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1 Introduction

- 1.1** Within the County town of Hertford, the Mead Lane area is situated to the east of the town centre and provides one of its largest and most valuable employment resources (see **Figures 1 and 2**). However, within this location lie some of the town's largest undeveloped brownfield sites. Some of the traditional uses of the area, including Gas Storage facilities and Sewage Filter beds, long since ceased operation and other elements of the employment offer have become outdated. In recent years there has been a steady improvement in the employment space offer, especially at the eastern end, and some residential redevelopment has taken place towards the western end of the area.
- 1.2** Disconnected by the Hertford East to London (Liverpool Street) railway line that bounds its south side, the area has struggled to realise its full potential, mainly due to restricted vehicular access issues. However, the area is in other respects well connected by proximity to the town centre, a nearby superstore, a railway station with a service to central London, and by access to the River Amenity corridor of Hartham Common and Kings Meads. The remaining underdeveloped areas provide the opportunity to create an outstanding mixed use environment to benefit the town.
- 1.3** While a few recent developments, including The Waterfront and The Meads apartments, have been constructed as stand-alone initiatives, it is considered that a framework is now required to ensure that a well integrated plan is delivered for the remaining areas of opportunity.



The Waterfront, Mill Road

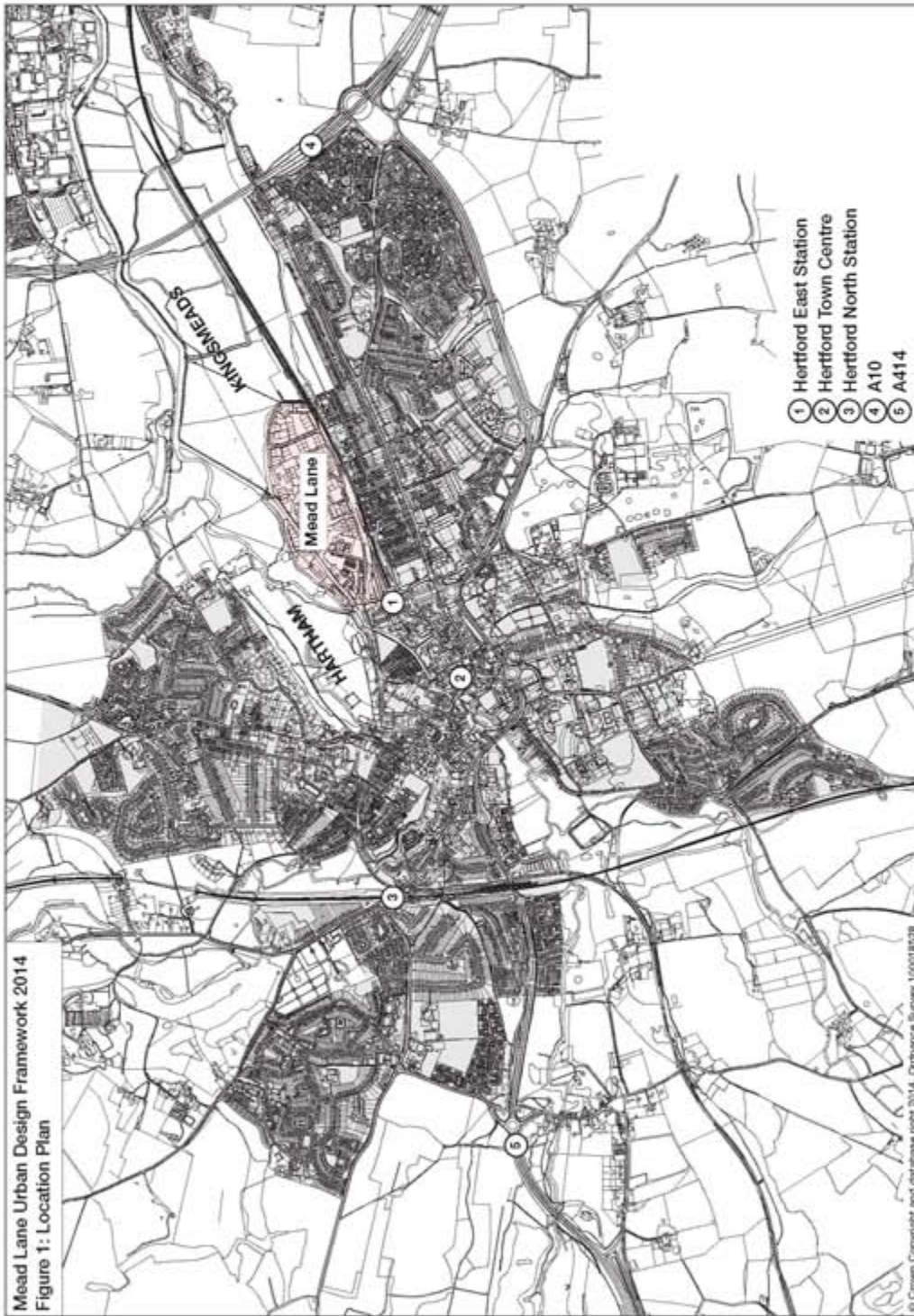


Figure 1: Location Plan



Figure 2: Mead Lane in Hertford

2 Aims and Objectives of the UDF

2.1 The broad aims of the Urban Design Framework are:

1. To ensure a high quality regeneration of the Mead Lane area;
2. To reintegrate the area with the wider town;
3. To ensure development is based on principles of Sustainable Development.

2.2 More specific objectives of the UDF (in no order of importance) will be:

1. The general uplift to the public realm, streets and river corridor through the Mead Lane area;
2. Promoting the amenity and recreational value of the Hartham Common Area with enhanced connectivity;
3. New pedestrian/cycle friendly routes throughout the Mead Lane area and enhanced links to the surroundings, such as a link from Hertford East Station to Hartham Common and the National Cycle Network Route 61, the existing crossing at Rowleys Road and improved access to the route of the Lea Valley Walk;
4. Designing residential roads to achieve 20mph standard;
5. Promoting the attractiveness of the River Lea navigation by enhanced built form with frontages in positive relationship to the river;
6. Retaining as many existing employment operations as possible (beyond Marshgate Drive) and flexibility of use within the B1, B2 and B8 use classes in those areas to be retained primarily for employment use while enhancing opportunities for new employment as part of mixed use proposals in those areas identified for redevelopment;
7. Designing any residential development to ensure that existing commercial enterprises are not jeopardised;
8. Creation of welcoming public spaces, as a priority to include, inter alia, an enhanced setting to Hertford East Station at the gateway to Mead Lane;
9. A sustainable travel strategy for the whole area;
10. New passenger transport provisions including improved bus stops and links to Hertford East and within the wider employment area;
11. Provision of a new road link to the north of Hertford East Station to the junction with Marshgate Drive and provision of a secondary emergency access in the Hertford East Station frontage area;
12. Provision of a new road link across the former Gas Storage site as part of the redevelopment of that site to enable circulatory traffic movements (in particular for buses) within the overall area;
13. Highway improvements to Marshgate Drive to promote its shared use;
14. Provision of on-street parking spaces for car club usage;

15. Diversifying the uses within the area to limit peak hour traffic congestion including the potential provision of commercial space and increased leisure space; and other measures to address local congestion and capacity issues;
16. Improving pedestrian connections between Hertford East Station, its surroundings, and the town centre;
17. Sustainable management of surface water and reduction of flood risk in new developments.

2.3 The Urban Design Framework will achieve these objectives by:

1. Identifying established patterns and environmental and heritage assets;
2. Assessing the constraints and opportunities of the area;
3. Outlining different urban character areas to ensure distinctiveness within the development;
4. Guiding the physical form, design and uses for key sites and areas;
5. Promoting sustainable movement networks to optimise the quality of life for residents and businesses;
6. Highlighting the public realm, key public spaces and facilitating its enhancement;
7. Setting high design and sustainability standards.



Former TXU site, Mead Lane

Town and Landscape Features Mead Lane, Hertford



Hertford East Station -
Fine Heritage, Poor Setting



“The Waterfront” - First flatted
scheme. Elevation to Mill Road



The Waterfront -
Enhanced Riverside



The Meads - Mead Lane



River Lea Navigation -
Bisects Mead Lane Area



Hertford Lock -
Lea Valley Beyond



Folly Island -
Nearby Victorian Streets



Dicker Mill -
Starter Employment Units



Centrus, Mead Lane -
Modern Business Investment

3 Context

- 3.1** East Herts Council has for many years supported the regeneration of the Mead Lane area; however, long-standing access difficulties have, until recently, prevented the achievement of this objective.
- 3.2** One main obstacle was the need for a second point of vehicular access for emergency purposes coupled with the effects of additional peak time traffic on the wider road network. A potential solution, involving the construction of a bridge over the railway line from Rowley's Road to the eastern end of the employment area was rejected by both district and county councils due to environmental impact, effect on residential amenity, cost, and land take on the employment site (due to ramping).
- 3.3** These access difficulties in turn stymied the progression of a draft Development Brief for the area in 2003, which had been prepared by consultants on behalf of a potential developer. Full details on the consideration of this issue can be found in the report to the Council's Executive 27/04/2004 (<http://tinyurl.com/3pba4b2>).
- 3.4** In 2008 work commenced on the development of the Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan (UTP), which was commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council, as Highway Authority. Within the overall context of the Plan a sub-study element was included to cover the access impediments, the solution of which would allow the potential redevelopment of the Mead Lane area. This study concluded that, subject to various measures being undertaken as part of the redevelopment of the area, the access difficulties could be surmountable. The Mead Lane subsection of the UTP is available at Appendix E and can be viewed via the following URL: <http://tinyurl.com/6dy2fcy>. The Hertford and Ware UTP was formally adopted by the County Council in November 2010, with the full endorsement of East Herts Council.

4 Historical Development Patterns and Uses

- 4.1** At the beginning of the 20th century the Mead Lane area was largely undeveloped. The main building within the area was Dicker Mill sited along the River Lea, the remnants of which remain today. Hertfordshire's first gasworks were established in Hertford at the end of Marshgate Drive (formerly Gashouse Lane) in 1825.
- 4.2** A station was first constructed in the Mead Lane area in 1843, with the current Hertford East Station being built in 1888. The former Dolphin public house was also constructed at the same time. A plan showing the area at around this time is available at **Figure 3**.
- 4.3** During the 20th century the area became developed for gas storage and water treatment, although by 1958 gas production had ceased. The Mead Lane area had previously been encroached by the cutting of the River Lea Navigation when it was extended from Ware to Hertford in 1769.
- 4.4** As the twentieth century progressed, the area saw a steady extension of development for employment purposes, firstly around Marshgate Drive, and, since the 1980's, larger modern units have been laid out in areas along Mead Lane, Merchant Drive and Fountain Drive.
- 4.5** Also in the 1980's, a proposal to promote a northern relief road that would have cut across the northern edge of the Mead lane area and bridged the railway line (which had been promulgated from the 1960's onwards and related to the construction of the A414 southern relief road in Hertford at Gascoyne Way) was ruled out on cost and environmental grounds. The previously safeguarded land was subsequently released and significant sections of that land have since been redeveloped. The scheme is therefore no longer considered to represent either a viable or feasible option.
- 4.6** Since the Millennium, the former East Herts Council depot at Mill Road has been brought forward for redevelopment as The Waterfront to provide housing that now presents a far more attractive edge to the Hertford River Basin.
- 4.7** More recently, housing development has also been completed at the former TXU site – The Meads apartments. This provides a similarly high density development of mostly apartments for private sale and affordable housing. The buildings are designed to overlook the primary public corridor of the River Lea navigation and Mead Lane (see **Figure 4**).

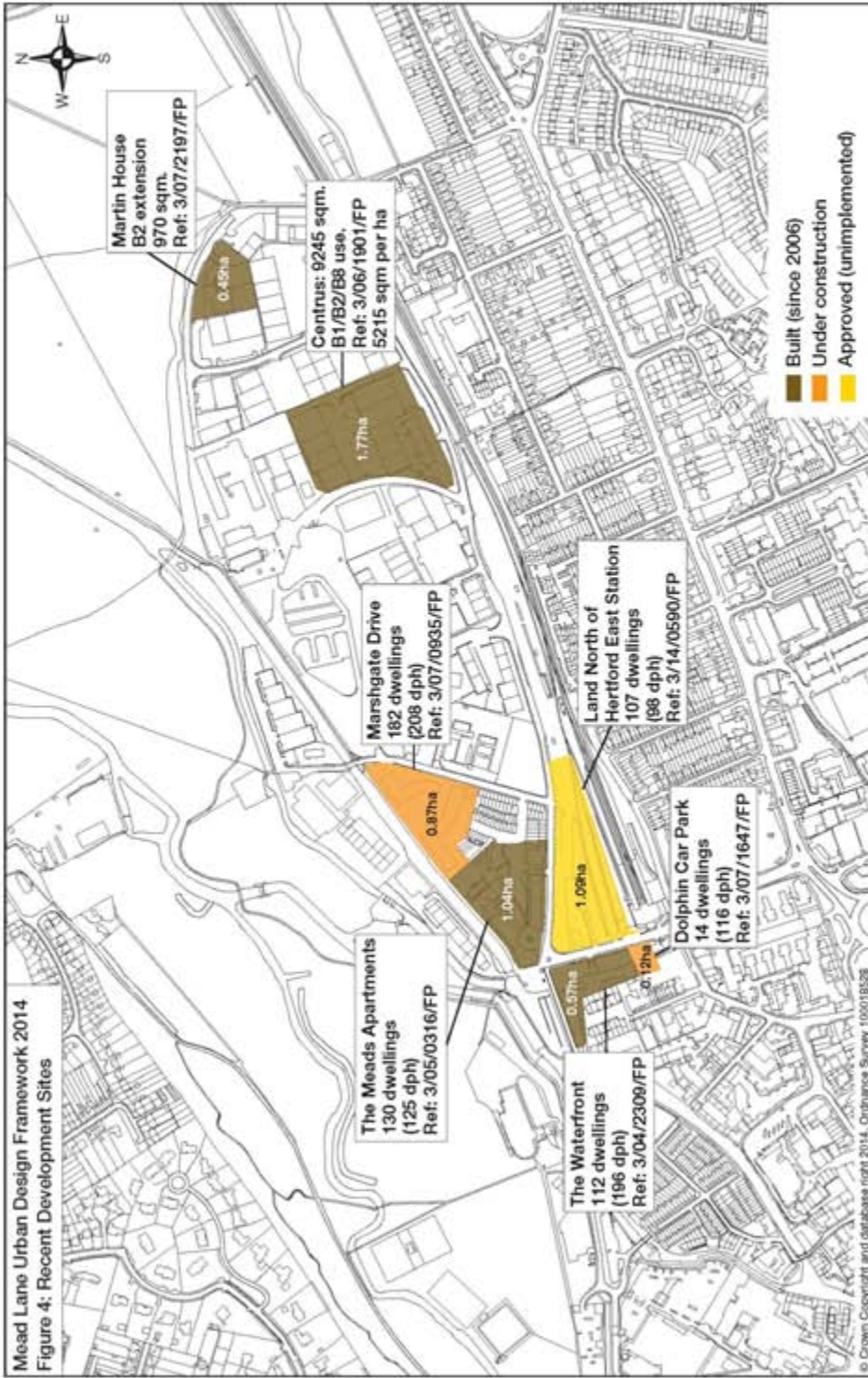


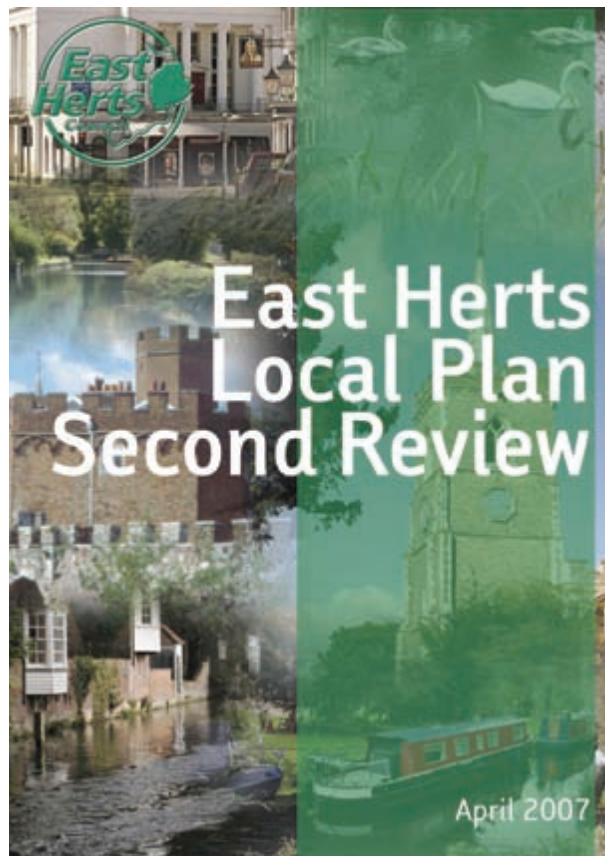
Figure 4: Recent Development Sites

5 Planning Policy Context

5.1 National planning guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the associated Planning Practice Guidance. A number of national policies are of relevance to any development proposals in the Mead Lane area.

East Herts Local Plan, Second Review, April 2007 (Saved Policies)

5.2 The main policy considerations of the East Herts Local Plan, Second Review, April 2007 (Saved Policies), with regard to the Mead Lane area, are identified below (the full Written Statement of this Local Plan is available on the East Herts Council website at www.eastherts.gov.uk/localplan)



Relevant Local Plan (2007) Policies

SD1 Making Development More Sustainable
SD2 Settlement Hierarchy
SD3 Renewable Energy
HSG1 Assessment of Sites not Allocated in this Plan
HSG3 Affordable Housing
HSG4 Affordable Housing Criteria
HSG6 Lifetime Homes
TR1 Traffic Reduction in New Developments
TR2 Access to New Developments
TR3 Transport Assessments
TR4 Travel Plans
TR7 Car Parking Standards
TR8 Car Parking – Accessibility Contributions
TR12 Cycle Routes – New Developments
TR13 Cycling – Facilities Provision (Non-residential)
TR14 Cycling – Facilities Provision (Residential)
EDE1 Employment Areas
STC1 Development in Town Centres and Edge-of-Centre
ENV1 Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2 Landscaping
ENV3 Planning Out Crime – New Development
ENV18 Water Environment
ENV19 Development on Land Liable to Flood
ENV20 Groundwater Protection
ENV21 Surface Water Drainage
ENV24 Noise Generating Development
ENV25 Noise Sensitive Development
ENV18 Water Environment
LRC3 Recreational Requirements in New Residential Development
HE5 Mead Lane Area West of Marshgate Drive
HE8 Employment Areas
IMP1 Planning Conditions and Obligations

5.3 A plan showing key policy designations is available at **Figure 5**.

5.4 SPDs that should also be taken into consideration include: Affordable Housing and Lifetime Homes, 2008; Open Space, Sport and Recreation, 2009; Planning Obligations, 2008; and Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development, 2008, which are also available on the East Herts Council website.

Technical Studies

- 5.5** In February 2008 East Herts Council commissioned Halcrow to undertake an assessment of existing areas of employment land and future employment land requirements for the District. This study will form part of the evidence base for the Council's emerging District Plan).
- 5.6** In relation to the Mead Lane area, the Study, which was published in October 2008, identified the Marshgate Drive Employment Area as “a good candidate for redevelopment to B1 if demand for B2 uses declines”. Merchant Drive is subject to the same prognosis. This supports the continuing policy emphasis that the areas be retained and developed for employment use. Although the adjacent Dicker Mill area was detailed as being of average overall quality it was recognised that “it serves the needs of smaller occupiers in Hertford”. The full Employment Land and Policy Review 2008 is available to view on the East Herts website at: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/employmentlandreview>.
- 5.7** The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which was completed in November 2008, is also relevant to the Mead Lane area in that part of the site is within designated Flood Zones 2 and 3. This will need to be considered as part of any development proposals with the sequential test applied as appropriate.

Other Policy Information

- 5.8** Prior to the adoption of the East Herts Local Plan, Second Review, April 2007, the whole of the Mead Lane area had been designated for employment use within previous Local Plans, although there were existing pockets of residential development within it. The adoption of the 2007 Local Plan resulted in a planning policy context that permitted the residential redevelopment of areas to the west of Marshgate Drive within the Mead Lane Employment Area, under Policy HE5, with potential scope for redevelopment to the east of Marshgate Drive, subject to meeting certain criteria. This also supported the preparation of a Development Brief (at paragraph 12.3.12).

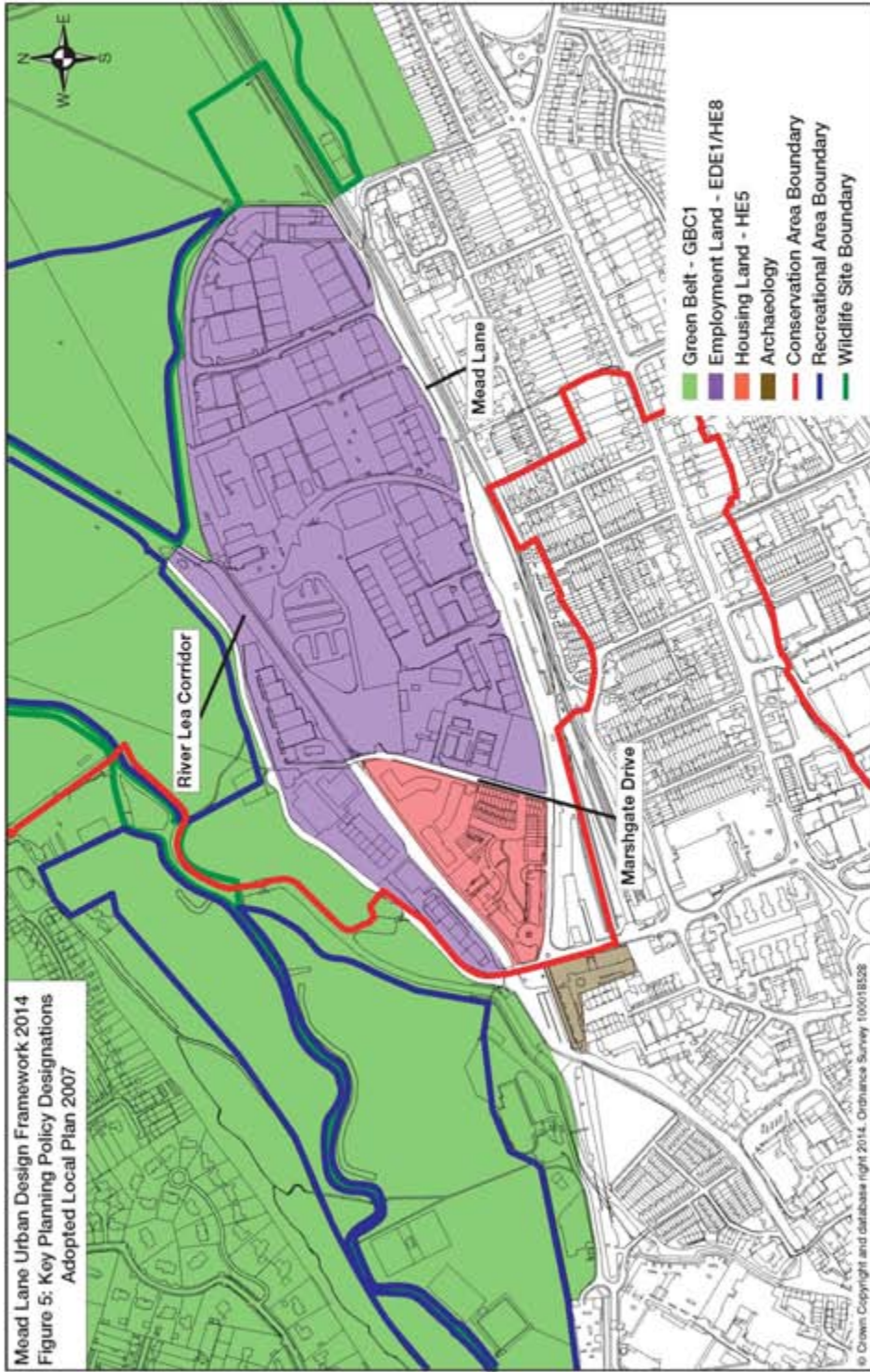


Figure 5: Key Planning Policy Designations Adopted Local Plan 2007

Problem Situations Mead Lane, Hertford



Congested Industrial Sites



Conflicting Uses,
Poor Image



Wasted Land
The Sidings



Narrow River Crossing Points



Steps
- a barrier to movement



Domestic Scale Streets
- industrial use

6 Constraints

- 6.1** The perceived constraints to the area are identified in **Figure 6**. These include the physical and environmental constraints of poor townscape, dereliction and land contamination & remediation, flood risk, noise pollution, as well as traffic hazards, road restrictions and obstacles to movement.
- 6.2** The major constraint in traffic terms is the single entry point from Mill Road, given that this serves such a wide area. The industrial traffic moving into Mead Lane conflicts with residential uses. A good example of where such conflicts are most acute is within the narrow street of Marshgate Drive. Mead Lane itself also experiences problems with speeding traffic and the route around Mill Road includes a bend of very restricted visibility. Noise pollution, due to the volume and types of traffic using this area, is also of particular concern.
- 6.3** The access to the recreational area of Hartham Common is constrained by the narrowness of bridge crossings and the steep steps are an obstruction to the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities or people using pushchairs.
- 6.4** The Mead Lane area is blighted by the undeveloped areas within it and there is clearly a design opportunity for new development to address the lack of enclosure by buildings and street form.
- 6.5** While certain locations have benefited from remediation works in the past, it is noted that a significant amount of contaminated land remains within the Mead Lane area which will need addressing prior to redevelopment.
- 6.6** Some businesses in the employment area have the scope to function on a 24/7 basis and noise attenuation is an issue that must be addressed in any new development to ensure that the successful continued operation of existing concerns is assured.
- 6.7** The location of residential dwellings within Flood Zone 3b would be contrary to the policies contained within the NPPF. Following the sequential approach, residential development should primarily be located in Flood Zone 1 with its vulnerability taken into account if development is proposed in Flood Zone 2 or 3.

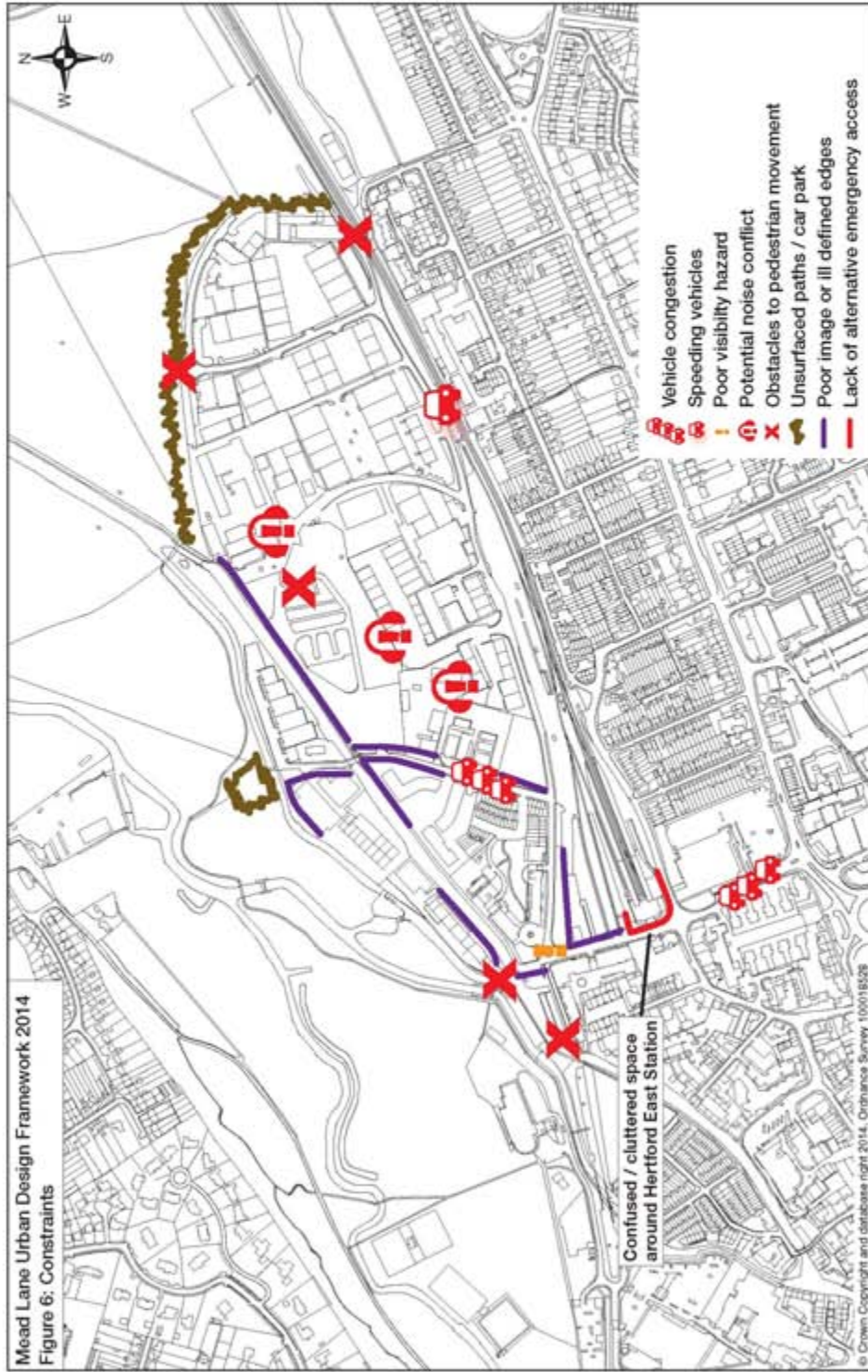


Figure 6: Constraints

7 Opportunities

- 7.1** There are widespread opportunities for the better use of land, visual enhancement and highway and access improvements throughout the area. Amongst other improvements, key aspects include the provision of a passenger transport interchange at the Hertford East end of the development; a road link as part of the redevelopment within the former Gas Storage site to enable circulatory traffic movements (in particular for buses); riverside improvements; and a footbridge to Hartham Common. These exploit the locational advantages of Mead Lane and its proximity to services, amenity areas and public transport.
- 7.2** The western end of the Mead Lane area is in close proximity to the main urban generators of activity, the Town Centre, Hertford East Station, and Hartham Leisure Centre. **Figure 7** illustrates which parts of the area are within 10 minutes walk of the town centre, the station and nearby existing food stores.
- 7.3** A major environmental asset for the site is the river corridor of the River Lea. A key design objective is to make the most of this amenity for residents, businesses and informal recreation (it lies on the route of the river walk from Hertford to Ware). The quality of new development and the wider built environment will be key to the improvement of this asset.
- 7.4** The Mead Lane area also lies adjacent to one of Hertford's 'Green Fingers', which are essentially countryside wedges of open undeveloped land that penetrate towards the centre of the town. The Hertford Civic Society's publication 'Hertford's Green Fingers' (2004) (available to view at: www.eastherts.gov.uk/hertfordgreenfingers), describes the unique quality of this vital environmental asset and provides a sound basis for offering opportunity for the integration of any new development into the wider locale, particularly the Kings Meads and Hartham Common areas within the River Rib environment. Ecological quality is also of particular importance in the context of the overall river corridor setting.
- 7.5** Although the area is not one of historic development and therefore does not contain many heritage assets, the Grade II listed building of Hertford East Station, constructed in 1888, provides a southern gateway to the area (see **Figure 8**) and is particularly significant due to its role and historic character. The UDF seeks to ensure that new development makes the most of this asset making improvements to the setting of public space around the station. Likewise, the former Dolphin public house opposite the station and constructed in conjunction with it, is also Grade II listed and adds environmental quality to the area. Both buildings lie within the Hertford Conservation Area. Along the Hertford East Line lies a Grade II listed signal box (with consent to be relocated).

- 7.6** Hertford East Station should be maintained as an operational railway station with a full range of facilities for access, including car parking, facilities for disabled and mobility impaired people. The development of further opportunities for access by sustainable modes (e.g. buses, taxis, cycling and walking) is strongly supported.
- 7.7** Other historical rail-related features of interest, including the rails which are embedded into the road surface on the bridge to Dicker Mill and at Mead Lane, should be retained wherever possible in order to contribute towards the creation of a unique sense of place in this area via new development proposals. The potential for archaeological finds should be considered as part of development proposals in consultation with Hertfordshire County Council's Archaeology section.
- 7.8** A number of key public routes, spaces and sites where opportunities exist to enhance the design of the built environment and improve the way they work have also been identified and these are illustrated in the attached **Figure 9**. By developing the specific qualities of each place the area will thereby evolve a distinctive character.
- 7.9** The key opportunity routes within the Mead Lane area include:
- Mill Road
 - Mead Lane
 - Marshgate Drive
 - River Lea navigation
- 7.10** Key opportunity sites include:
- Hertford East Sidings
 - National Grid
 - Marshgate Drive
 - Dicker Mill

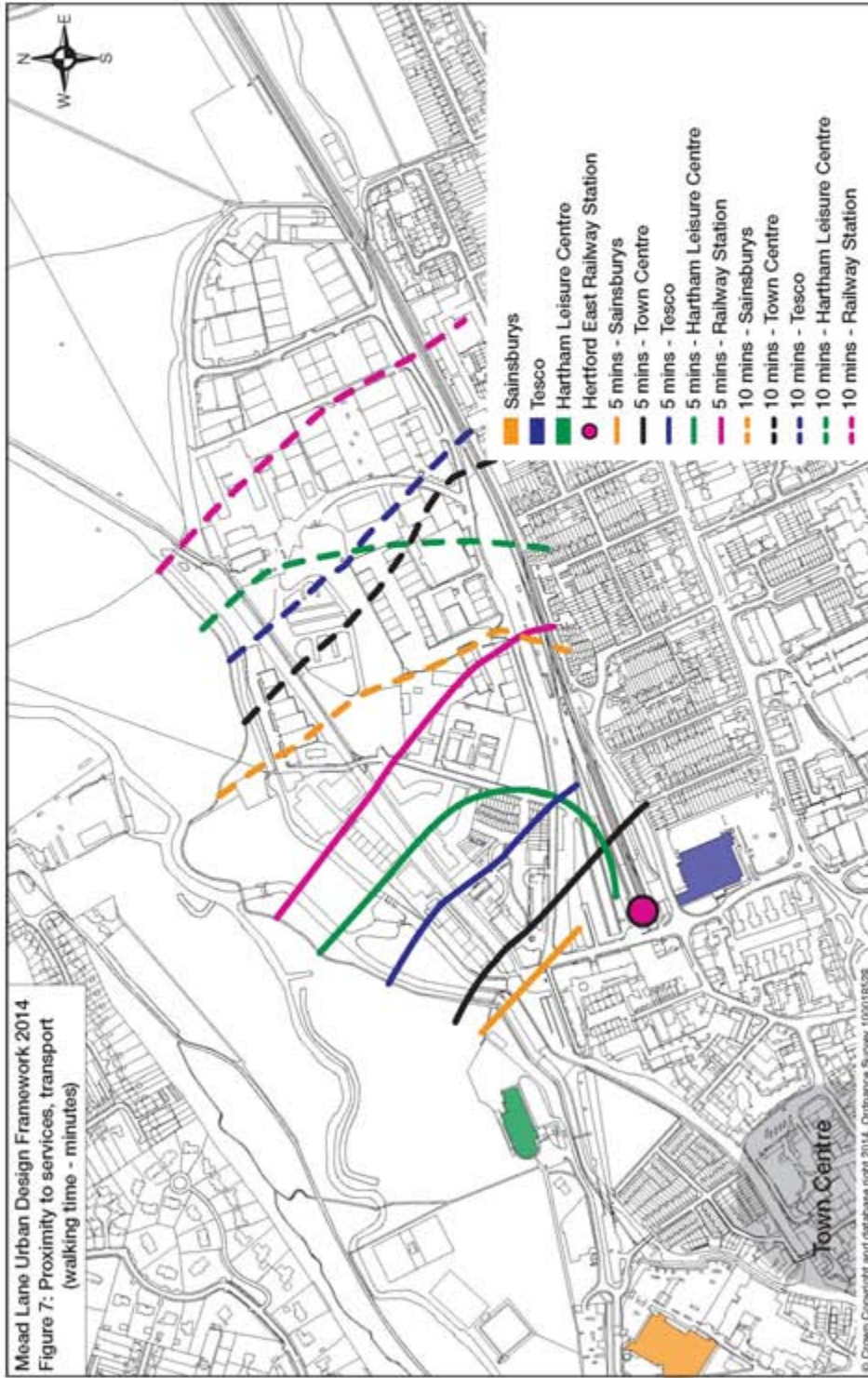


Figure 7: Proximity to services, transport (walking time - minutes)

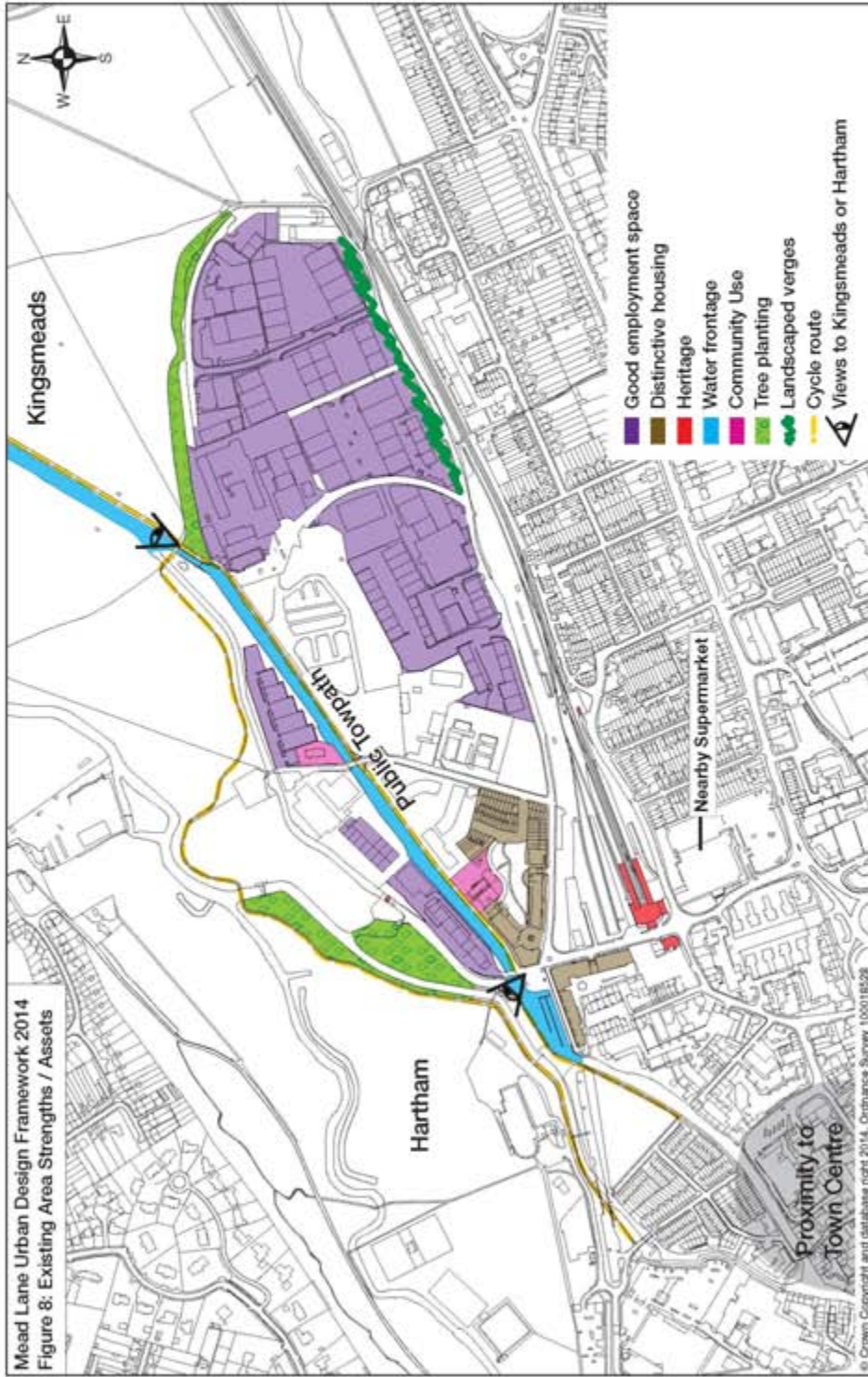


Figure 8: Area Strengths/Assets

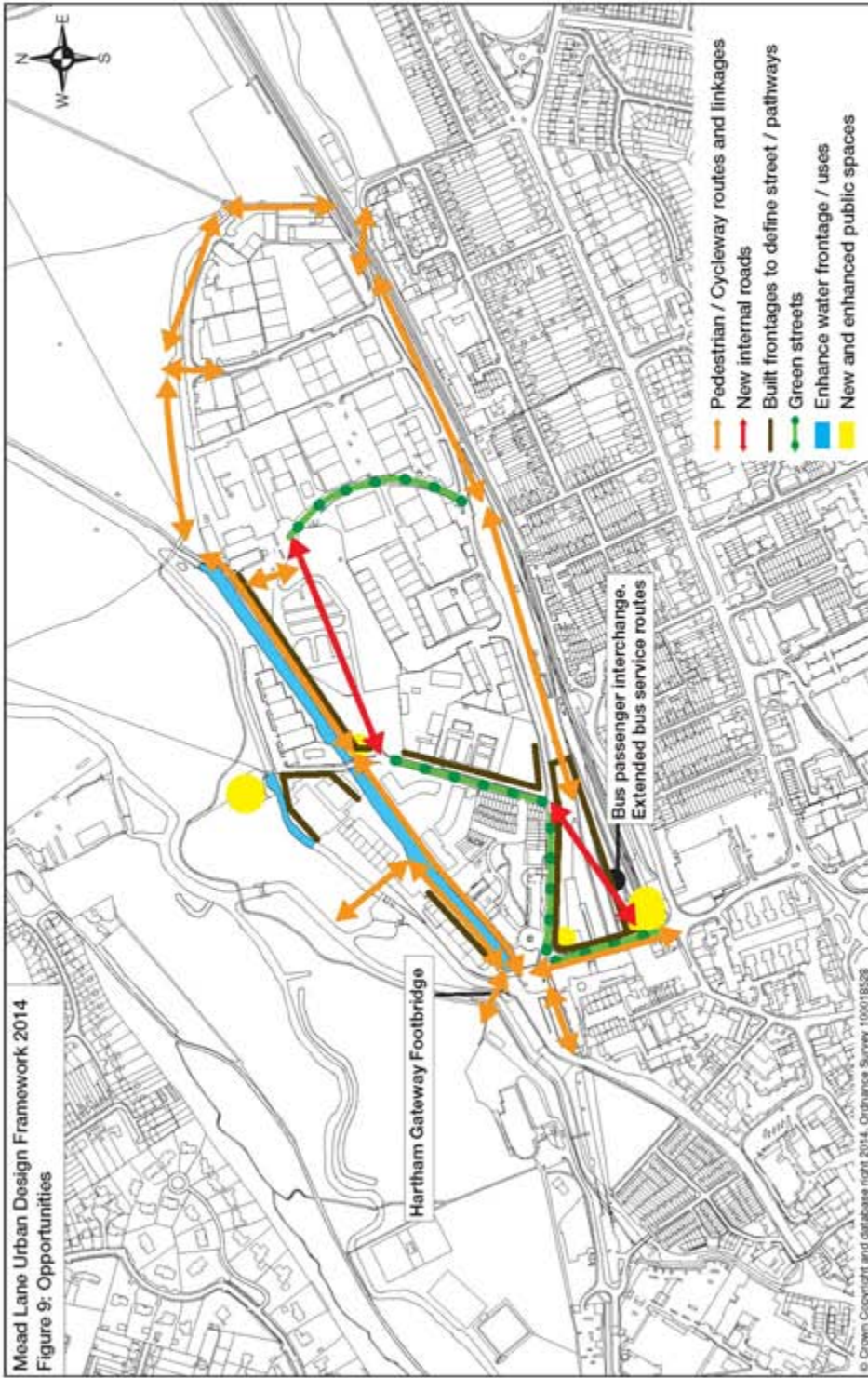


Figure 9: Opportunities

8 Movement Strategy

- 8.1** Drawing on the principle of access highlighted in the Hertford & Ware UTP, the area appraisal (in **Figures 6, 7, 8 and 9**), and by application of sustainable travel principles to all new development, the UDF identifies a movement strategy for the area at **Figure 10**.
- 8.2** Sustainable Travel Principles: The development of the Mead Lane area shall include sustainable travel principles so as to maximise the potential for walking, cycling and passenger transport and minimise the impacts of excess car use.
- 8.3** National guidance in Manual for Streets supports by evidence what is commonly understood, that the quality and design of the built environment has a major influence on people's decisions on whether to walk. Similarly, this is the case for cycling and passenger transport. Local guidance in the form of Hertfordshire County Council's 'Roads in Hertfordshire, Highway Design Guide 3rd Edition, should also be taken into account and is available to view at: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/devmanagment/roadsinherts/>. Local guidance for passenger transport provision is available via Hertfordshire County Council's website at: <http://tinyurl.com/5tbbevud>. The UDF will place importance on promoting the design of the built environment to further the aims of sustainable travel.
- 8.4** In relation to the use of cars, initiatives will be introduced and extended for car sharing and car clubs via Green Travel Plans and S106 obligations. The Mead Lane area is considered suitable for car clubs with initial investment required to start up any scheme. It is anticipated that a six car scheme could be supported by the area to serve incoming residents and would also be open to existing communities to join. Any low car parking regimes will be mitigated by the use of on street parking controls. Essential spaces for parking and servicing should be provided, in accordance with the Vehicle Parking Provision at New Developments SPD (available to view at: <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/vehicleparking>), but they must not be allowed to dominate the layout of new developments or undermine the quality of the built environment. Good design will be important in supporting the principles of promoting sustainable travel in the Mead Lane area.
- 8.5** The UDF will facilitate the provision of a second emergency access by Hertford East Station, a passenger transport interchange, the new link road, extended bus service provision within the area, and the promotion of pedestrian and cycling routes which are endorsed within the Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan, 2010.
- 8.6** The western end of the Mead Lane area is in close proximity to the main urban generators of activity, the Town Centre, Hertford East Station, and Hartham Leisure Centre. **Figure 7** illustrates which parts of the area are within 10 minutes walk of the town centre, the station and nearby existing food stores.

Development of the Mead Lane area would offer opportunities for improvement to walking and cycling links between the destinations and wider environs, such as Ware.

- 8.7** There may be opportunity for a Sustainable Travel Plan to be carried out in conjunction with a Station Travel Plan for Hertford East Station, as many of the access issues and opportunities will be common to both locations. This would also help inform the requirements for future development of station access (e.g. additional cycle and car parking, pedestrian routes and new bus services).
- 8.8** It is noted that the Greater Anglia rail franchise, which covers Hertford East Station, is due for renewal in 2013. The expectation is that, due to the Government's franchising policy, any new franchisee will have greater incentive to secure investment in its stations and it is hoped that this will provide an opportunity to achieve a new focus for both the station and the local train service.



Hertford East station

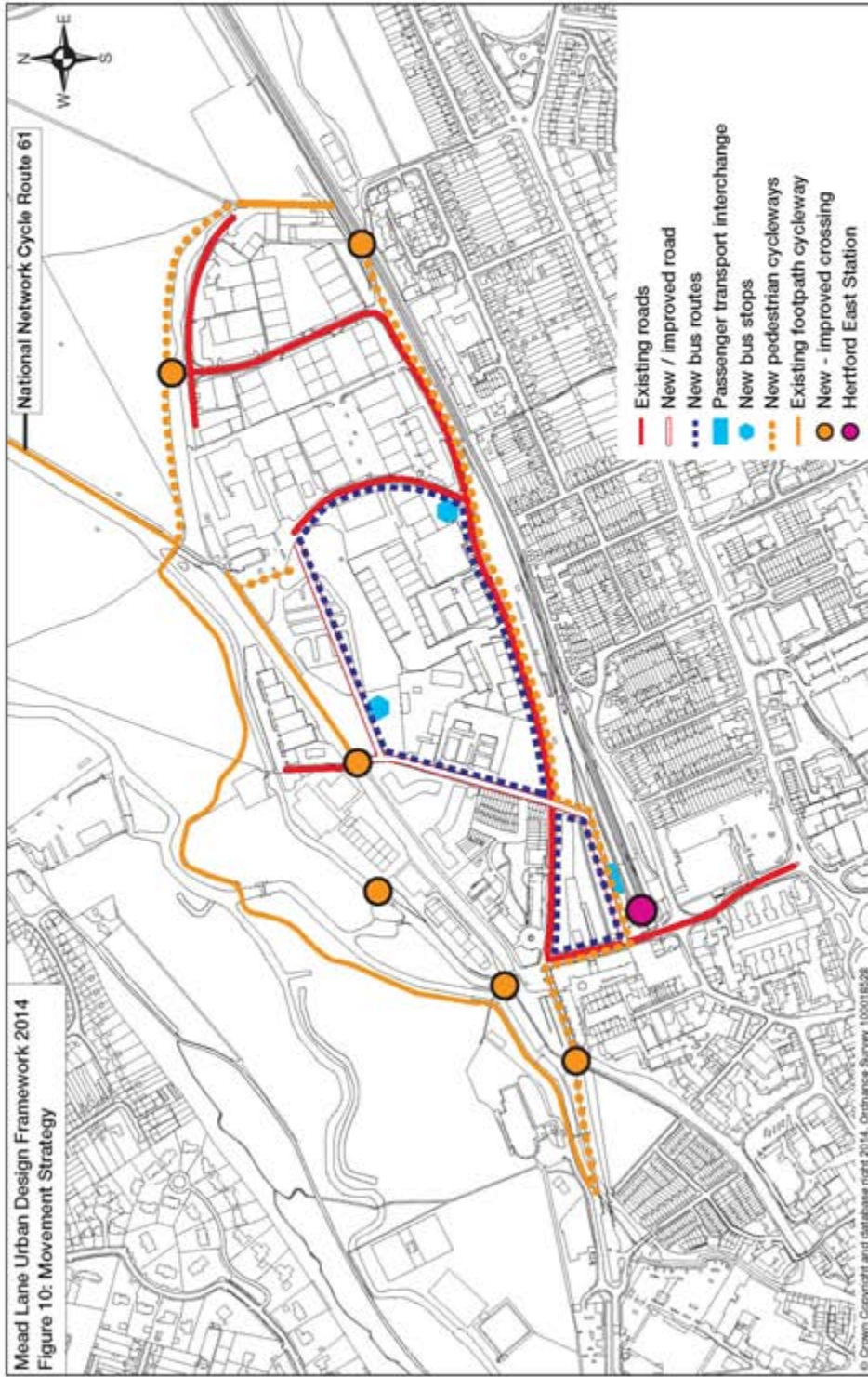


Figure 10: Movement Strategy

9 Built Form

- 9.1** The development of sites within the Mead Lane area will be expected to strengthen the urban form which, as a result of large undeveloped areas, is presently quite weak. This is revealed by the Ground Figure Plan for the area (**Figure 11**). While the structure of streets and spaces, the urban morphology of the town centre and nearby residential areas and streets is quite clearly defined, the area of Mead Lane is rather devoid of such structure and the character of the area is poorly defined and diminished accordingly. The framework will be a means to provide this much needed structure.
- 9.2** Scale: The scale of building should reflect the broader character of Hertford as a market town and be generally low to medium rise with good street enclosure. Other factors to influence the design of the built form will be the pattern of uses, surrounding townscape, accessibility and location. The existing plan of building heights show some established variations (**Figure 12**). So, for instance, higher density forms will appropriately locate to the western end of Mead Lane on sites which are more accessible to Hertford East Station and the town centre.



The Meads from the River Lea



Figure 11: Ground Figure Plan

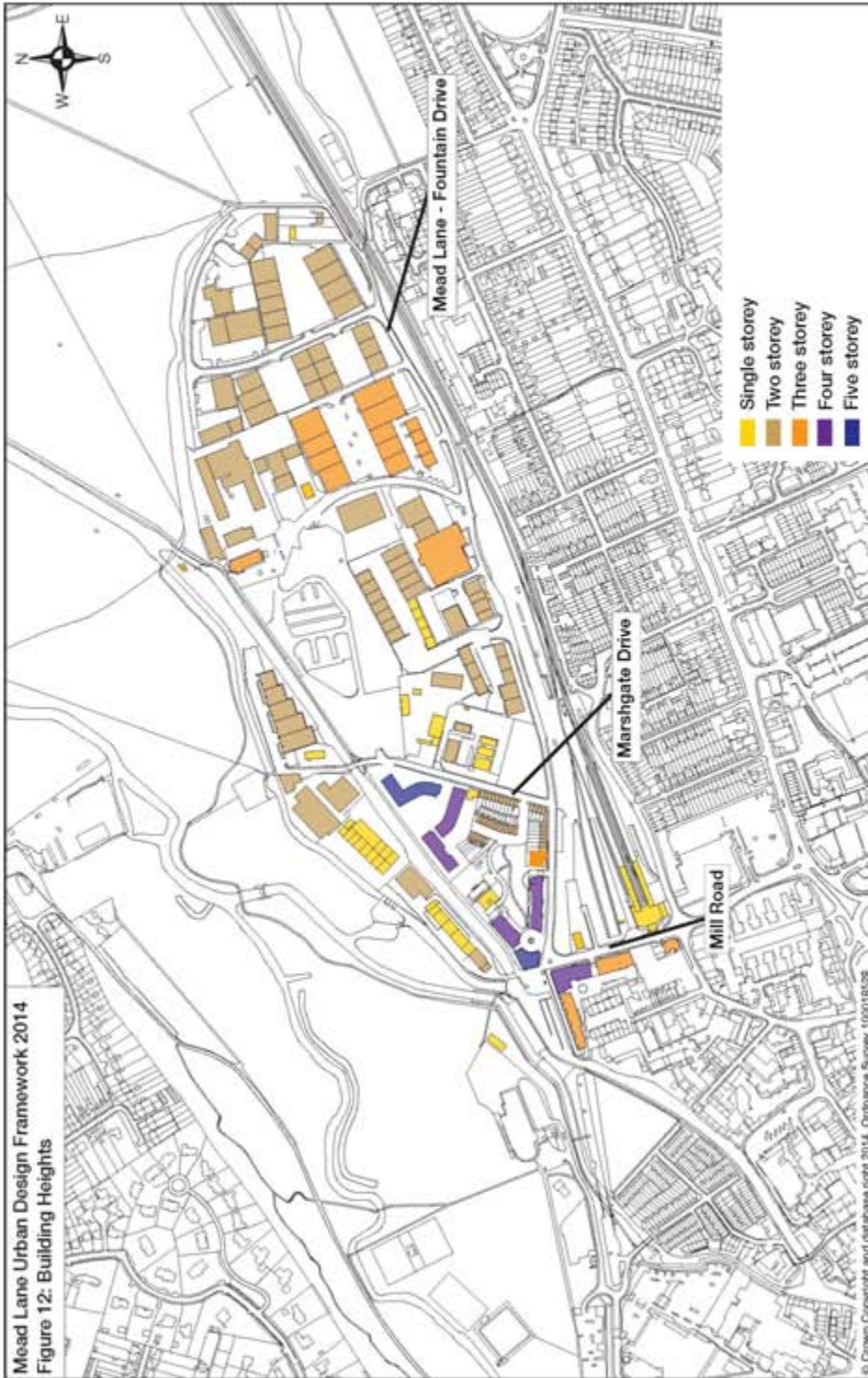


Figure 12: Building Heights

10 The Main Character Areas

- 10.1** The Framework seeks to identify and then reinforce distinctive urban character areas within the Mead Lane Area (see **Figure 13**).
- 10.2** The eastern area of Mead Lane/Merchant Drive/Fountain Drive is established employment space (Area 4) with few vacant sites and therefore will remain largely unchanged, although it will benefit from the transport infrastructure of the UDF. Outside of these general areas, it is expected that most other areas will result in a greater mix of uses, although the balance within them will vary. In general, the UDF seeks to secure the retention and enhancement of Mead Lane as an attractive employment area retaining a good quality offer for local businesses. However, it is recognised that a wider range of uses will be necessary to bring forward key sites, make the best use of urban land and achieve the broader design aims of the UDF. This will be in accordance with the provisions of adopted local plan policies. A wider range of uses will also provide a more balanced pattern of movement into and out of the area and increases the activity and vitality of the place.
- 10.3** The introduction of any residential use must always be carefully considered in relation to existing businesses and should not be developed in a way that would prejudice their normal operations and employment activity.
- 10.4** The principal character areas identified (**Figure 13**) are:
1. Mill Road
 2. Marshgate Drive
 3. River Lea corridor
 4. Mead Lane/Merchant Drive/Fountain Drive
- 10.5** **1 - Mill Road:** This will be predominantly residential with potential opportunities for a range of other commercial uses such as retail and restaurant uses. The built form should provide a perimeter block of higher density and result in a clear street structure with good connection to and overlooking of walking routes. Building heights will vary from generally two and a half storeys to three and a half storeys. Corner locations on Mill Road will provide a focus for longer views so must be soundly derived and show attention to detailed design.
- 10.6** A priority link to bring forward is that between Hertford East Station and the National Cycle Network Route 61 at Hartham Common. This should include a 3m pedestrian/cycleway and a new bridge crossing wider than existing and avoiding the barrier of steps. Due to changes in level and the number of linkages, this bridge will be of bespoke design. An architectural competition will be expected to provide a worthy design for what should be a local landmark and gateway between Hartham Common and Mead Lane.

- 10.7** Public frontages and elevations should reflect themes within the site surroundings and be attractively proportioned and interesting. The main roads will be designed with a strong landscaped structure, “green streets” of high amenity, to be particularly encouraging for walking and cycling.
- 10.8 Mill Road Opportunities** – The UDF seeks that new development will bring forward/support the following public benefits:

1 - Mill Road Opportunities

- 1a – provision of a new link road and passenger interchange north of Hertford East station (precise locations to be determined);
- 1b – provision of secondary point of access solely for emergency vehicle use at the frontage of Hertford East Station;
- 1c – provision of public space within an enhanced setting of Hertford East Station, including improved pedestrian access from the station towards the town centre;
- 1d – pedestrian/cycleway link between Hartham Common and Hertford East Station including a new landmark crossing of the River Lea;
- 1e – completion of the bridge link from Hartham Car Park to The Waterfront following the old railway route;
- 1f – a pocket garden, open space opposite the Hartham Common entry;
- 1g – active built edges and uses around the Station and main roads;
- 1h – an extension of bus routes into the area;
- 1i – options for a modest expansion of station car parking, subject to evidence of demand, and increased cycle parking provision;
- 1j – a comprehensively planned approach to the area of land between Mead Lane and the Railway line.

- 10.9 2. Marshgate Drive:** mixed employment and residential areas, with some community uses incorporated and public spaces along the river to enhance the quality of the environment. The street will be widened and formed by development on its east side with space for generous footways, street trees and on street residents and car share/car club parking. The design of the road should be inviting and attractive to all users, and reflect that this is part of a strategic pedestrian and cycle route directly linking Hartham Common and Kings Meads to the town and the station.
- 10.10 Marshgate Drive Opportunities** – The UDF seeks that new development will bring forward/support the following benefits:

2 - Marshgate Drive Opportunities

- 2a – improved footpath widths and provisions for local parking;
- 2b – a widened road for improved access and space for street trees/verges;
- 2c – improved surfacing and landscaping of the Kings Mead car park;
- 2d – a well defined street character;
- 2e – new good quality employment spaces as well as residential uses;
- 2f – road layout that allows circulatory traffic movements (in particular for buses) throughout the wider area;
- 2g – reduction in flood risk by increasing storage capacity of the floodplain where possible.

10.11 3 - The River Lea Corridor: the character of this area will be linear and mostly defined by the water corridor of the River Lea navigation and the way in which buildings and uses are designed around and respond to it. It will provide a mixed employment and residential area with leisure and community spaces. The towpath corridor along the south side of the river, which forms part of the Lea Valley Walk, will be upgraded and widened and the attractiveness of its setting reinforced. Such an initiative would be welcomed by The Canal and River Trust and would be consistent with advice contained in its Policy Advice Note: Inland Waterways Unlocking the Potential and Securing the Future of Inland Waterways through the Planning System available to view at: <http://tinyurl.com/3gftnue>. The careful location of narrowboats and supporting services can provide interest and reinforce the distinctive character of the area. The employment premises along the north side of the river (Dicker Mill) are valuable business spaces that provide scope for meeting the needs of smaller occupiers and it would not be in accordance with adopted local plan policy or the interests of the area as a whole that these be lost. Flooding considerations may restrict residential development options in this area subject to the application of the Sequential Test and, if necessary, the Exception Test. However, redevelopment of units within an employment use category should be encouraged to provide units that meet modern requirements. There may be some scope to improve the river setting through selective redevelopment. Existing community facilities such as the Hertford Scout Group and the Canoe Club should be retained and, where possible, enhanced. In design terms, the Lea and its surrounds should be considered as an entity and not just a boundary for development. New housing should face the navigation and its towpath and any parking should be discrete. The potential for sensitive and appropriate landscaping should be seized.

10.12 River Lea Corridor Opportunities – the UDF seeks that new development will bring forward/support the following key benefits:

3 - River Lea Corridors Opportunities

- 3a – enhanced towpath routes for pedestrians and cyclists and for people with a disability, and better access to the towpath itself;
- 3b – enhanced non vehicular linkages to the employment areas to the south;
- 3c – a resting green space/café/restaurant dining spaces on the river frontage (which could include potential for the introduction of a floating café/restaurant, perhaps provided on a narrowboat/within a newly formed basin);
- 3d – spaces for community use/benefit including support for opportunities to provide for public art interventions;
- 3e – potential for improved public access to north side associated with a new public route to the site of the original Dicker Mill;
- 3f – improved access to passenger transport via related improvements to local road network and provisions to extend bus services;
- 3g – maximise the ecological opportunities from redevelopment and existing land parcels not planned for redevelopment.

10.13 4 - Mead Lane/Merchant Drive/Fountain Drive: large format modern business spaces predominantly in employment use with good road access, notwithstanding congestion at Mill Road entrance. The area is defined by its robust green edges and retains an attractive amount of soft landscaped verges and planting within it too, a feature to be retained and improved. The pedestrian cyclist links to the wider surroundings are good but with much scope for improvement.

10.14 Mead Lane/Merchant Drive/Fountain Drive Opportunities – the UDF seeks that new development will bring forward/support the following benefits:

4 - Mead Lane/Merchant Drive/Fountain Drive Opportunities

- 4a – 3m pedestrian/cycleway to parallel Mead Lane (on south side);
- 4b – increased access to bus services;
- 4c – improved crossing of rail line;
- 4d – improved surfacing and links to connect footpaths and cycleways on Kings Meads;
- 4e – improved vehicle circulation internally to Mead Lane by new circulating road linking Marshgate Drive (east) and Mead Lane.

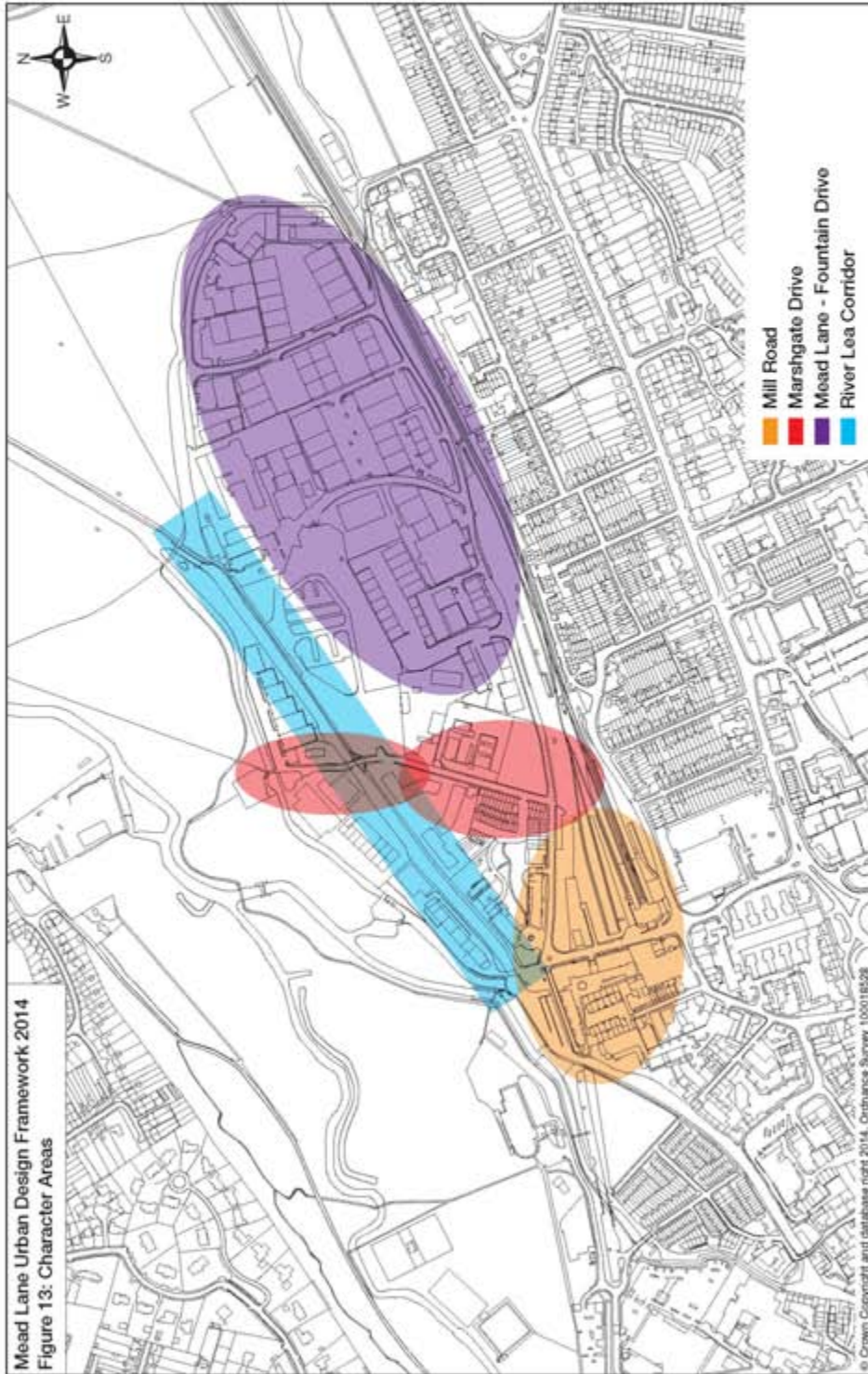


Figure 13: Character Areas

11 Design and Sustainability Standards

- 11.1** Developers will be encouraged to achieve a high level of sustainable design in accordance with nationally recognised standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM and Passivhaus. The use of SUDS to achieve on-site 1 in 100 year climate change attenuation will also be encouraged. Subject to the overall coherence of design, the incorporation of green roofs and living walls will be promoted to foster sustainable drainage, heating and cooling benefits and biodiversity.
- 11.2** The Hertfordshire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study (2010) identified Hertford as an Opportunity Area for District Heating. Given its town centre location and the potential mix and scale of development, careful consideration should be given to the feasibility of a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant integrated with a District Heating scheme.
- 11.3** A sustainability statement setting out the provisions and standards to be achieved will be required to be submitted with planning applications. Developments shall be certified by approved assessors. In considering the design of new developments, regard should be had to the Building for Life 12 standard.
- 11.4** In the design of the public realm and public highways the design principles of Manual for Streets and Roads in Hertfordshire, 3rd Edition (available to view on Hertfordshire County Council's website at: <http://www.hertsdirect.org.services/transtreets/devmanagement/roadsinherts/>), shall be adopted by developers to promote the quality within the whole built environment and promote the area's attractiveness for pedestrians. Particular consideration should be given to lighting arrangements within new developments to ensure that the natural environment of the River Lea and its banks are
- 11.5** Likewise, the design principles for bus provision within the area are set out in Hertfordshire County Council's 'Bus Infrastructure in Hertfordshire - A Design Guide' (available at: www.hertsdirect.org/docs/pdf/b/businfrainhertsDG).
- 11.6** Hertfordshire County Council also has adopted Rail Strategy and Bus Strategies, which are linked to the Local Transport Plan (LTP3). The contents of these Strategies should be taken into account in any new development proposals for the Mead Lane area.
- 11.7** The Policy documents of the East Herts Local Plan, Second Review, April 2007, (Saved Policies), and associated SPDs provide a number of key references, such as the need to provide up to 40% affordable housing within new developments and the requirement to provide a minimum of 15% lifetime homes. S106 obligations will generally be calculated on the basis of the adopted Planning Obligations SPD, taking into account the content of the HCC Toolkit in order to ensure that the full range of requirements are met. However,

it should be recognised that the scope for payments will be increased in the Mead Lane area to ensure that the objectives of the UDF are fully met. Where flexibility is demanded on viability grounds, it will be expected that a full viability assessment will be prepared by an agreed independent assessor. It is anticipated that pooled contributions may be necessary in order to achieve all of the aims of the UDF.

12 Summary - A Vision for Mead Lane

- 12.1** The Mead Lane Urban Design Framework seeks to provide firm guidance within which developers and designers can respond to brownfield development opportunities and provide a high quality, attractive and liveable neighbourhood – an area that is quite distinctively its own place.
- 12.2** It should be recognised that, although short-term economic cycles are experienced, this UDF is concerned with ensuring that a long-term strategy to regenerate the area can be successfully achieved.

Future Visions for Mead Lane, Hertford



Well Connected



Walkable



Green Streets



Well Overlooked - Safe



Liveable



Popular Employment Spaces



Easy Access To Countryside



Sustainable Travel



Neighbourly

- 12.3** Although there are no timescales, the UDF seeks to achieve the following vision and objectives for the Mead Lane area:

A Vision for the Mead Lane Area

Overview

The Mead Lane area will be enlivened by a healthy mix of uses and a network of streets and paths that provide good internal connections, promote walking and cycling and exploit the locational advantages of the area (see Figure 14).

Land Use

As a whole, the area will remain predominantly in employment uses continuing to provide for the towns employment needs. However, there is scope for introducing more residential development with ancillary retail and recreational space.

Accessibility

Traditionally an area isolated by its poor connections, the Design Framework will ensure that links will be improved in part by new roads, but principally by the upgrading and fostering of the sustainable travel choices of walking, cycling, car sharing and improved access to bus and rail services. The framework reflects the evidence that the quality of the built environment can itself promote healthier travel and lifestyle choices. Barriers to movement across the river shall be replaced with new crossing points and the formation of the river corridor area will ensure that the waterways are fully integrated into the area. A new bridge link to Hartham will provide the opportunity for distinctive architecture and a landmark entry into the area from the northwest. The vision will enable the greater balance of journeys to be by sustainable modes and reduce the related impacts of private car use whilst providing for necessary car usage. The new road link north of Hertford East Station will be able to divert more of the industrial traffic away from residential areas while elsewhere improved roads facilitating a greater ease of movement within Marshgate Drive.

Design

Much of the area has been a blank canvas for new development but the framework seeks to ensure that local references are retained and local features exploited in an emerging common language of building. There is no identified need for iconic or landmark tall buildings within the area, although some locations must acknowledge they are the focus for longer views. Architecture of interest and quality, contextual building that respects the town's character and its wider surroundings is sought. In particular, a good street form should be established to give Mead Lane a strong sense of being a worthy destination and place to live, to work and enjoy in its own right.

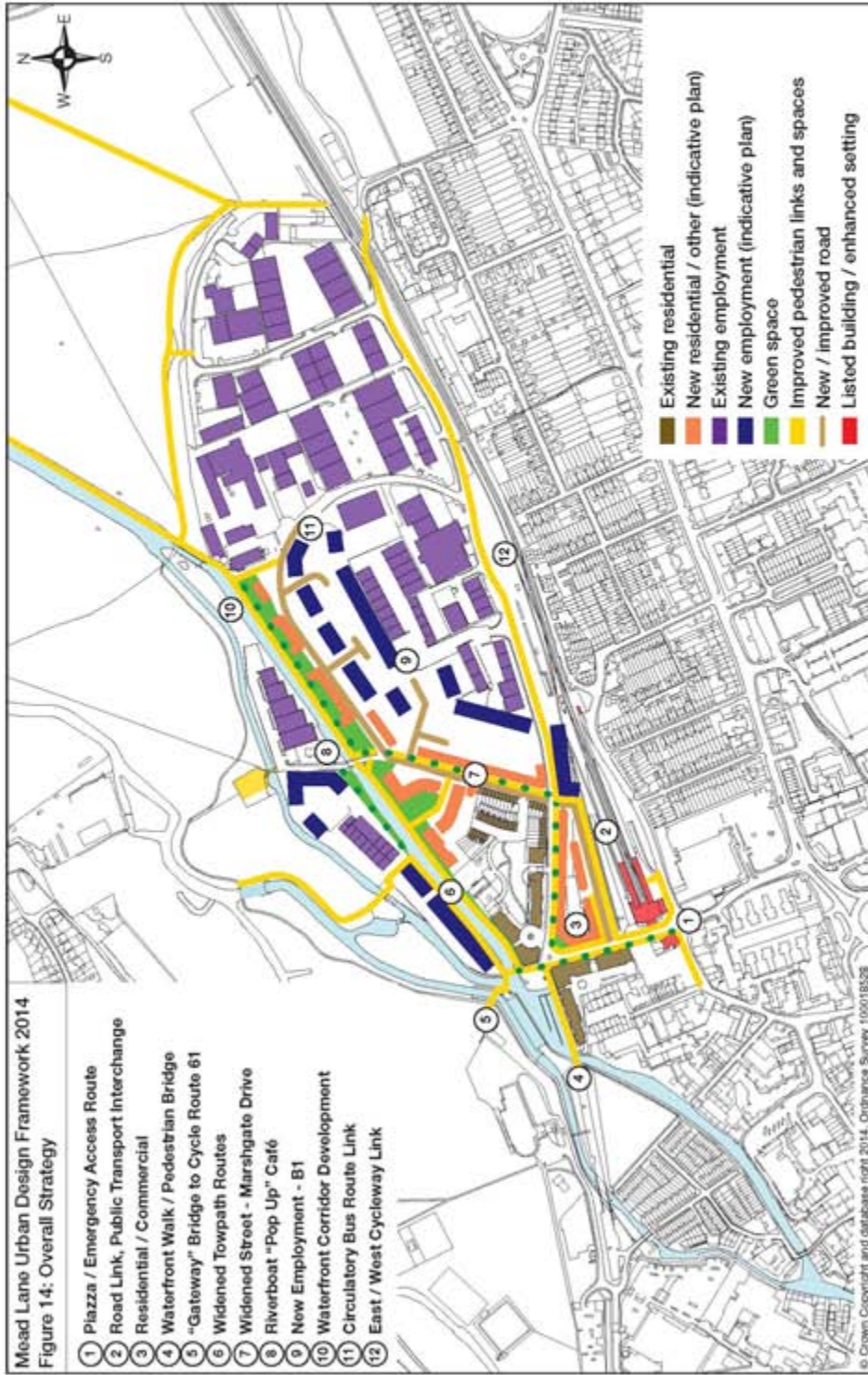


Figure 14: Overall Strategy