

Settlement Appraisal

Ware

1. History

- 1.1 The Preferred Options District Plan proposed development of at least 32 new homes in Ware (which included 14 homes as part of mixed use development at the former Co-op Depot, Star Street within draft Policy WARE2), plus an element of windfall, with additional provision of between 200 and 3,000 homes to the North and East of Ware.

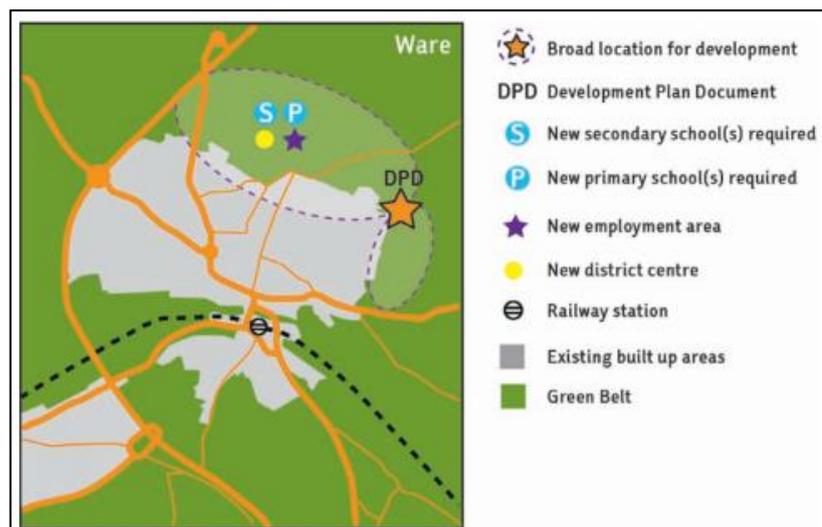


Figure 1: East Herts District Plan, Preferred Options, Ware Key Diagram

- 1.2 The [Supporting Document](#) to the Preferred Options District Plan records the various assessment stages that were undertaken as part of the process to inform the Preferred Options version of the Draft District Plan. It therefore provides an essential background to this current Settlement Appraisal. Chapter 4 of the Supporting Document explains the process of shortlisting or 'sieving' options applied to 'Areas of Search' and their initial findings. Chapter 5 details a further appraisal stage based on option refinement.
- 1.3 Chapter 6 draws together the findings of Chapters 4 and 5 for Ware and provides conclusions to issues considered at previous stages, discussing such matters as educational capacity at primary and secondary level, transport (including trip generation impact and the potential for introducing mitigation measures), other infrastructure such as waste water issues, and the potential deliverability of the development. The chapter then sets out the conclusions for the land to the North and East of Ware in terms of suitability to form part of the emerging District Plan, resulting in the above proposed sites being selected for the Preferred Options stage.

- 1.4 Chapter 6 further established that, for proposed development to the North and East of Ware, it would not be possible to define a specific level of development at that stage, as there was a level of uncertainty around key infrastructure provision and cumulative effects of potential development on the town.
- 1.5 Given the complexities of the site concerning the provision of infrastructure and what the (as-then unknown) effects of traffic impacts of development would be both on the local and wider road network, it was not possible at that time to define a specific level of development that would be appropriate in the location beyond 200 dwellings. However, subject to the results of further testing, there remained the potential for an upper limit of up to 3,000 dwellings to be established in due course.
- 1.6 Therefore, as it was not possible for an upper level to be defined at that point in time and as there was therefore no established site boundary, it was proposed that land to the North and East of Ware be identified as a Broad Location for Development in the Preferred Options District Plan to accommodate a range of between 200 and 3,000 new homes and supporting infrastructure in the Preferred Options consultation.
- 1.7 As a larger level development (if subsequently demonstrated to be acceptable) would need to be comprehensively masterplanned, this was a further consideration which resulted in the proposal that this development would be best accommodated through the preparation of a Development Planning Document (DPD) following the adoption of the District Plan. This Broad Location/DPD approach would set out the Council's intention to deliver development in the overall location within the Plan period commencing between 2021-26, but would enable further work to be undertaken to establish the final quantum of development, define Green Belt boundaries, infrastructure requirements and delivery.
- 1.8 This document now continues the narrative beyond Chapters 4 to 6 of the Supporting Document by detailing information and evidence which has emerged since the Preferred Options consultation.

2. Consultation Response – town-wide

- 2.1 The Preferred Options consultation elicited a significant response from members of the local community. While these representations covered a variety of topics, the main areas of concern were:
- Too much growth in Ware;
 - Development on Green Belt land considered to be inappropriate;

- Highway infrastructure being unable to cope with the level of development proposed;
- Insufficient school places;
- Effect of development in relation to wildlife and conservation interests; and
- Additional development causing harm to the character of the town.

2.2 Several land owners and site promoters made representations specific to their sites and further consideration of these locations is covered at appropriate points throughout the remainder of this document.

3. Green Belt Review

3.1 The 2015 Green Belt Review assessed 12 parcels of land within and around Ware. None of the areas assessed were regarded as being of high suitability for development in Green Belt terms. Only parcel 37a to the West of Ware (adjacent to the Trapstyle area) was adjudged to have Slight/Negligible or Moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes and, as such, was considered to have Moderate suitability for development.

3.2 Parcels 38, 39, 40 (to the north of the town) and 45 and 46 (to the south) were considered to have low suitability for consideration as areas of search for development.

3.3 All other parcels assessed in the Green Belt assessment for Ware (37, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 44a) were, due to their contribution to the purposes of Green Belt, considered to have very low overall suitability as areas of search for development.

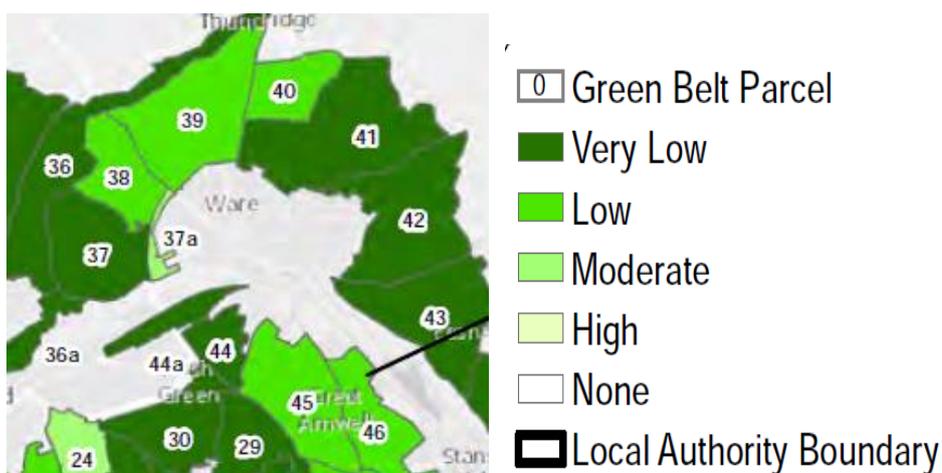


Figure 2: Conclusions of Green Belt Review 2015 for Ware

3.4 While the above map illustrates the overall findings for the whole settlement, for consideration of Land North and East of Ware, the findings of the Study

are covered in greater detail in Policy WARE3: Land North and East of Ware, below.

4. Transport/Modelling

- 4.1 Prior to the publication of the Preferred Options District Plan, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) had provided transport advice in respect of proposed development in Ware. As there was an extant permission for 14 new homes at the former Co-op Depot, Star Street (draft Policy WARE2), no specific measures were detailed in respect of this particular development.
- 4.2 For the larger area to the North and East of Ware, proposed as a Broad Location for between 200 and 3,000 dwellings, it was recognised that, dependent on the level of development proposed, the impact on the local road network and the town centre (which already suffers considerable congestion at peak times) would be significant and would need to be addressed. It was detailed that a northern spine road may need to be provided to access development to the east. Although development to the north would have good access to the A10, cumulative impact of trip generation on this road would also need to be considered.
- 4.3 Information received from HCC subsequent to the Preferred Options consultation is discussed at the sections covering Policy WARE3: Land North and East of Ware, below.

5. Hertford and Ware Employment Study

- 5.1 The Hertford and Ware Employment Study, June 2016, was undertaken to assess the current strengths and weaknesses of the two towns and establish how they can continue to prosper through the growth of business and employment. Based on an assessment of the quality of existing sites, advice was further provided on the requirement for employment sites in the towns and also on an overall strategy for the provision of floorspace. The work was undertaken in the context of the Council's Economic Development Vision and Action Plan.
- 5.2 The Study established that a high proportion of the working-age residents of the towns are economically active and that the towns have a relatively well qualified workforce. GSK in Ware accounts for a high proportion of overall floorspace. However, it is also noted that the number of jobs available in the towns has decreased by around 600 since 2009. This is contrary to the trend across the district and other benchmark areas and implies that the towns have jointly become a less important employment centre and that out-commuting is likely to have increased. When compared to benchmark

authorities, the Hertford and Ware study area has the lowest office vacancy rate (1.9%), which is largely attributed to changes of use which have occurred.

- 5.3 The report notes that the current provision of employment floorspace in the towns essentially provides for the needs of local businesses and also that the towns are unable to compete for large occupiers with the floorspace in the main transport corridors (M11, A1(M) and M25). Hertford and Ware should, however, be able to compete for medium and small occupiers looking for space in south east Herts.
- 5.4 It is considered important that the Council develop a strategy for dealing with ongoing pressure to release employment sites for residential development and a key element of this involves establishing a clear housing land supply position through progression of the District Plan. Where this does not require the release of employment land, such sites should be protected. In respect of Ware, the best existing employment sites which also have capacity to accommodate further development or offer possibility for employment uses include Marsh Lane and Crane Mead. The report also introduces the potential need to plan for the provision of good quality B1 floorspace in a well accessed strategic location, potentially on the A414 or A10 road corridors.

6. Delivery Study

- 6.1 Due to the small level of development proposed for the Co-op Depot, Star Street within draft Policy WARE2 (14 new homes) and the extant planning permission for development in this location, this area was not considered suitable for assessment via the Delivery Study mechanism.
- 6.2 For the larger proposed broad location, proposals for this area were assessed in the Delivery Study and this is covered in greater detail in Policy WARE3: Land North and East of Ware, below.

7. Duty to Co-operate

- 7.1 Several Duty to Co-operate meetings have been held at Executive Member level, involving officers, between the Council and its adjoining districts. Memoranda of Understanding are being jointly prepared to assist each council moving forward to examination. Records of meetings are published on the Council's website. No major issues in relation to Ware have been cited as specific areas of concern to any neighbouring district, other than the general effects of congestion on the A414 and, in respect of Broxbourne, the potential effects of trip generation related to development to the North and

East of Ware (depending on the final quantum proposed), in respect of impact on the A10 and M25 (junction 25).

8. Neighbourhood Planning

- 8.1 While no Neighbourhood Plan designations have yet been agreed for Ware, it is known that Ware Town Council has established a Steering Group and will be working with the relevant adjoining parishes to bring forward a Neighbourhood Plan in due course.

9. Emerging Strategy

- 9.1 Following the consultation, further work has been undertaken on the District Plan and events have occurred, which have led to a reconsideration of some elements of the proposed strategy. In respect of development proposals for Ware, changes of approach are detailed below within the discrete policy areas.

10. Policy WARE2: Former Co-op Depot, Star Street

- 10.1 This site was included in the District Plan Preferred Options Consultation for the proposed delivery of 14 homes as part of a mixed-use development, which had been carried forward from Policy WA6 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review, April 2007 (non-saved policy).
- 10.2 Since the 2014 Preferred Options consultation, development of 14 homes as part of mixed use development at the former Co-op Depot, Star Street (also referred to in draft Policy WARE2) has been completed.
- 10.3 As a result of the completion of this development, Policy WARE2 becomes redundant and should be deleted from the Draft District Plan in its Regulation 19 iteration.

11. Policy WARE3 (to be renumbered WARE2): Land to the North and East of Ware

- 11.1 As noted above, and having been informed by the sieving process which is narrated via Chapters 4 through 6 of the Supporting Document, at the Preferred Options Consultation stage the draft policy suggested a range of between 200 and 3,000 dwellings in this location.
- 11.2 The Preferred Options approach involved bringing forward a finally agreed level of development through a Broad Location policy, with details of site boundaries to be confirmed through the subsequent preparation of a DPD.

Therefore, as the area would be subject to further testing to establish the final level of development, no site boundaries were identified at that stage.

- 11.3 In January 2016, the Council met with a Planning Inspector who advised that the Council needed to provide more certainty over the delivery of its emerging strategy. This was in the context of the approach to Broad Locations and the use of Development Plan Documents. The Inspector suggested that where the emerging strategy included very large strategic sites which made up a large proportion of the overall housing number, where it was possible, these locations should become allocations in the District Plan.
- 11.4 In the case of land to the North and East of Ware, at the Preferred Options stage there had been significant evidence gaps, which had resulted in a range of between 200 and 3,000 dwellings being included in the Broad Location policy. Since that time, technical work has been completed (summarised in subsequent sections) and this enables the Council to have greater certainty over the level of development which could be supported in this location across the plan period to 2033. Officers therefore now consider that there is sufficient evidence in place to support an approach which would allow the site to come forward as an allocation in the Plan.

12. Consultation Responses- Policy WARE3: Land North and East of Ware

- 12.1 A significant level of comments were received in respect of draft Policy WARE3 at the 2014 Preferred Options Consultation stage.
- 12.2 The main issues raised related to (in no particular order):
- i) Greater clarity needed on the amount of growth proposed;
 - ii) The development would be more appropriate as a new settlement and should be provided elsewhere in the district;
 - iii) The upper level of development would have a detrimental impact both on the town and its historic character;
 - iv) Traffic impact and the ability of the road network (locally and wider) to accommodate trip generation;
 - v) Potential increase in air and noise pollution;
 - vi) Green Belt land should not be released for development;
 - vii) The development should provide permanent Green Belt boundaries;
 - viii) Greater provision should be made for walking and cycling;
 - ix) Additional bus services required;
 - x) Rail service inadequate to cope with demands of growth;
 - xi) Need to protect wildlife, historic and conservation interests;
 - xii) Development should be self-contained;
 - xiii) Development too far away from the town to integrate with it;
 - xiv) Insufficient health facilities currently to cope with growth;

- xv) Insufficient educational provision;
- xvi) Site promoters favouring particular parcels of land for inclusion in the development/suggested timing of development;
- xvii) Criticism of DPD approach as this would lead to uncertainty and risk delaying delivery, therefore, site allocation preferred;
- xviii) Need to provide additional leisure, indoor and outdoor sports facilities;
- xix) More detail required on type and tenure of housing proposed;
- xx) Need for additional retail facilities;
- xxi) Additional retail facilities could put strain on town centre shops; and
- xxii) Need to avoid sterilising potential minerals deposits.

A full summary of the issues that were raised in respect of draft Policy WARE3 and the Officer proposed responses to them were considered by Members at the District Planning Executive Panel meeting on 21st July 2016. These can be viewed via the following link: <http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=151&MId=2951&Ver=4>

13. Technical Assessments

- 13.1 The following sections summarise the various technical evidence based assessments that have been undertaken since the Preferred Options consultation to assess this site alongside the wider Plan preparation process.

East Herts Green Belt Review 2015 (Peter Brett Associates)

- 13.2 As detailed above at Section 3 above, the 2015 Green Belt Review assessed 12 parcels within and around Ware. In respect of draft policy WARE3, four parcels of land fall within this overall area (parcels 39 to 43).
- 13.3 Of these, Parcels 39 and 40 were considered to have low suitability and Parcels 41 and 42 considered to have very low overall suitability as areas of search for development. The full assessment of each area can be found at pages 68 to 74 of the Green Belt Review, which can be viewed via the following link: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/greenbeltreview2015>, but a synopsis of each applicable parcel follows.

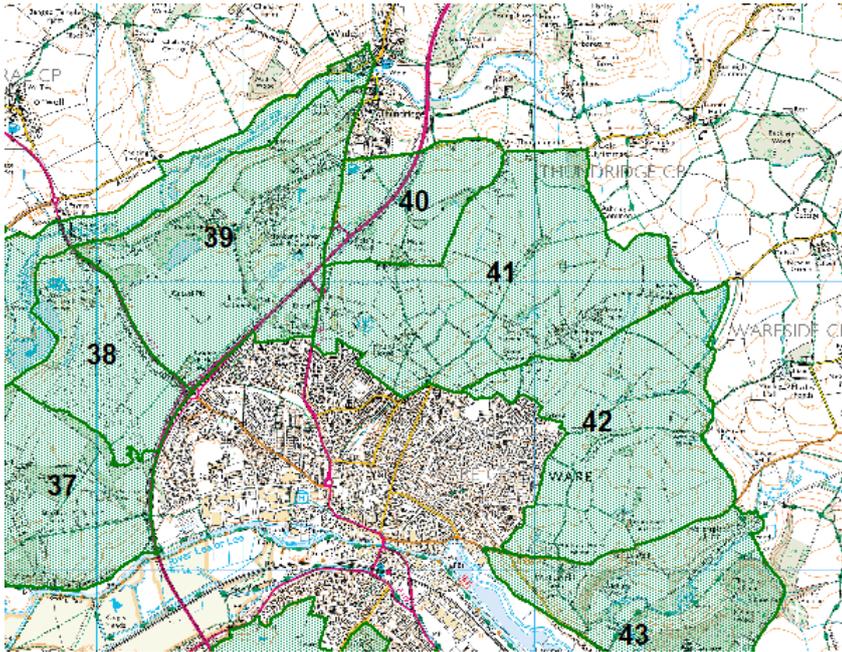


Figure 3: East Herts Green Belt Review Parcels identified by PBA for land to the North and East of Ware

- 13.4 Parcel 39 covers the land to the north of Ware from the A602 to the east to the A1170 Wadesmill Road in the west. The Study considered that the parcel was of 'Major importance in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'; was of 'Slight/Negligible importance in preventing neighbouring towns merging'; was of 'Major (Moderate in south western part) importance in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'; and made 'No contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns'. The parcel scored Low in terms of its overall suitability as an area of search based on its contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
- 13.5 Parcel 40 covers the land to the north of Ware from the A1170 Wadesmill Road to the east, Moles Farm to the south, Cold Christmas Lane to the north, which is joined by a lane running between the two to the west. The parcel was considered by the Study to be of 'Moderate importance in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'; was of 'No importance in preventing neighbouring towns merging'; was of 'Major importance in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'; and made 'No contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns'. The parcel scored Low in terms of its overall suitability as an area of search based on its contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
- 13.6 Parcel 41 covers the land to the north east of Ware with its eastern boundary from the A1170 Wadesmill Road to the east (up to the lane leading to Moles Farm); the urban boundary of Ware and Fanhams Hall Lane to the south,

Moles Farm, Cold Christmas Lane and the lane between them to the north, and various field boundaries to the west. The Study concluded that the parcel was of 'Paramount importance in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'; was of 'No importance in preventing neighbouring towns merging'; was of 'Paramount (Major in contained southern parts) importance in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'; and made 'No contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns'. The parcel scored Very Low in terms of its overall suitability as an area of search based on its contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

- 13.7 Parcel 42 covers the land to the east of Ware with its eastern boundary from the urban boundary of Ware; Fanhams Hall Lane to the north, various lanes and field boundaries to the west; and the B1004 to the south. The Study concluded that the parcel of 'Paramount importance in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'; was of 'No importance in preventing neighbouring towns merging'; was of 'Paramount importance in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'; and made 'No contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns'. The parcel scored Very Low in terms of its overall suitability as an area of search based on its contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 13.8 In 2014 the Council commissioned a Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment to identify the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Council further commissioned an Identification of Potential Sites Study in 2014 with the aim of identifying locations where such need could potentially be met.
- 13.9 Subsequent to the publication of revised 'Planning policy for traveller sites' guidance, published by the Government in August 2015, the Council commissioned an update to the Accommodation Needs Assessment, which was finalised in May 2016. The Assessment concluded that five Gypsies and Travellers pitches and nine Travelling Showpeople's plots were needed over the Plan period.

Transport/Modelling

- 13.10 Further to the information received from HCC prior to the Preferred Options consultation (detailed above at Section 4) and its response to the consultation, which confirmed that detailed town based modelling would be required in order to determine detailed impacts of development within Ware, in addition to the need to understand the impacts on the A10 and M25 junction 25; A602; and A414 plus consideration of Air Quality Impacts, and

cost mitigation measures, the site promoters appointed consultants (Transport Planning Associates) to carry out transport modelling. Subsequent survey and other technical work led to the construction of a Paramics transport model to assess the impact of development at various levels. Both the model and its outputs were subject to assessment by HCC in its role as Transport Authority for the area.

- 13.11 Separate to this, and prior to the final reporting of the Ware Paramics model, HCC wrote to East Herts Council in July 2015 following its consideration of studies on the A414 identifying significant concerns regarding the cumulative impact of proposed development in the emerging District Plan on the A414 corridor. This letter set out the position that development beyond the first five years proposed in the draft District Plan (including the development proposed to the North and East of Ware) could not be accommodated by the existing A414 corridor in Hertford.
- 13.12 Further to that, HCC later (26th January 2016) assessed the outcomes of localised Paramics transport modelling for the Ware area undertaken by the consultants appointed by the site promoter for the North and East of Ware proposed Broad Location. In this respect HCC concluded that “although the consultant has proposed some changes to the operating network, the quantum proposed (2,000 to 3,000 units) is not viable, given the additional delays and queues, particularly as assumptions have been made which already reduce the volume of traffic passing through the town centre”. HCC later advised that 300 dwellings would be likely to be acceptable in traffic terms, subject to further testing.
- 13.13 Since that time, refinements to the Ware Paramics modelling have provided HCC with a greater understanding of the likely effects of development in transport terms and potential mitigation measures, not only for the larger 2,000 and 3,000 units previously considered, but also for mid-range levels which were introduced to provide an understanding of the impact of development at 300, 600, 1,000 and 1,500 dwellings.
- 13.14 Following consideration of these refined Paramics outputs, HCC confirmed in a letter dated 19th May 2016 that “recent traffic flow data for the A414 in Hertford indicates that there is capacity to support a mid-range scenario of development [in Ware]...”. This position was then further clarified in a letter dated 17th June which stated that “increasing the size of the proposed development in Ware will therefore use up some of this newly identified spare capacity on the network” and therefore “the best option, at present, is the 1,000 units as this brings the benefit of the link road. However, we would expect that, based on the original quantum being considered, that up to 300 units would be provided within the seven year period (2024, assuming a

2017 start), and any units above this will be provided beyond 2024". This position would relate the delivery of dwellings within the plan period to 2033.

- 13.15 As the Hertfordshire 2050 Transport Vision has yet to be finalised (public consultation is expected shortly) and any resultant mitigation measures to relieve pressure on the A414 through Hertford are yet to be identified, the position beyond 2033 requires clarification. However, the A414 is clearly a major concern for HCC in highway terms and alleviation of the route is therefore likely to form part of the Vision's proposals. Therefore, although there is currently no solution in place for the plan period, it is possible that mitigation measures could be identified to free additional capacity in the corridor at a later date. If such a solution were in place then, in highway terms, a development scenario of 1,500 dwellings would perform best as there would be a greater provision of sustainable transport measures to relieve pressure on routes throughout Ware than in lesser development totals. Development of 2,000 dwellings would have a greater negative impact on the town, leading to considerable delays in queuing over the base scenario.

14. Stakeholder Engagement

- 14.1 A Ware North and East (WARE3) Project Group Meeting was held on 24th April 2014. In addition to East Herts Council Officers, site promoters and agents, the following stakeholders were represented:

Thames Water

Herts County Council: Highways;
Rail/Passenger Transport;
Transport Modelling;
Education (Secondary & Primary Schools);
Property; and
Minerals and Waste.

- 14.2 The main aim of the meeting was to identify the main issues requiring further testing through the District Plan. The following matters were particularly relevant:

Transport

- 14.3 HSGTM strategic model, which had tested the impact of 1,300 dwellings to the east and 1,700 to the north had flagged up areas of concern including the A602 and the A1170/Ware Road, and possibly also the A10 Corridor. However, as the level of modelling was rather coarse, further work would be required via a microsimulation (Paramics) model to understand the impacts

on the local road network including the High Street, and the impacts of mitigation measures, which should also take into account passenger transport initiatives.

Waste Water

- 14.4 The site would need to drain to Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works, and there was some capacity to accommodate future forecast growth beyond that identified in the Water Cycle Study undertaken in 2008/9 growth due to the downturn in housing development. The predicted capacity limitation dates within the study would therefore effectively move forward with ongoing works to change the way the sewage is treated would provide a further period of relief to between 2021 and 2026. After that time it is likely that additional capacity provision will need to be made. Additional tanks could be provided without any extension of the Treatment Works site and without any encroachment into the adjacent SSSI.
- 14.5 However, importantly, the overall impact and treatment requirement could not be predicted at that time as the cumulative effects of development from all the adjacent local authority areas also served by Rye Meads had not been fully defined.
- 14.6 In terms of connections to the sewerage network, the simplest solution would be for connection to the heads of the pipes, but this would only be feasible for small scale development in the High Oak Road area for development to the North of Ware and also to the East of Ware.
- 14.7 For larger scale development or development in other parts of the North of Ware area, it would be necessary to establish a new connection to the outfall sewer. This would require a new pipe around the northern and eastern edges of the town, with a pumping station to the north to address the slight dip in the valley to the north. While the route could be open to variation and layout would influence what form drainage could take, the end point of the existing sewer in the River Lea locality would be a fixed matter.
- 14.8 The cost of provision could be in the region of around £4-5million. Some funding could become available through OFWAT but, with a single site or consortium, the option of a requisition could also be explored. Under a requisition, Thames Water's contribution would be approximately 12 x the annual income from sewerage charges from the new properties with the developer/s contributing the balance. The planning process for implementation generally takes around five years from initial conception to construction.

Education

- 14.9 Very little capacity exists in the existing primary schools in the area and very little potential to expand the existing schools has been identified, beyond that which was under construction at St Catherine's at the time of the Preferred Options consultation [*Post meeting note: this development has since been completed*].
- 14.10 Strategic scale development would be expected to support itself in educational terms. 500 to 850 dwellings would yield 1 Form of Entry (FE) of 30 pupils, which applies to both Primary and Secondary Schools. A development of 3,000 would equate to six forms of entry (FE) across the development. In respect of secondary schools, there is a range of provision; however, a school must be able to deliver the KS4 curriculum. Minimum effectiveness is recognised as being around 4FE, with HCC preferring the provision of 6-10FE schools.

Wildlife Sites

- 14.11 While unable to attend the meeting, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) communicated that there would be a need to survey the two existing designated wildlife sites during 2015 and that surveying should accord with the HMWT requirements.

Minerals and Waste

- 14.12 East of Ware falls within Minerals Area 8 and HCC would require a detailed study to be carried out by site promoters to assess the potential for minerals extraction and a proposed approach to phasing. This should assess the depth and quality of any underlying mineral deposits to ascertain whether extraction would be economically viable. There may be opportunity to utilise any gravel extracted in the construction process on site.

Healthcare

- 14.13 GP surgeries in the town were at capacity and new capacity would be sought in relation to additional dwellings provided in the area, but also may include the potential to relocate/expand existing facilities in the town. Liaison with the NHS/CCG would be required.

Masterplanning/Delivery

- 14.14 While it was anticipated that detailed masterplanning would be carried out at the DPD stage, it would be necessary for a high-level concept masterplan/s to be produced to inform a spreadsheet of costs. This should factor in all

key aspects of delivery and include important provisions, such as neighbourhood centres, and employment.

- 14.15 In respect of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, it was important at this stage that an idea of all costs (e.g. GP's, open space etc) was gained in order to inform the process to show that the District Plan would be deliverable.

15. Developer Meetings/Information

- 15.1 Since the Stakeholder Workshop, a number of meetings have been held with site promoters, the majority of which were organised by, and held at, HCC in relation to the development and refining of the Paramics transport modelling. Most of these transport related meetings were also attended by East Herts Council officer/s.
- 15.2 Latterly, meetings at East Herts Council have also been held to discuss other elements of the potential development, including issues relating to Masterplanning, Green Belt, and Education.
- 15.3 It should be noted that, in the period following the Stakeholder event, there have been several changes in land ownership and agent responsibilities for the various parcels of land comprising the overall whole of the area to the North and East of Ware. However, while both attendees and responsibilities have changed over this time, there has been overlap and consistency of approach by those who continue to be involved in the promotion of land in this area.
- 15.4 In order to assist in its deliberations, the Council invited further information from landowners, developers and agents in the form of Delivery Statements which would form the basis of draft Statements of Common Ground. These statements contain details about required infrastructure and utilities and would be used to support the submission of the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate. The preparation of a draft Statement of Common Ground for development to the North and East of Ware will continue to be developed in order that it is finalised as the Council proceeds towards Examination.

16. Deliverability Assessment

Introduction

- 16.1 This Deliverability Assessment section sets out details of the proposed development in relation to its feasibility in delivery terms. It also aims to preempt and address typical queries which could be raised by Inspectors at the Examination stage. It is a useful way of illustrating whether the site would be

deliverable and, if any outstanding issues have been identified that could be an impediment to development, that mitigation measures can be successfully employed to address them. Where it has not yet been possible to fully define such mitigation measures, there should be a clear mechanism in place to ensure that they can be addressed prior to development.

Aims & Objectives

- 16.2 Land to the North and East of Ware is intended to create an urban extension to the town. It should provide a mix of housing type and tenure and further provide a range of supporting facilities and infrastructure. It is viewed as important that the development should be as self-supporting as possible to limit trip generation, while providing the necessary infrastructure to ensure that it integrates well with the fabric, facilities and character of the existing town.
- 16.3 Policy WARE3 set out, at the Preferred Options consultation, a clear framework for the delivery of a sustainable form of development in the location to the North and East of Ware. However, at that stage the scale was undetermined, with a range of between 200 and 3,000 dwellings requiring further testing to ascertain the final amount of development within a Broad Location concept. The Regulation 19 consultation will now identify the final amount of development to be delivered in the overall location via site allocation in the District Plan.

Identification of Site Constraints

Green Belt

- 16.4 The site is currently located within the Green Belt, with the inner Green Belt boundary which is drawn tight against the built-up edge of Ware. The East Herts Green Belt Review 2015 (Peter Brett Associates), discussed above, came to conclusions on the suitability of land in terms of overall suitability as an area of search.
- 16.5 As discussed in the Development Strategy Chapter, the Council has a duty to meet its identified housing need and, due to the lack of brownfield opportunities, this results in a consequential need to release some Green Belt land in order to achieve sustainable development in the district. Officers acknowledge that the assessment of the four land areas to the North and East of Ware would not in itself suggest that the land contained in these parcels would be suitable for Green Belt release. However, it should be noted that Study should be viewed in its overall context, whereby the majority of land assessed throughout the district via this process resulted in

similar ratings being achieved. Therefore, of necessity, the imperative of meeting the district's housing need brings into deliberation locations that may not otherwise have been considered suitable to be brought forward for development.

- 16.6 On balance it is considered that, in order to allow for an urban extension to the sustainable settlement of Ware (which is the third largest settlement in the district), it would be appropriate to allow some Green Belt release in this instance in order to meet identified housing need. In this respect, it will be important to ensure that any future development can be sensitively planned to respect the most important aspects identified in the Green Belt Review in amending the town's boundaries.

Transport

- 16.7 As detailed above, the Paramics modelling undertaken in respect of proposed development to the North and East of Ware has demonstrated significant constraints in relation to both the local and wider road network. At the upper levels of development in the range proposed in the Preferred Options consultation, the view of HCC is that such development would not be acceptable. However, subject to appropriate mitigation, development of 1,000 dwellings would be achievable in the plan period. The provision of a link road to link the north and east of Ware would be required in this respect, and this infrastructure would need to be linked with the provision of sustainable transport measures.

Foul Water Drainage

- 16.8 Development to the North and East of Ware would require a new connection to the outfall sewer via the construction of a new pipe around the northern and eastern edges of the town, with a pumping station to address the slight dip in the valley to the north. This is considered to be deliverable through the development of the site.

Surface Water Flooding

- 16.9 Where evidence of surface water flooding exists this will require mitigation, which can be achieved through the successful masterplanning of the site. There would be the potential to integrate these features into the landscape via incorporation into multi-functional green spaces in place of standard engineered solutions.

Minerals

- 16.10 An element of the easterly part of the site is situated within Minerals Area 8 and HCC, in its capacity as Minerals and Waste Authority, would not support the sterilisation of this asset through built development if the depth and quality of any underlying mineral deposits would result in extraction being economically viable. There may be opportunity to utilise any gravel extracted in the construction process on site.

Heritage Assets

- 16.11 While both lie outside of the area proposed for development, there are two important listed buildings located in close proximity; namely, Poles Park, Hanbury Manor (Grade II*) and Fanhams Hall (Grade II), both also having associated registered Historic Parks and Gardens. It will be essential that any new development respects these key assets, along with other, smaller, listed buildings in the vicinity.

17. Land uses and proposals

- 17.1 The development will comprise a mix of tenures in accordance with Policy HOU1. The new homes will be supported by a range of community facilities, which dependent on the final level of development, will include at least one neighbourhood centre to provide retail and other facilities. Additional to this an employment area (of around 3ha) would be provided to offer opportunities for Ware residents to work locally and thus contain trip generation.
- 17.2 Primary school, with early years, provision will be made on-site corresponding with the level of residential development delivered. Secondary provision, possibly through the delivery of an all-through school, will be made commensurate with the level of development provided. As secondary provision is required to serve a wider area (Ware forms part of the Hertford and Ware school planning area at secondary level) an area of land to accommodate up to six-forms of entry should be set aside, with HCC (as the Local Authority with responsibility for education in Hertfordshire) arranging the delivery of any element of provision beyond that occasioned by the development.
- 17.3 Given the close location of the area to the North of Ware to the Strategic Road Network (A10 in particular) Officers consider that, when combined with lack of available land outside the Green Belt to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, this site would provide a suitable location to help meet the identified accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople (including provision of space for the storage and maintenance of equipment). A site to meet the medium to longer term needs

of Travelling Showpeople would therefore be provided within the overall development area.

- 17.4 In order to mitigate trip generation of all forms of development proposed for the site, a link road between the north (A1170) and east of Ware (Widbury Hill) will be provided. An important aspect of the development will be its connectivity within the site and to the existing town. Walking and cycling and bus connectivity will be prioritised over car users to encourage a shift towards more sustainable means of transport. New bus route provision to enable journeys within the town and to the station. Existing Rights of Way and footways linking to the site will be enhanced, improving access within the site and its relationship to both the urban area and the countryside beyond.
- 17.5 Important heritage assets within and in the vicinity of the site will be protected through adequate mitigation which will include maintaining open or landscaped areas where necessary.
- 17.6 Open spaces will be provided which should provide space for both sports and recreation.
- 17.7 Supplementary to their primary function, open spaces are also likely to include multi-functional drainage solutions, which will be provided in addition to the new foul sewer. Sustainable Urban Drainage will be incorporated into the layout of the development and will create multi-functional green spaces.
- 17.8 The site will incorporate Garden City principles, supported by a masterplan and Supplementary Planning Document which will set out details such as character and design. Masterplanning will ensure involvement of both Town and relevant Parish Councils and meaningful public input to the process will be required.
- 17.9 Areas of woodland and hedgerows will be extended through buffer planting and will contribute to wider ecological networks. Street trees should form an integral part of the design of the site creating, not only pleasant urban greening, but also creating a net gain in terms of biodiversity across the site, which is currently predominantly farmland.

18. Infrastructure Requirements

- 18.1 The key infrastructure requirement to enable development to proceed at a level of 1,000 dwellings or above would be the delivery of a link road between the north of Ware (at the A1170, Wadesmill Road, intersection with the A10) and east of Ware (B1004, Widbury Hill) to provide mitigation for

trips generated by the development and lessen the impact on local roads, especially in the town centre, where the High Street in particular already experiences significant levels of congestion at peak times. Other off-site mitigation measures would also be required.

- 18.2 Development to the North and East of Ware would require a new sewer to be constructed around the northern and eastern edges of the town, together with a pumping station. Thames Water has further confirmed that the Rye Meads Waste Water Treatment Works has the capacity to serve the development.
- 18.3 In respect of education, HCC expects that the development should provide for its latest generated need at both primary and secondary level. In this regard, provision should be made commensurate with the level of development. This would equate to 2 forms of entry for development of 1,000 dwellings, with this rising to 3 forms of entry at 1,500 dwellings.
- 18.4 Primary provision should be made on-site. In respect of secondary provision it is unlikely that there will be sufficient capacity in existing schools in the Hertford and Ware school planning area to accommodate the level/s of growth at the site and, potentially, also elsewhere in the area. Therefore, whilst evidence indicates that a development of 1,000 homes would trigger the need for 2 forms of entry, and 1,500 dwellings generating 3 forms of entry, for a secondary school to function efficiently a minimum of 6 forms of entry would likely be required. Therefore, a site of sufficient size to accommodate 6 forms of entry at secondary level would need to be reserved within the overall developable area, which would be delivered via a phased approach in tandem with the appropriate quanta of development as agreed with HCC, as the Local Authority with responsibility for education in Hertfordshire. The detail of location, access and layout of all educational facilities will be determined through the masterplanning process.
- 18.5 Another important part of any neighbourhood is access to local primary healthcare facilities such as doctors and dentists. This will be particularly necessary given that the site would deliver a range of housing type and tenure, including housing for older and vulnerable people, which have a greater demand for local healthcare services. However, this would not be likely to be fully provided by the development at levels under 1,500 dwellings.
- 18.6 The provision of utilities to serve the proposed development, involving connections and improvements to existing utility infrastructure are considered feasible. The development should further ensure the integration of communications infrastructure into the design of the site to ensure suitable

broadband connectivity for both residents and community and commercial properties.

19. Delivery Study

- 19.1 The East Herts Strategic Sites Delivery Study, September 2015 is a technical document which assessed the financial viability and deliverability of the proposals contained in the Preferred Options District Plan. The Delivery Study assessed development to the North and East of Ware at levels of 2,972 and 2,000 dwellings and appraised viability based on high level cost assumptions.
- 19.2 In respect of the upper level, the Study concluded that “deliverable solutions to critical infrastructure (particularly sewage, utilities, site access and provision of a secondary education [*sic*]) needed to enable the development to take place have been identified and shown to be achievable for the larger scheme”.
- 19.3 For a development of 2,000 dwellings, the Study recognised that “although broadly it looks viable, it may require other developments to contribute to the cost of some of the major infrastructure such as the secondary school and some flexibility on the development density and affordable housing policy”.
- 19.4 Although the Delivery Study did not examine proposals for development at a lower level than 2,000 dwellings, the site promoters have undertaken an assessment using the same parameters as the assumptions used for the Study and have concluded that delivery would be viable, albeit that although key infrastructure provision, such as the new foul sewer, link road and education would be made, lesser levels of delivery would occur in certain respects, commensurate with the quantum of development provided.

Implementation Route Map: Masterplan, Phasing and Delivery

- 19.5 Given the complexities of the site, such as the need to provide the link road, sewer, and coordinate educational provision, amongst other aspects of site delivery, it is proposed that the development should be brought forward through detailed masterplanning.
- 19.6 It is important that all interested parties, including the relevant town and parish councils and the general public are involved in this process to ensure community support for a successful urban extension that would integrate well with the existing settlement. The site promoters have given every indication that they would be willing to follow this route.

19.7 Once the Council has launched its Pre-Submission consultation on the District Plan, Officers will progress towards agreeing a Statement of Common Ground with the site promoters/landowners/developers, as applicable, in support of the Examination in Public. This will form the basis of the material to underpin the commencement of preparation of the masterplan for the site.

19.8 While the start date of development is subject to the adoption of the Plan, it is currently envisaged that delivery of 300 homes would occur between 2022 and 2027, with a further 700 homes to be constructed between 2027 and 2033. Therefore, there will be a sufficient period of time to ensure that full masterplanning of the site can occur and that all necessary identified infrastructure can be provided at appropriate points in the development process.

20. Duty to Co-operate

20.1 No further issues have been raised in respect of this policy area beyond that discussed at paragraph 6.1, above.

21. Neighbourhood Planning

21.1 As detailed above at paragraph 7.1, while no Neighbourhood Plan designations have yet been agreed for Ware, it is known that Ware Town Council has established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and will be working with the relevant adjoining parishes to bring forward a Neighbourhood Plan in due course.

22. Consideration of Alternative Sites

22.1 As part of the Plan-making process it has been necessary to consider whether any available and suitable alternative options would be better placed to meet the level of development proposed to be delivered in the area to the North and East of Ware. Assuming that land in that location would be suitable in principle for development, it is also necessary to consider whether there would be an alternative location in and around the town of Ware which would have the ability to better accommodate a similar amount of development (i.e. 1,000 to, potentially, 1,500 dwellings in the longer term). The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) is considered to be the most appropriate mechanism to establish land which may be available at other locations (either singly or cumulatively) in the immediate Ware area and the forms of development proposed.

22.2 Therefore, the following section considers those sites submitted through the Call for Sites process for residential or mixed uses, which were: large enough to meet the 0.25ha threshold, as identified by national policy; which have not already been granted planning permission (and would therefore count as commitments); or are already included within the proposed allocation area. The sites have been listed below in the order in which they appear in the SLAA, and should not be viewed as being in any order of importance. It should be noted that Members have already taken some of these sites into consideration through agreement of the Officer responses to the Preferred Options consultation at the District Planning Executive Panel held on 21st July 2016.

05/001 – Presdales Pit, Hoe Lane.

22.3 This submission proposes residential, affordable housing and employment development over 11.23ha to the south west of the town. The site is located within the Green Belt and within Area of Search 22, which failed Sieve 1 and was not taken forward to Sieve 2 primarily due to the importance of the location in protecting the strategic gap between Ware and the other neighbouring settlements of Hertford, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, and Hoddesdon. A similar area of land was submitted in respect of the currently adopted Local Plan and the Inquiry Inspector concluded that “it forms an integral part of the wider area of land serving clear Green Belt purposes. The site assists with checking the sprawl of Ware, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment but its most important function is its strategic role of preventing coalescence of Ware with Hertford, Great Amwell and Stansted Abbots [*sic*]”. It would also “result in an illogical and unacceptable “hole” in the Green Belt, thereby disrupting its strategic functions”. It is not considered that there has been any change in such a position since the 2007 Inspector’s Report and that the stance of defending the Green Belt in this sensitive location should be continued.

05/003 – Nuns' Triangle (land bound by A10/A1170/Quincey Road).

22.4 This submission proposes residential development over 10.65ha in a Green Belt location to the north of Ware and, throughout the sieving process, has been considered under Area 19 (Sub-Area A). In terms of that process, at Sieve 1 the Sub-Area failed in consideration on its own but, in combination with the larger Sub-Area B, it was rated as a Marginal Fail and was thus carried forward to Sieve 2.

22.5 As detailed at the District Planning Executive Panel meeting on 21st July 2016, the detailed technical Transport Paramics work that has been undertaken has identified considerable constraints in the highway network,

which mean that the upper levels of development of 3,000 (or indeed even 2,000) dwellings would no longer be considered appropriate by Officers. Given that the overall area of development is to be significantly reduced, it is important that the most appropriate areas be selected to be taken forward. As the Nun's Triangle performed the worst out of the sub-areas considered through the sieving process (and it is important to note that the Nun's Triangle forms part of a designated Historic Park and Garden), it is now considered that development of the Nun's Triangle would be inappropriate.

- 22.6 As it is Officers' opinion is that the area should not form part of the proposed Site Allocation for the area to the North and East of Ware, it therefore follows that it would not be supported as an alternative location for development.

05/005 – Horticultural Nursery, Presdales School.

- 22.7 This area of 1.12ha is located in the Green Belt to the south west of Ware in the vicinity of Presdales School and is proposed for residential development. The SLAA assessment details that the greenfield site is currently in use as allotments associated with Presdales School.

- 22.8 The site is located within the Green Belt and within Area of Search 22, which failed Sieve 1 and was not taken forward to Sieve 2 primarily due to the importance of the location in protecting the strategic gap between Ware and the other neighbouring settlements of Hertford, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, and Hoddesdon. While the site would itself be considered to be well related to the existing urban area, it is considered to be unsuitable for development due to its location in the Green Belt and, due to its size, would only have a limited contribution to make.

05/008 – Old Hertfordians Rugby Club, Hoe Lane.

- 22.9 Proposed for residential development, this site of 2.27ha is located in the Green Belt to the south of the town and is positioned directly adjacent to sites 05/017 and 05/019, detailed below.

- 22.10 The site is located within the Green Belt and within Area of Search 22, which failed Sieve 1 and was not taken forward to Sieve 2 primarily due to the importance of the location in protecting the strategic gap between Ware and the other neighbouring settlements of Hertford, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, and Hoddesdon. While this site was not previously considered by the Inspector to the 2007 Local Plan Inquiry, it is the opinion of Officers that similar arguments apply as to 05/001, above, and that, therefore, development should not be supported in this sensitive Green Belt location,

especially in respect of the coalescence issues between Ware and Hertford that would be of particular concern.

05/013 – Land at Rush Green, Hoe Lane.

22.11 This area of 14.6ha is proposed for residential development and is located to the south west of the town on the opposite side of Hoe Lane to 05/001, above and directly abuts site 05/019, detailed below.

22.12 The site is located within the Green Belt and within Area of Search 22, which failed Sieve 1 and was not taken forward to Sieve 2 primarily due to the importance of the location in protecting the strategic gap between Ware and the other neighbouring settlements of Hertford, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, and Hoddesdon. While this site was not previously considered by the Inspector to the 2007 Local Plan Inquiry, it is the opinion of Officers that similar arguments apply as in the case of 05/001 and that, therefore, development should not be supported in this sensitive Green Belt location, especially in respect of the coalescence issues between Ware and Hertford that would be of particular concern.

05/014 – Land at Crane Mead.

22.13 This area of land comprises 1.66ha and is proposed for residential development. The Sieve 2 assessment in respect of land to the south east of Ware (Area 21: Sub-Area B) concluded that this area should not be taken forward due to issues concerning flood risk, natural asset and wildlife constraints; effect on the Lee Valley Regional Park and coalescence with the neighbouring settlements of Great Amwell, Stanstead Abbots and Hoddesdon.

22.14 In respect of this specific site, while all sites submitted through the SLAA process will be subject to objective assessment, it should be noted that the majority of it lies within a Wildlife site designation and that, in respect of a previous submission of the site, the Inspector to the 2007 adopted Local Plan stated that the site “To me, it fulfils the function of restricting sprawl of a large built up area, assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and, as part of the river landscape, enhances the setting of the town”. It is therefore the view of Officers that this site should not be supported.

05/017 – Land at Little Acres, Little Acres.

22.15 Residential development is proposed for this area of 2.16ha, which is located to the south of Ware and directly abuts sites 05/008 and 05/019.

22.16 The site is located within the Green Belt and within Area of Search 22, which failed Sieve 1 and was not taken forward to Sieve 2 primarily due to the importance of the location in protecting the strategic gap between Ware and the other neighbouring settlements of Hertford, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, and Hoddesdon. While this site was not previously considered by the Inspector to the 2007 Local Plan Inquiry, it is the opinion of Officers that similar arguments apply as in the case of 05/001 and that, therefore, development should not be supported in this sensitive Green Belt location, especially in respect of the coalescence issues between Ware and Hertford that would be of particular concern.

05/019 – Hale Club, Hoe Lane

22.17 This site comprises 3.85ha and is located directly adjacent to sites 05/008 and 05/013, above. Residential use is proposed for this area.

22.18 The site is located within the Green Belt and within Area of Search 22, which failed Sieve 1 and was not taken forward to Sieve 2 primarily due to the importance of the location in protecting the strategic gap between Ware and the other neighbouring settlements of Hertford, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, and Hoddesdon. While this site was not previously considered by the Inspector to the 2007 Local Plan Inquiry, it is the opinion of Officers that similar arguments apply as in the case of 05/001 and that, therefore, development should not be supported in this sensitive Green Belt location, especially in respect of the coalescence issues between Ware and Hertford that would be of particular concern.

05/090 – Land at Trapstyle Woods

22.19 This area of 0.72ha is located within the Green Belt to the west of the town and is proposed for residential use.

22.20 As detailed at District Planning Executive Panel on 21st July, Officers do not consider that the site should be identified as an allocation within the District Plan because, while the site is within the area bounded by the A10, it is within the Green Belt and much of the site is subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Furthermore, while it could be perceived as being well related to existing development, the site provides valuable green infrastructure and acts as an amenity buffer between the A10 and existing residential development. Therefore, the site is not considered to be suitable for development or inclusion in the District Plan.

05/096 – Viaduct Road

22.21 Residential use is proposed for this 1.2ha site to the south of Ware. While well related to existing development, as it directly abuts the urban edge of the town, this greenfield site lies within the Green Belt. The green space is considered by Officers to play an important role in maintaining the semi-rural character of this part of Ware. As such it is considered to be unsuitable for development.

23. SA Objectives

23.1 The Sustainability Appraisal is an integral part of the Plan-making process. This Settlement Appraisal forms part of the Sustainability Appraisal for the District Plan as it considers the impacts arising from development and a consideration of alternative development options. To assist the broader District-Wide Sustainability Appraisal, each of the urban extension options and the proposed development strategy for each East Herts town has been assessed against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework as updated by the Strategic Housing Market Area Spatial Options Distribution work. The appraisal of land to the North and East of Ware, below, describes how the site will meet the objectives as set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.

Air Quality

23.2 The site is not in direct proximity to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), but traffic emanating from the development may have some impact on the AQMA declared at Gascoyne Way, Hertford unless or until mitigation measures are introduced. Given this issue, *inter alia*, the phasing of development would be staged in order that delivery would occur towards the end of the plan period. Furthermore, the site will have incorporated Garden City principles which would include tree-lined avenues and buffer planting to minimise and mitigate impacts on areas of woodland. Such increased biodiversity across the site would help mitigate air quality impacts arising from increased vehicle movements and buildings.

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

23.3 There are two wildlife sites located within or near to the proposed development:

46/044 Fanhams Hall Meadow

23.4 This location lies outside the defined site area, but in close proximity to it. Fanhams Hall Meadow is noted for supporting diverse species, including

over five neutral grassland indicator species and several calcareous grassland species.

60/001 Wood Lane

- 23.5 The Wood Lane designated Wildlife Site is a habitat of hedge with trees and this lies within the overall development site area. It is described as a green lane with substantial hedge, including one woodland indicator species and 13 woody species in hedge.
- 23.6 Other, non-designated features also exist, both within the site and on the periphery. Therefore, in order to mitigate the impacts of development, the retention, expansion, enhancement and positive management of existing woodland areas, landscape belts and green infrastructure corridors will be required, for both designated and appropriate non-designated wildlife sites in addition to further new provision throughout the site through well designed streets and urban blocks along Garden City principles, as appropriate.

Community and Wellbeing

- 23.7 The proposed housing mix and tenure and range of community facilities will support all age ranges, including the needs of an ageing population. Where any provision of bungalows and assisted living units is made, this should provide for those with specialist physical needs. The neighbourhood centre/s will provide local shops and (subject to the level of development provided) healthcare services, as well as local sources of employment. Early Years, primary and secondary education will also be provided on-site. The use of Garden City principles, along with the provision of formal, informal and accessible natural green space, outdoor and indoor sports and play spaces in the locality will make valuable contributions to health and wellbeing objectives.

Economy and Employment

- 23.8 The site is located on the key north/south A10 corridor leading to the M25 and the A10 also links into the east/west A414 corridor which is a major travel to work corridor through southern Hertfordshire providing links to major towns along key transport networks and access to M11 in the east and A1 and M1 to the west. The site is also closely located to the A602, which provides access to Stevenage and the A1 corridor. The site will provide employment opportunities through the creation of education, retail, community and healthcare facilities on site, and, dependent on level of development, may also provide additional discrete employment development.

Historic Environment

- 23.9 While there are no Areas of Archaeological Significance or listed buildings within the call for sites submission areas themselves for the land to the east of the A1170, there are various key heritage assets in the locality that will need to be respected through careful planning of the development. This would be an important matter for the masterplanning process.

Housing

- 23.10 The development proposals will provide for a wide range of house types and mix of tenures.

Land

- 23.11 There will be a variety of densities across the site ensuring that the land is used efficiently but in a manner that respects the edge of settlement location within a landscaped setting. The land is currently in agricultural use as arable fields. The extraction of sand and gravel may be required to the east of the site, depending on the depth and quality of any deposits in the area. If material is extracted it should be used on-site as construction material.

Landscape

- 23.12 The proposed development area lies entirely within Area 89 of the Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, September 2007. This describes Area 89 as comprising uplands, east of Standon and Braughing, between the Rib and Ash valleys, south to the northern edge of Ware.
- 23.13 The character of the area is noted as being open, gently undulating arable farmland with clustered settlements and few roads, on a clay plateau of varying width between the valleys of the rivers Rib and Ash. This large area is divided into four sub-areas, with the site area to the north and east of Ware being included within the Fanhams Plateau. It is documented that arable cultivation has removed field boundaries and reduced woodland cover and the significant settlements lie within the river valleys, with isolated farms set above them on the edge of the plateau. The whole of Area 89 is distinctive in being the largest uninterrupted plateau in south Hertfordshire and is also noted for having hedgerow oaks within fields rather than in hedge lines.

- 23.14 In terms of land cover and land use, Fanhams plateau has little woodland, with no settlements but some individual houses, isolated farms and small hamlets. In respect of vegetation and wildlife it has important remnant hedgerow/green lane systems, with hazel, dogwood, spindle and ash, and little woodland (except Buckney Wood). There are some pure elm hedges, often unmanaged. Around Fanhams Hall there is a little neutral to calcareous grassland which supports cowslips.
- 23.15 In respect of historic and cultural influences, Fanhams Hall has a listed (Grade II in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens) early 19th-century authentic Japanese garden and formal English gardens, including a lake, within 11ha of parkland.
- 23.16 The evaluation of the area through the Assessment is in good condition with moderate strength of character and thus results in an overall recommendation that the area should be conserved and strengthened.
- 23.17 This conclusion should therefore be built into landscaping aspects of the future masterplanning of the area.

Low Carbon Development

- 23.18 The site will incorporate footpaths and cycleways and facilitate new bus provision through the site which will connect to the existing town and station, thus facilitating the use of alternative modes of transport. The site will not support a decentralised heating system but will comprise buildings that incorporate sustainable building features exceeding building standards. On-site flood attenuation measures will be a fundamental element of the overall design of the site, incorporating natural drainage features and the creation of suds and swales, as appropriate, in addition to the provision of a new foul sewer.

Transport

- 23.19 The site is well located to provide good connections to the development from the existing urban area and extend the network of pedestrian routes that connect Ware to this area. Cycleways and footpaths will be incorporated into the design in a way which prioritises these routes over the use of private vehicle. Existing bus routes will be supplemented by bespoke services that will run through the development connecting the development to the town centre and its railway station.
- 23.20 Transport modelling indicates that anticipated levels of vehicle movements generated by this development would have an impact on the already

constrained town centre and the provision of a new link road will mitigate some of the effects of motorised vehicle trips generated by the development. Personal transport planning will be key to ensuring that residents are motivated to use sustainable transport modes and thereby lessen the impact of development, which will be limited to 1,000 dwellings in the plan period. Beyond the plan period, should acceptable mitigation to the A414 Gascoyne Way congestion issues be identified, then development of up to 1,500 new homes in total for the area would allow for the provision of enhanced sustainable transport provision to mitigate the effects of development.

Water

23.21 Methods to minimise water consumption through construction and occupation of the development will be utilised and appropriate connections to water supply and waste water networks are possible. The wider Rye Meads Waste Water Treatment Works has capacity with local improvements to connection points required.

24. Conclusion

24.1 The Council has undertaken a thorough appraisal of the potential for development in this location, including the consideration of areas of land in and on the periphery of other parts of the town as either alternative, or supplementary, development options. As discussed in the Development Strategy Chapter, it is considered that the Council's objectively assessed housing need necessitates the release of Green Belt land in order for the Plan to deliver sustainable patterns of development.

24.2 The site to the North and East of Ware, which is positioned on the edge of the district's third largest town, will be well connected to a well-established and historic urban area with many existing shops and services. The development will provide further infrastructure and community facilities that will benefit new and existing residents, such as a new secondary school, potential healthcare provision, and enhanced open spaces and sports facilities. A new foul sewer would also be provided in addition to sustainable drainage measures. The development will also enable connections from the existing urban area to the wider countryside through the improvement and creation of new green infrastructure routes and corridors.

24.3 The site will further provide a new road linking the north and east of the town, which would not only partially alleviate pressure on the already congested town centre, but also ensure that residents and those accessing the town from the east would have an alternative route to access the A10 at the top of the A1170, Wadesmill Road. New homes will be provided in

already established travel to work corridors and will further provide additional new employment opportunities for its residents.

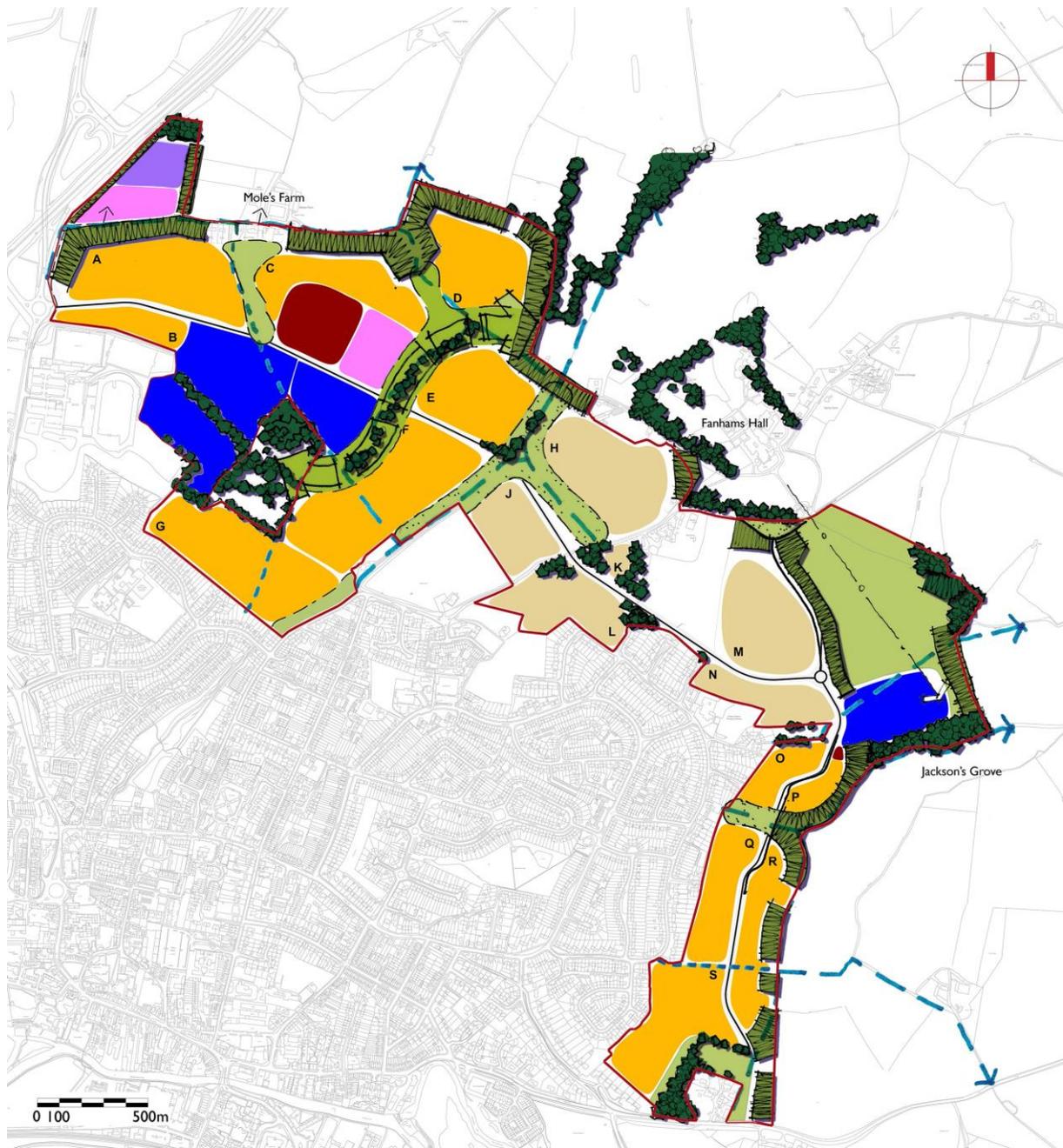
24.4 The masterplan approach will provide opportunities for local engagement in the planning of this new neighbourhood and ensure delivery of development in line with that masterplan's original aims and objectives.

24.5 Given the evolution of available evidence, particularly that which relates to highways, it is now clear that a development of 1,000 dwellings would be the maximum achievable in the plan period; however, sufficient scope should be allowed to enable development of up to 1,500 new homes if suitable mitigation to the A414 issues can be identified. Green Belt boundaries would therefore be redrawn to reflect the overall potential development area and ensure a long-term defensible boundary.

24.6 Therefore, taking into account all the available evidence, it is the considered opinion of Officers that one site should be allocated in Ware:

- Land to the North and East of Ware – 1,000 dwellings within the plan period, with potential to expand to 1,500 beyond 2033, subject to suitable mitigation of the A414 being identified.

24.7 Figure 4 below shows an illustrative conceptual diagram provided by the site promoters, which provides an indication of how the various proposed uses could potentially be configured across the site. This, or a subsequently amended diagram, is likely to be used as a basis for commencing the Masterplanning process which, when finalised, will be used to inform the decision making process. It should be noted that, while the Council will take this diagram into account, decisions on Green Belt boundary revisions will be based on a holistic approach to the settlement overall.



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | Land to be released from Green Belt |  | Important existing woodlands/spinneys on site and within the adjoining landscape |
|  | Primary road infrastructure |  | Proposed structure planting to provide strong defendable edges, responsible inter-relationship with the wider landscape and contribute to the site's Green Infrastructure |
|  | School |  | Proposed important open space/movement corridors within the site which follow existing rights of way, watercourses and/or existing landscape features |
|  | Mixed-use centre |  | Proposed primary green infrastructure corridors running through /across the site |
|  | Employment |  | Existing rights of way |
|  | Residential and associated open space (incl. sports pitches) | | |
|  | Safeguarded residential land | | |
|  | Travelling Showpeople site | | |

Figure 4: Illustrative conceptual diagram provided by site promoters - not binding on the Council.