on the Proposals Map will be considered against Policy STC4.

16.8.3 As part of the Council's Economic Development Strategy, assistance has been given to the setting up of a Town Centre Management Board for Buntingford. Membership of the Board is drawn from representatives of the business community, residents, local interest groups and local authorities. The Town Centre Management Board works to help improve and promote Buntingford Town Centre. The District Council will continue to support the Buntingford Town Centre Management Board.

16.9 Leisure and Community Facilities

16.9.1 Chapter 10 (Leisure, Recreation and Community Facilities) includes policies regarding the retention, provision, and improvement of such facilities. The Review of the Local Plan provides the opportunity to address any shortfalls in leisure or community facilities in Buntingford that may already exist, or may arise, as a result of any new development.

16.9.2 Within Buntingford all sites of public or private, outdoor sports, recreation and open space facilities or school playing fields to be protected are shown on the Proposals Map. Any proposals for development that would result in the loss of these areas will be refused unless the proposed development complies with Policy LRC1.