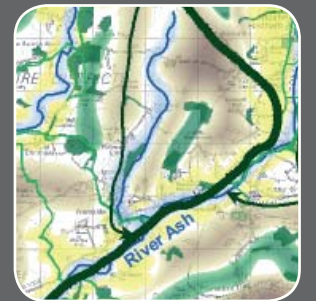


# EAST HERTS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN - FINAL REPORT

Prepared for East Herts Council  
by  
Land Use Consultants

March 2011



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Land Use Consultants team comprised: Kate Ahern (Principal), Andrew Tempany (Project Manager), Alex Massey, Emma Deen, Fearghus Foyle, Graham Savage, Sofie Swindlehurst, Matthew Parkhill and Diana Manson.

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# 1 Introduction

- I.1 Green infrastructure (GI) is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of sustainable development and communities. It is a ‘must have’, due to the many social, environmental and economic benefits it offers.
- I.2 Green infrastructure planning and delivery completes Hertfordshire’s consideration of sustainable land use and landscape planning, expressed in **Green Infrastructure in Hertfordshire: A Framework**<sup>i</sup>. It helps bridge the gap between strategic planning and site design and management, providing messages to inform spatial land planning and development management decisions.
- I.3 Working on behalf of a network of stakeholders, in particular members of the Hertfordshire Technical Chief Officers Association (HTCOA), Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT), Land Use Consultants (LUC) was commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council in September 2010 to develop the Hertfordshire GI Plans. This encompassed a county wide strategic Green Infrastructure Plan for Hertfordshire/the Green Arc and ‘local level’ district Green Infrastructure Plans for seven Hertfordshire districts. The East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan has been developed in parallel with the strategic county wide plan and with those for Watford, Dacorum, Three Rivers, Hertsmere, Welwyn Hatfield and St Albans. Account has also been taken of existing GI plans to ensure links across boundaries, with the strategic GI Plan also considering existing GI work in Hertfordshire, such as the North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan.
- I.4 This is a high level Green Infrastructure Plan, which identifies further work which will be needed in future to deliver green infrastructure. Where further, more detailed green infrastructure planning work will be required, this is also referenced.
- I.5 The Green Infrastructure Plan for East Herts:
- Provides an overview of existing green infrastructure assets within the District;
  - Sets out an assessment of the ability of green infrastructure to provide multiple environmental and social and in some cases economic functions;
  - Considers opportunities for enhancement and creation of green infrastructure;
  - Outlines a series of potential projects to deliver multiple functions and benefits, and
  - Provides advice on taking green infrastructure proposals forward through spatial planning and practical delivery.

### What is green infrastructure?

- I.6 Green infrastructure is described in **Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning**, as:
- a network of multi-functional greenspace...both new and existing...both rural and urban...which supports the natural and ecological processes...and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities...”*
- I.7 This definition is reinforced and expanded in **Green Infrastructure in Hertfordshire: A Framework** and in Natural England’s **Green Infrastructure Guidance**<sup>ii</sup>.

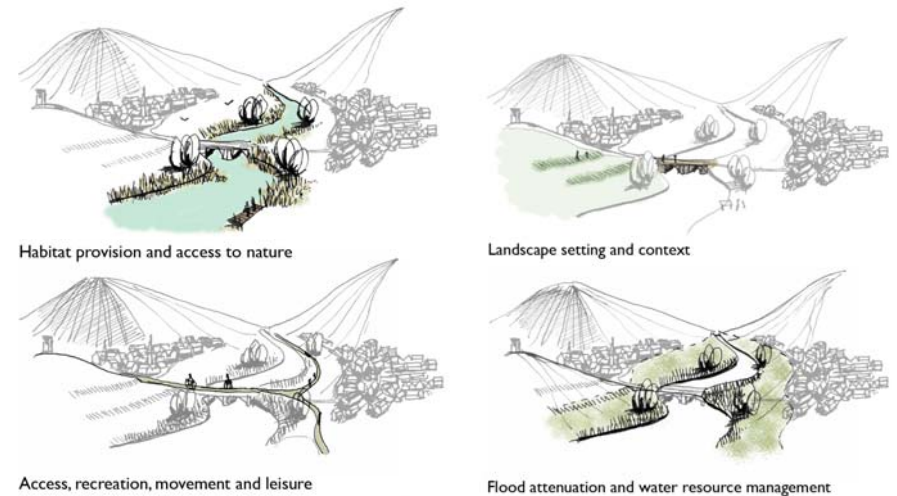




**Aspects of multi-functional green infrastructure – links and spaces for people and wildlife**

**Benefits and relevance of the green infrastructure approach to East Herts**

1.8 In the face of competition for resources and environmental change, now more than ever we must look to our landscape and to sites to perform the widest range of functions for people, communities and quality of life, wildlife and ecosystems. This concept of ‘multi-functionality’ is shown in the illustration from Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Guidance.



**The green infrastructure approach: One site performing multiple functions (source: Natural England, Green Infrastructure Guidance)<sup>iii</sup>**

1.9 East Herts has a rich green infrastructure resource centred on the principal river valleys of the Lee, Beane, Quin, Rib, Ash and Stort in addition to a varied mosaic of landscape and habitat types, such as grassland, ancient and plantation woodland and farmland. The landscape of East Herts is a relatively simple and unified, intact and strongly rural, often tranquil chalk landscape of lightly settled Wooded Plateau Farmlands, cut by a network of well defined Wooded Chalk Valleys. East Herts has a distinctly rural character defined by the agricultural land use, low density settlement and the tranquil river valleys that flow through the agricultural landscape

- I.10 There is also a wide array of existing green infrastructure assets and initiatives in the District, such as promoted greenway routes along the river corridors and on disused railway lines, Hartham Common and the Meads and the historic landscape of Pishiobury Park and ongoing positive restoration taking place at Panshanger Country Park.
- I.11 Against this must be considered issues of green infrastructure need and demand, how existing green infrastructure is performing, and the potential for green infrastructure to contribute to landscape and environmental enhancement in more fragmented, southern parts of the District (presence of major transport corridors and large settlements).
- I.12 In some cases, existing GI assets are delivering the necessary functionality, in others not. This pattern of demand and supply forms the basis for the analyses undertaken and proposals made in this plan.
- I.13 This Green Infrastructure Plan seeks to address links and connections, alternative greenspace provision and low cost, maximum benefit interventions such as improved landscape management to deliver a wider array of functions. It also looks at ways to influence sustainable living modes and transport choices through non spatial and educational projects to support spatial proposals.

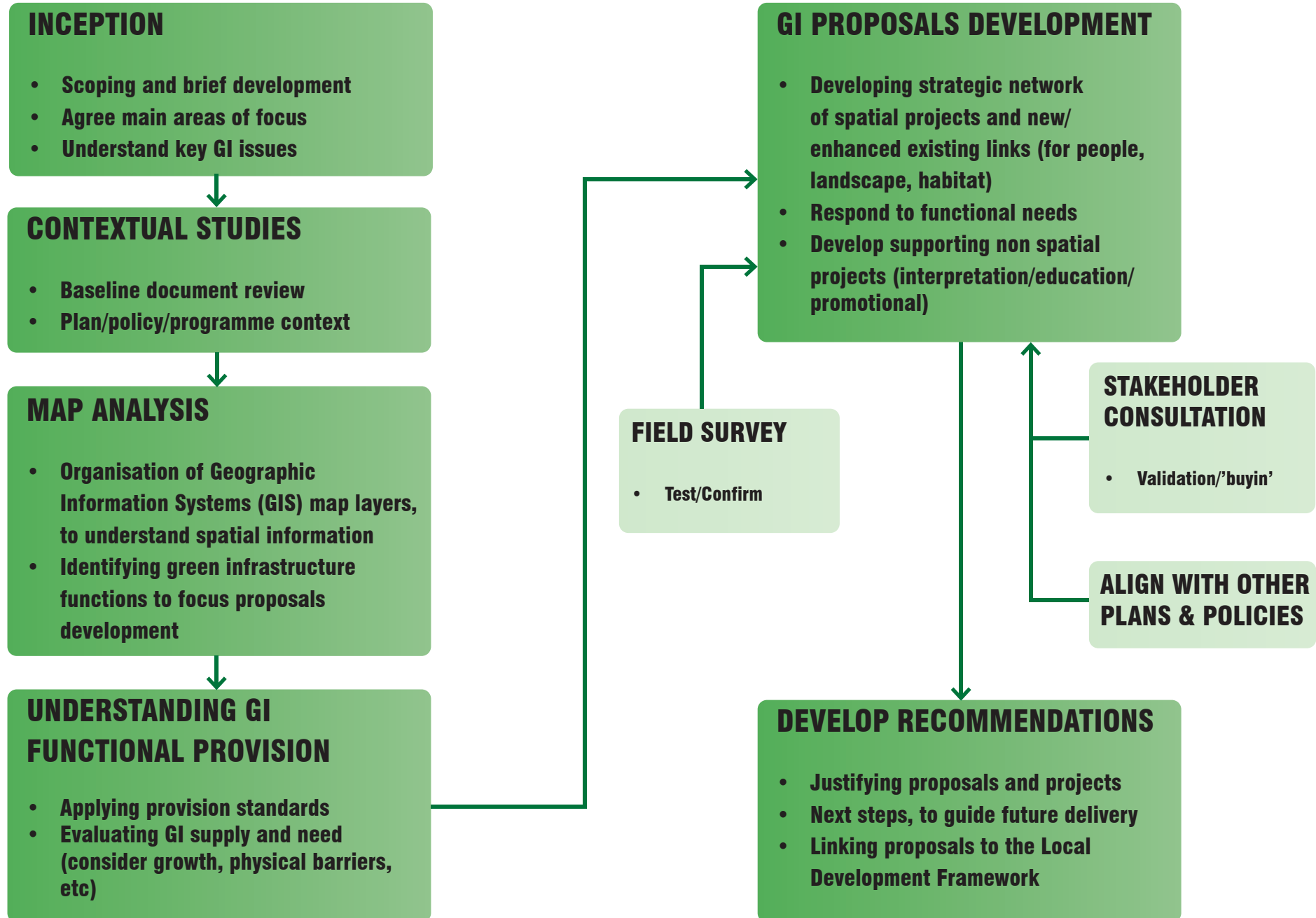


**The varied green infrastructure of East Herts**

### **The green infrastructure planning process – a summary**

- I.14 For the purposes of this study, the green infrastructure planning process can be summarised in the diagram overleaf.

# Developing the Green Infrastructure Plan: Summary of Process



## STRUCTURE OF THIS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

I.15 The remainder of this Green Infrastructure Plan is set out as follows:

- Section 2: Green infrastructure demand and opportunity in East Herts by function
- Section 3: Proposed green infrastructure network and projects
- Section 4: Linking the green infrastructure proposals to local spatial planning

I.16 Appendices are presented in a separate volume. **Appendix 1** sets out the record of stakeholder consultation undertaken as part of the study. **Appendix 2** shows the summary findings from a thematic document review undertaken to set the GI Plan in context. **Appendix 3** sets out the summary findings from the functional analysis.



**Aspects of the green infrastructure of East Herts**  
**Top – (l) The River Ash, (r) Hartham Common and the Meads;**  
**Bottom – Typical agricultural landscape in East Herts**

## 2 Green infrastructure demand and opportunity in East Herts by function

- 2.1 To evaluate existing green infrastructure opportunities, a rapid thematic document review was undertaken to understand the environmental and social context. The themes for the document review are different from but are linked to and have informed the separate analysis of GI functional provision.
- 2.2 Themes for the literature review were:
- Access and recreation
  - Landscape character and experience; settlement setting
  - The historic environment
  - Health and deprivation
  - Functional ecosystems and flood risk
  - Productive landscapes (orchards and allotments) and land in Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)
  - Land remediation (issues concerning mineral sites and restoration, derelict and previously developed land)
  - Nature conservation
- 2.3 Documents reviewed and key messages from each theme are set out in **Appendix 2**.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FUNCTIONS

- 2.4 Key to understanding green infrastructure and to justifying the proposals is consideration of the functions green infrastructure can and needs to perform.
- 2.5 The eleven functions which have been identified for this Green Infrastructure Plan are shown overleaf.
- 2.6 These functions have been defined and mapped to understand geographical/spatial provision of green infrastructure assets in East Herts. When considered alongside main settlements, an indication of GI demand is also provided. Consideration has been given to shortfalls and potential need in the context of future growth as identified in the emerging Core Strategy, where these areas are known. The functions have also been used to develop proposals in response to identified need and to evaluate proposals, for prioritisation and future implementation by others.



## Green infrastructure functions

access



approach



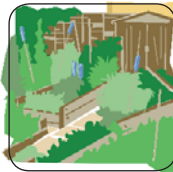
health



ecosystems



productive



historic



sustainability



remediation



nature



experience



flood





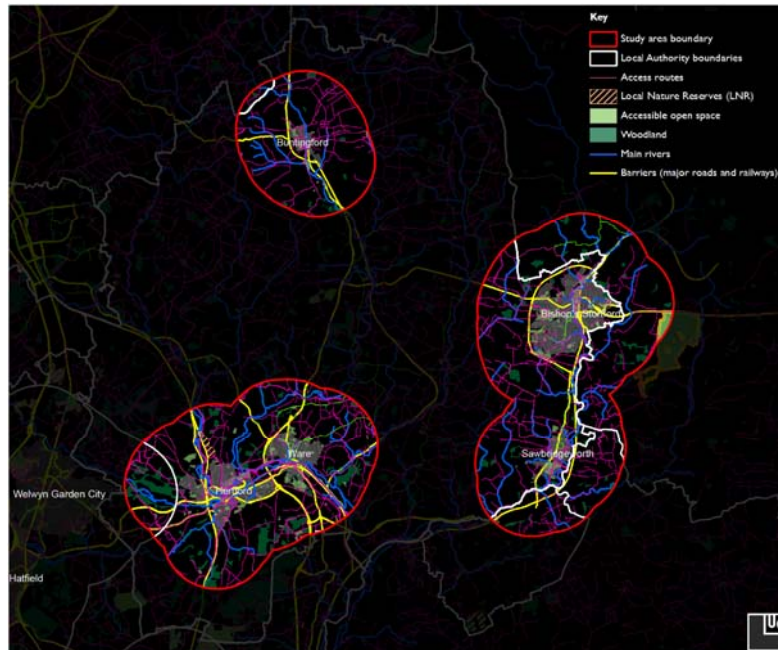


- 2.7 Each of the functions have been considered at either district/borough wide scale or settlement scale (including a 2.5km buffer) which varies between function and district/borough. The analysis methodology for each function (including provision standards applied) is set out at **Appendix 3**. Supporting mapping showing the distribution of GI assets and their functions is shown in relation to each function, below.

### **THE FUNCTIONS – SUMMARY OF NEED, SUPPLY AND OPPORTUNITY IN EAST HERTS**

- 2.8 The findings from each functional analysis are summarised below.

## Access to recreation



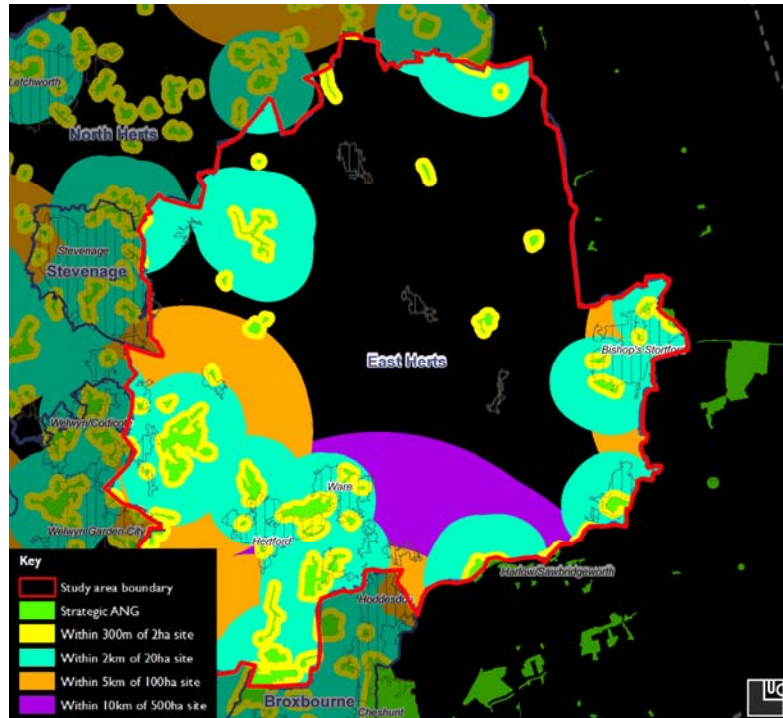
- 2.9 Accessible open space forms a key part of the quality of life of communities, although it is recognised that functionality varies according to the type and size of spaces. Areas may not always be well served due to settlement evolution and the presence of barriers to access. These issues are both relevant to some degree in parts of East Herts.
- 2.10 Applying the Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANGSt) standards deficiency in 2ha ANG and space for children sites has been identified at Hertford, the

former which should be prioritised for action (mainly through enhanced links to the wider countryside via the river valleys from Hartham Common out into the countryside (see the proposed GI network in **Figure 3.1**, section 3). Within Hertford, there appear to be few off-road links between the urban area and the surrounding countryside, and this is particularly true to the north and west of Hertford, which is severed from the countryside by the A414 and B1502 road, and this is an issue which should be addressed (see **projects 1 and 2** in section 3). Cycle provision is also limited within Hertford which should be supported through improved access as part public access enhancements across the District (as shown on **Figure 3.1**, section 3). There are also deficiencies in strategic ANG (500ha) at Bishop's Stortford, while at Buntingford there is poor provision of ANG and as well as space for children. In order to improve access to open space enhanced links along the disused railway line and river corridors has been identified (see **projects 3 & 4** in section 3).

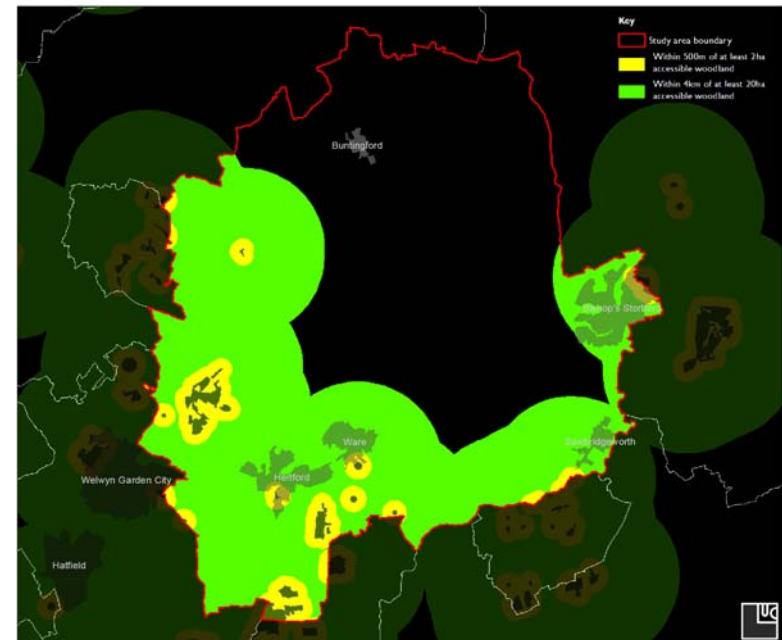
- 2.11 At Ware there is poor provision in ANG at Ware, as well as in space for children and young people. This should be alleviated through creating better public access to the countryside resource that surrounds the settlement, including the Lee and Rib Rivers. The A414 and B1502 are barriers to access to the countryside. The river corridors have been identified as areas for improvement of both habitat and physical links between the settlements at Hartham Common (see **project 1** and **Figure 3.1** in the

GI Plan). Key issues are to make improved links between Hertford and Ware and the wider countryside, while also ensuring lateral links across the District, particularly if future growth is considered to the urban fringes.

- 2.12 With reference to the Woodland Trust's Accessible Woodland Standard mapping the northern half of the District appears to be deficient in accessible woodland; however this is likely due to the nature of the land use in this area (agricultural). The south west of the District surrounding the larger settlements of Hertford and Ware has therefore formed part of the focus for a Woodland Enhancement Zone shown on **Figure 3.1**.
- 2.13 Opportunities for access improvements could be met through proposed projects for the Hertford and Ware wetland enhancements, River Valleys and Lateral Links projects, as well as improved links to strategic, cross district corridors such as the Hatfield Forest. These broad principles are shown on **Figure 3.1** and **projects 1 and 3** at section 3.

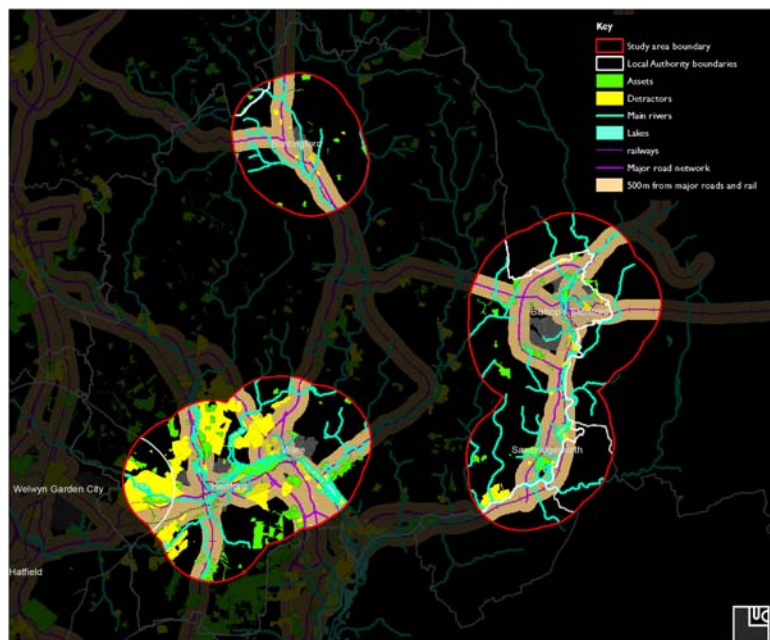


**Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG) provision, applying the Natural England ANGSt standards (source: Natural England<sup>iv</sup>)**



**Accessible Woodland Provision (Woodland Trust standard)**

## Prestige on settlement approach corridors



- 2.14 The concept of prestige, that is, the experience and perception of settlement approaches, is a key part of the green infrastructure approach and for positive planning of settlement fringes. Within the context of the principal transport corridors on the East Herts main settlement approaches, this functional analysis has referred to spatial mapping of assets and detractors produced for Hertfordshire<sup>v</sup>, as well as consideration of landscape condition and quality in the Hertfordshire Landscape

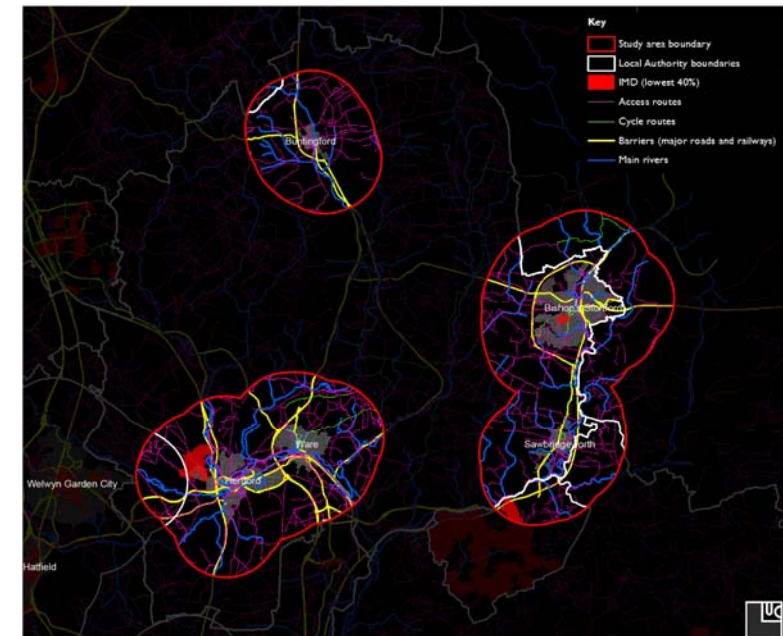
Character Assessment<sup>vi</sup>. Given the time at which baseline data was drawn up (e.g. assets and detractors mapping), this does reflect ongoing positive land management and conservation (and which has been considered in developing the proposed GI network), as at Panshanger Park for example. As such that data represents a 'point in time' not necessarily now reflected at site level, but the data nonetheless provides a guide to help focus GI proposals development.

- 2.15 Within the main settlements, the experience of most of the GI assets is impaired to a degree by intrusion of transport corridors (e.g. A10 crossing of Hartham Common). Existing woodlands in the transport corridor buffers should be used as a template for re linking woodland sites south of Hertford around Hertford Heath, to enhance settlement approach (see **project 1** at Section 3). The setting of the Stort Valley is impaired to the north of Sawbridgeworth and could be improved with small scale wetland planting as part of a package of measures to deliver proposals in the Stort Valley as identified in the Harlow GI Plan and the Stort Valley Feasibility Study, e.g. that structural green infrastructure provision, whilst buffering detractors and edges, should not detract from the more open landscape character here.
- 2.16 The analysis indicated a need to re-link areas of the landscape due to severance and fragmentation of landscape structure as a result of the bypass at Bishop's Stortford. There is an opportunity to reconnect areas of woodland to enhance perception of tranquillity and settlement approach



to the north and west of the town. A key opportunity is to extend wetland vegetation and wet woodland habitat to enhance settlement edge/interface with valley at this point and to consider this as part of proposals for access links in the Stort Valley Park proposed in the Harlow GI Plan (see **project 2** at Section 3). Enhancing access to settlements from the river valleys across the District (e.g. improvements to Rivers Nursery Site on the western edge of Sawbridgeworth) could improve settlement approaches. To the east of Bishop's Stortford within Essex, expanded woodland planting could re connect Hatfield Forest and provide attenuation in relation to the M11 interchange. In Buntingford, GI enhancement issues will relate mainly to integration of hard southern edge of Buntingford with localised foiling and using such landscape structure to make better visual connections with wet woodland in landscapes such as the Quin Valley while enhanced hedgerow planting would be beneficial to the A10 bypass to improve setting of and approach to Buntingford in the landscape (see **project 4** at Section 3).

## Health

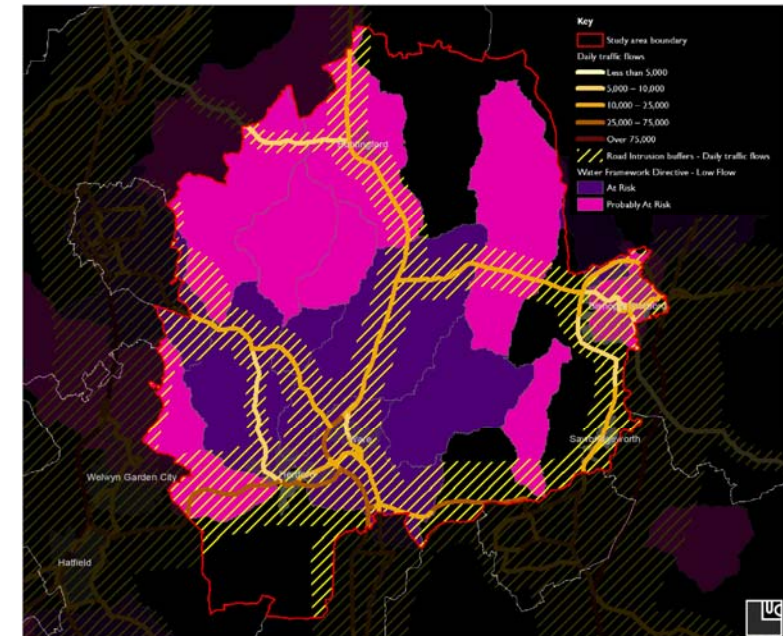


- 2.17 In this analysis, access links and proximity to areas of deprivation were mapped. Main road corridors were also considered to understand where there were linked issues of 'unhealthy environments' (air quality and pollution), or need to target tree planting as described in relation to the 'prestige' function above.
- 2.18 With reference to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shown on the left, with areas of health deprivation are evident in Sele Ward (Hertford), with no significant

health deprivation issues in Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth or Ware although access to public rights of way and cycle routes are limited in each of these settlements.

- 2.19 In many of the larger urban areas such as Hertford and Ware and locations along major transport corridors, air quality is usually affected. As such, public open spaces, paths and rights of way and cycle routes should be buffered as far as possible through tree and woodland planting. Alternative off road links and areas of woodland creation opportunity are shown on **Figure 3.1**. This also includes areas of strategic woodland planting to high intensity road corridors such as the M11 & A414 (to extend earlier strategic level considerations and proposals set out in the Trees Against Pollution (TAP) Report<sup>vii</sup>).

## Sound ecosystems



- 2.20 Sound ecosystems are a key part of a green infrastructure network, and proposals should seek to contribute to positive and proactive management of these for community benefit. The focus for this analysis has been the key services of water and air quality.
- 2.21 The analysis interpreted the Water Framework Directive (WFD) data produced by the Environment Agency for river catchments. The riverine environment of the Lee, Stort, Mimram, Rib, Beane, Quin & Ash Rivers are

identified as being of poor ecological status and vulnerable to abstraction and low flow pressures. Key areas for expansion identified in the Wetland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) include the Stort valley, Lee and Stort confluence (Rye Meads and the Lee between Hertford and Ware, including the Rib and Beane confluences) and the Mimram Valley.

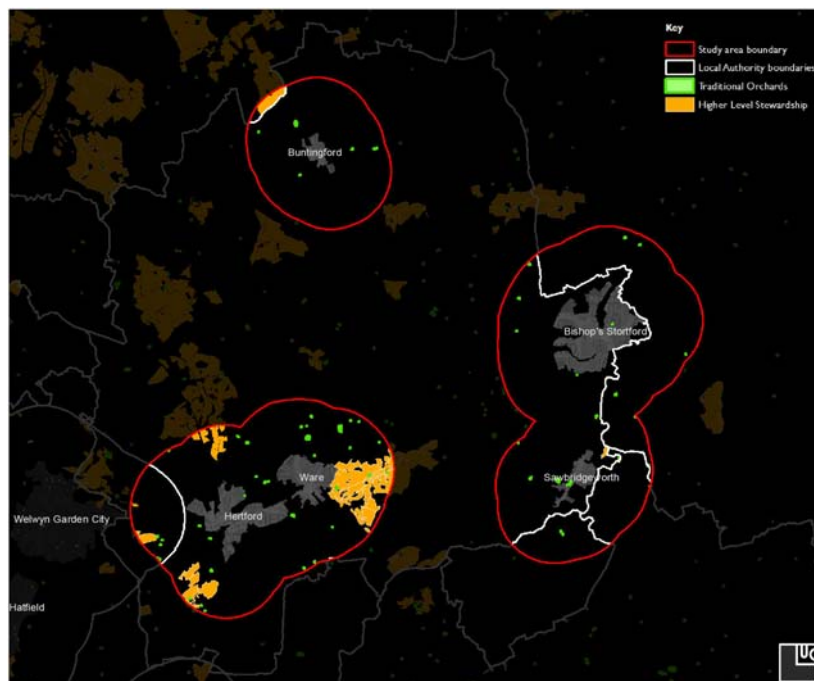
- 2.22 The analysis indicates a need for positive management of the all the rivers in the district, particularly the Ash due to the high level of environmental contaminates. Opportunities include reinstatement of native wetland and riparian river valleys. Also additional wetland creation in the Ash and Lee to reinforce it's habitats in light of high abstraction pressures. Whilst this does not apply to the Lee, the majority of the river courses and riverine environments are affected by clusters of invasive species along their length.
- 2.23 Future development in Hertford and Ware, and Bishop's Stortford could place further abstraction pressures on the Lee, Ash and Stort Rivers, further heightening the need for positive management of the river network and appropriate wetland expansion.
- 2.24 The analysis indicates a need for positive management of the Ash and Beane their various brooks within the District. There is a significant opportunity to enhance and expand wetland character near pinch points such as at Hertford and Ware where the rivers of the District meet. Also reinstatement of native wetland and riparian river

corridors, and making 'space for water' (see **project 3** at section 3).

- 2.25 Whilst large parts of the principal transport corridors are partly wooded (M11) there is a need for additional woodland and hedgerow belts to re connect existing woodlands and improve air quality. Primary locations are the infrastructure corridors M11 & A414 (e.g. to deliver continued woodland buffering in areas such as Panshanger Country Park and Broxbourne Woods) and the A10, focussing on links to existing large scale woodlands such as Broxbourne Woods.



## Productive green environments



2.26 Consideration of the wider farmland landscape in East Herts reveals that a relatively high proportion (864.50 ha) of the landscape is managed through Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). These areas are spread throughout the north and west of the District (e.g. Benington and the lower Ash Valley) with large areas focused around Hertford and Ware. However, most of the land in stewardship lies outside the 2.5 km settlement buffer

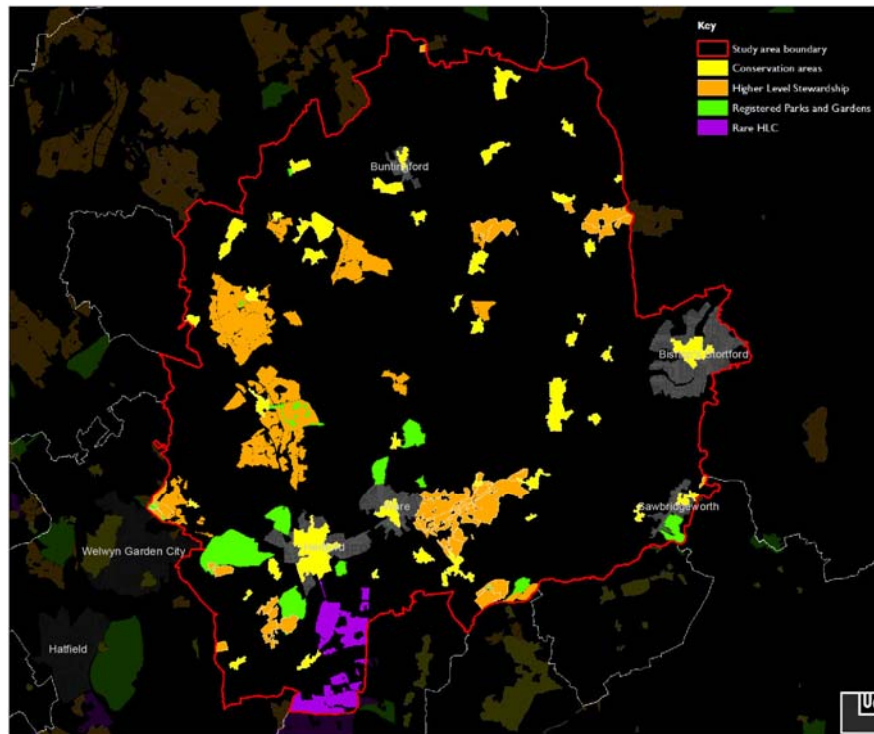
defined for this analysis as shown on the map. In addition there is a small area forming part of the Rivers Nursery Site at Sawbridgeworth. There is potential to improve uptake of organic level stewardship with the District currently having only one site (81 ha). HLS uptake is therefore a key opportunity to enhance productivity and functionality of farmland landscapes in East Herts. It would also help deliver the objectives of the Farmland Conservation and Enhancement Zone and Landscape Restoration Zone identified on **Figure 3.1**.

2.27 Small areas of the District along its eastern and southeast border (e.g. Sawbridgeworth) fall within the Essex Coast and Growth Areas HLS Target Area. HLS schemes which will be supported within this area include those which seek to maintain, restore or create wet woodland or ancient semi-natural woodland. An opportunity therefore exists to benefit both biodiversity and the production of timber and/or biofuels by tree planting, support for natural woodland expansion or the bringing of existing woodland under management such as coppicing.

2.28 The Rivers Nursery site at Sawbridgeworth has historic importance for fruit production and breeding and is cited by the East Herts Core Strategy Issues and Options as one of the open spaces of particular importance to the settlement's character. Recognising multi-functional values of historic orchards in the District is important. (**project 2**, section 3).

2.29 There is an opportunity to improve the quality and value of many of these allotment sites throughout the District, but also to provide enhanced urban greening and locally productive landscapes as part of GI proposals including river valley enhancement (**project 3**, section 3).

### Conserving historic landscape character



2.30 The historic environment and historic legacy provides a rich resource for conservation and interpretation as part

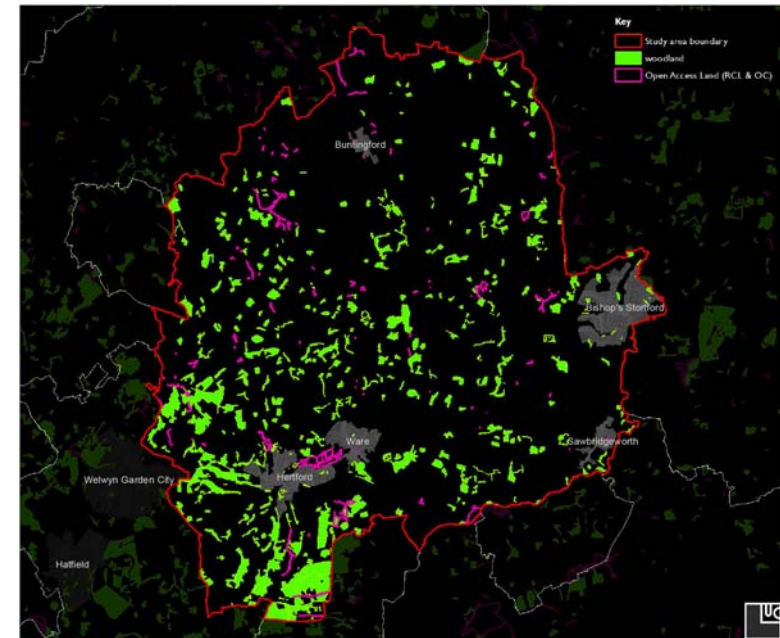
of a multi-functional green infrastructure network. It also clearly links to other functions such as prestige, experience and the potential for recreation. This analysis considered the distribution of designated heritage assets in addition to rare historic landscape character types, as a basis for identifying aspects of historic legacy to be conserved as part of the GI network.

2.31 Rare historic landscape types in East Herts are Co Axial Enclosures, which occupy around 1% of the District area. The Co Axial Enclosures (boundaries of adjacent fields make a series of long, roughly parallel lines) form part of the Farmland Conservation and Enhancement Zone on **Figure 3.1**.

2.32 Although there are a high number of Registered Parks and Gardens (15) and a high number of Conservation Areas scattered throughout the District. Only four of the fifteen registered parks are covered by agri-environment schemes. In addition a number of ancient woodland sites are statutorily designated for nature conservation as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These include ancient woodland at High Wood (west of Benington), Moor Hall, Plashes Wood, Wormley Wood, Hodesdon Park, Broxbourne Wood and Great Horstead Park. There is a very large and rather dispersed ancient woodland resource, with two covered by Conservation Areas (Moor Hall Wood and Hadham Cross Wood), while parts of Broxbourne Woods in the south of the District has additional protection as a National Nature Reserve (NNR).

2.33 Key opportunities are to secure protection and enhancement for the woodland resource through HLS and Woodland Grant Schemes, and also through additional broadleaf native woodland planting to reconnect sites. If this was concentrated around registered parklands, in particular the area surrounding the settlements of Hertford and Ware, this could also help enhance their setting and context (see **Figure 3.1**). Another opportunity may be more sympathetic/appropriate management of replanted woodland sites e.g. Waterford Heath (a former mineral site at Hertford).

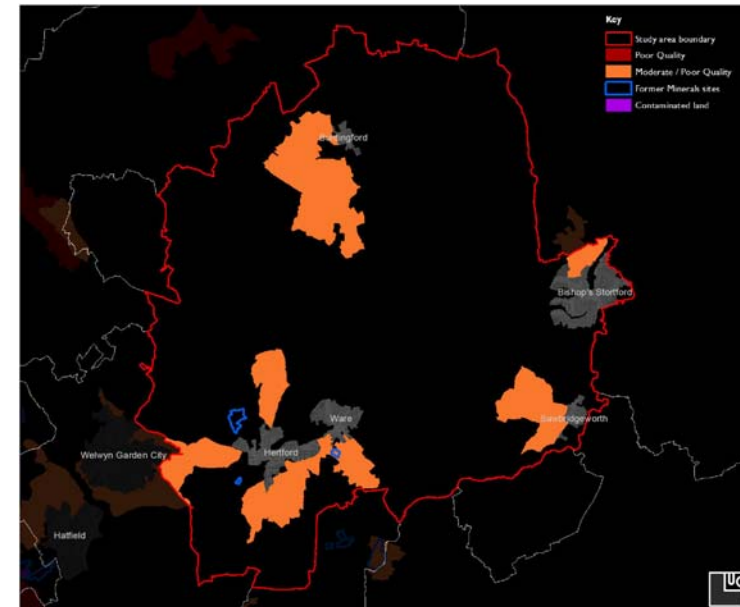
## Sustainability and responding to climate change



2.34 Urban greening, shading and cooling is a key part of community focussed green infrastructure. This analysis has concentrated on tree cover. There are however clear links with other functions such as flood attenuation and water management, as part of a climate change adapted response to spatial planning. This function is particularly relevant to the higher density settlements within the District, such as Hertford and Ware, and Bishop's Stortford.

- 2.35 Due to the traditional morphology of the main settlements in the District, tree cover within the public realm is relatively limited. The settlements do however display a good level of tree cover in terms of woodland blocks and within private gardens.
- 2.36 Issues and opportunities relate mainly to conserving what exists and managing this appropriately/planning for succession planting and ensuring new tree planting in relation to redevelopment sites – use of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) standards for enhanced urban tree planting of 80 street trees (of appropriately robust grade) per linear km.
- 2.37 Any future growth and redevelopment should plan for street tree planting as an integral part of the masterplan to ensure climate change adaptation. Foci for potential large scale tree and woodland planting to respond to this function and other functional needs, are shown on **Figure 3.1**.

## Land remediation



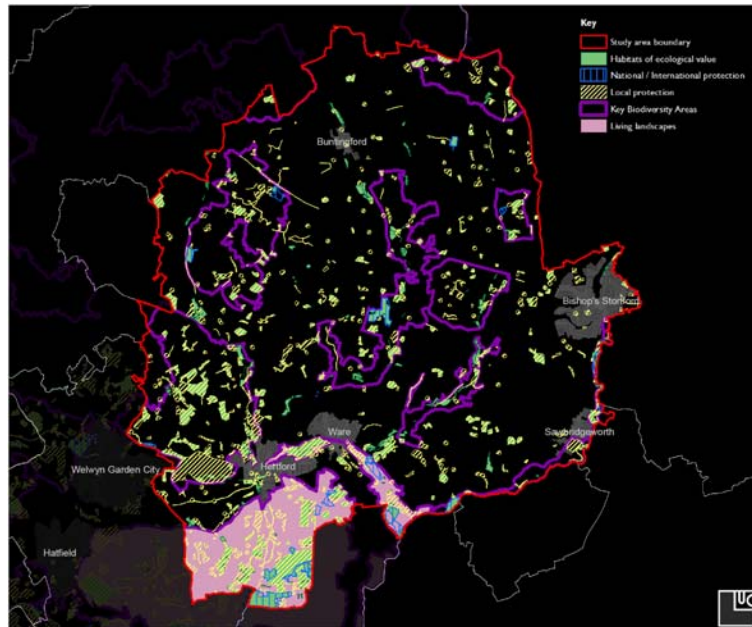
- 2.38 Green infrastructure planning and design can play a key part in delivering enhancement and restoration of landscape character and quality, and in enhancing areas of degraded landscape (e.g. mineral and re restoration sites).
- 2.39 As referenced in the Liz Lake Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Report, there are a number of former mineral sites which could be considered for re restoration<sup>viii</sup> and which provide opportunities for GI planning. Key opportunities relate to the sites at the existing woodland restoration at Waterford Heath and also at Presdales Pit

and St Mary's Lane sites. These have formed foci for landscape enhancement zones shown on **Figure 3.1** and for projects to deliver wider connectivity for green infrastructure assets to settlement gateways, e.g. linking the positive restoration taking place at Panshanger Park with other mineral sites at Waterford Heath and St Mary's Lane (**project 5** at section 3).

- 2.40 Areas of lower landscape quality as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment tend to have been previously worked for minerals. These occur in close proximity to the larger settlements of Buntingford, Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and to a larger extent around Hertford and Ware. As such they form part of the focus for ongoing landscape conservation, enhancement and restoration zones as shown on **Figure 3.1**.
- 2.41 Due to the number of mineral sites and their proximity to each other (e.g. surrounding Hertford and Ware), proposals should aim to connect and improve the quality of the land, thereby enhancing the character of the landscape. This could be brought forward as part of the ongoing Panshanger Park restoration (see **project 5**).



## Nature conservation



2.42 Conservation and enhancement of habitats, together with planning for sustainable communities, is a key consideration of multi-functional green infrastructure planning. This plan has taken a landscape scale approach, considering Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), in addition to statutorily and locally designated nature conservation sites and areas of local protection (Local Wildlife Sites).

2.43 Primary issues relate to the connectivity of habitats in light of future landscape change and climate change, and barriers to habitat connectivity created by the transport network. Main barriers to habitat links are the M11 close to the east district boundary, the A414 to the south and the A10 running north/south along the centre of the District.

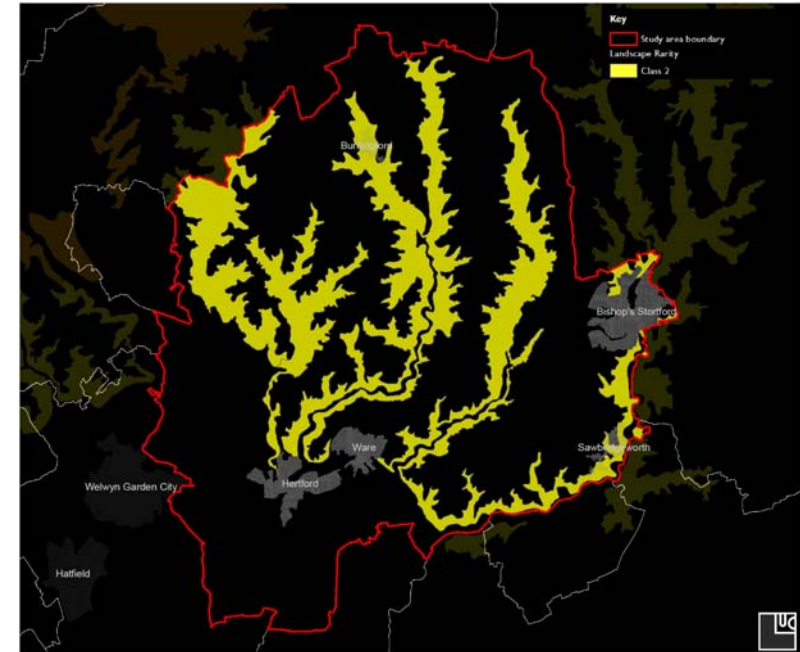
2.44 The analysis identifies core biodiversity areas through the south west of the District, in addition to the principal river valleys – the Lee, Beane, Quin, Rib and Stort. The majority of the remainder of the District is identified for habitat extension and linkage. The two most common threats to ecologically valued habitats across the district is first the relatively small and isolated patch size, which has inherently limited viability in the long term, and second, the conflict between recreational use and nature conservation. The Woodland and Heathland BAPs identified additional key threats as the lack of / changing management practices. The Wetlands BAP identified additional threats of low water levels and drainage, natural succession, nutrient enrichment, acidification and pollution (see **project 3**, section 3).

2.45 Key opportunities include ensuring the consideration of green infrastructure provision within the strategic / Masterplanning of proposed development. Expanding of existing wetland features to a varied wetland mosaic, for example, including wet grassland, carr and open water could also improve biodiversity. Key areas for expansion identified in the Wetland BAP include the Stort valley, Lee and Stort confluence (Rye Meads and the Lee between

Hertford and Ware, incl. the Rib and Beane confluences) and the Mimram Valley.

- 2.46 Grassland and heathland expansion identified in the BAP have been drawn out in the enhancement zones identified in **Figure 3.1** of the GI Plan. Woodland enhancement zones include both Broxbourne Woods and Knebworth Wood (West of Stevenage). These should help alleviate severance along transport infrastructure and use of such linear features as foci for connectivity, for example, expansion of wildlife corridors along the existing transport network, using the principles of the Trees Against Pollution initiative are also important measures to be considered.

## Experience

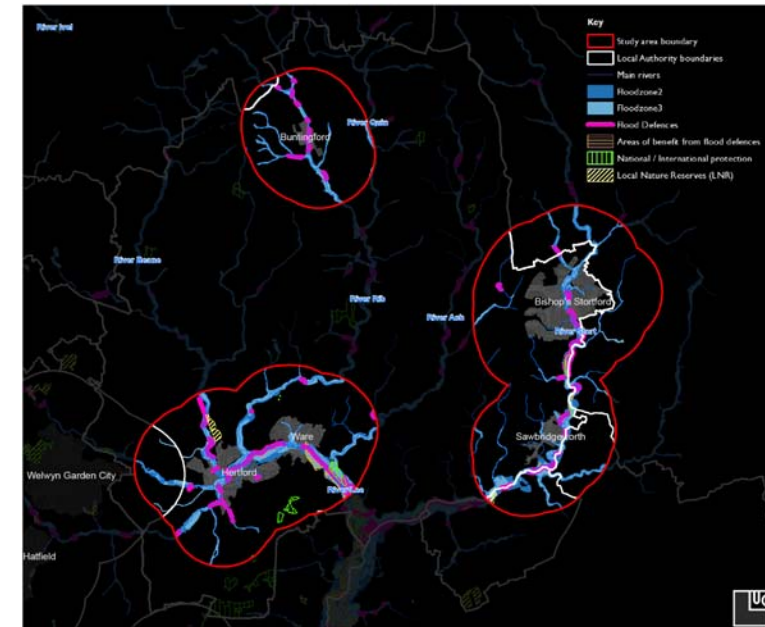


- 2.47 The main regionally rare landscape types in East Herts have been identified as Settled Chalk Valleys and Wooded Chalk Valleys landscape types. The Settled Chalk Valleys represent approximately 19% of the District area (significantly this also represents approximately 43% of the total regional distribution of the landscape type) and the Wooded Chalk Valleys represent approximately 4% of the District (note that this also represents approximately 10% of the total regional distribution of the landscape type).

2.48 The Settled Chalk Valleys and Wooded Chalk Valleys should be conserved, managed and enhanced to maximise their functions (character, floodplain, biodiversity, access). There is an opportunity to enhance access in a way that maintains the tranquil character of the valleys. A key opportunity may be to facilitate enhanced access in appropriate locations, such as the expansion of the riparian habitat through HLS (e.g. Beane Valley). There may also be an opportunity for some restoration of woodland linkages and to re connect ancient woodlands on ridges, to provide enhanced definition of the valley network.

2.49 The valleys form the focus for a project in section 3 of this GI Plan (see **project 3**). In addition, a number of ‘action zones’ shown on **Figure 3.1** are complementary to the objectives of conserving these landscape types - Valley Conservation and Wetland Habitat Zones, for example.

## Flood attenuation and water management



2.50 Planning for and making space for water forms a key part of considering future landscapes in the face of climate change, particularly through sound flood risk management.

2.51 The analysis has identified the following issues. A review by the EA of areas at risk of surface water flooding includes areas to the north of East Herts, which will require more effective flood management.

2.52 Of the other settlements, the flood zones within Buntingford, Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth are



primarily open space; although there are instances of floodplain development in both settlements (e.g. the floodplain flows through Lower Sheering in Sawbridgeworth).

- 2.53 Future development in close proximity to the rivers within East Herts could exacerbate existing pressures in this area so identifying areas for wetland expansion may help alleviate this pressure. Any future settlement growth is likely to increase pressures during periods of high flows and could inevitably lead to flooding of developed land.
- 2.54 The need to 'make space for water' outside and upstream of main settlement pinch points has formed part of the focus of a River Valleys project (**project 3**) at section 3, and also the Wetland Habitat Zone shown on **Figure 3.1**.



### 3 Proposed green infrastructure network and projects

#### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE VISION

##### 3.1 The green infrastructure vision for East Herts is:

###### To conserve and enhance

- The varied landscapes of the District – farmland, ancient woodland, wooded chalk valleys, settled chalk valleys, heathlands and commons and intricate network of river valleys;
- The functionality of the riverine environments of Mimram, Beane, Rib, Quin, Ash, Stort & Lee in terms of landscape character, ecology and flows and improving water quality throughout;
- The quiet rural landscape character and distinctive agricultural landscape, while also linking areas of broadleaf woodland to provide increased landscape connectivity and resilience in the face of climate change, balancing this with large scale open landscape character;

###### To improve and create

- Enhanced wetland networks associated with the East Herts Rivers – Lee, Beane, Rib, Quin, Ash & Stort;
- Accessibility and connections to and along the river valleys and lateral links across the District to adjoining

districts in Hertfordshire, Essex and north London GI network;

- Links for a variety of users – walkers, cyclists and riders;
- ‘Space for water’ - naturalising river courses to reduce the potential for flooding in the District and aid creation of additional recreational water spaces;
- Enhanced links to greenspace, particularly in the larger and higher density settlements such as Hertford and Ware, and Bishop’s Stortford and outlying suburbs, and Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth, as well as opportunities for urban greening for community benefit and value, such as orchards;

###### To recognise and value

- The importance of links between landscape and nature and ensuring that this is the first layer of consideration in the development process;
- The significance of Community Forestry, and links to the aspirations of Watling Chase Community Forest;
- GI for people – the importance of provision for low key and informal recreation to enhance the value of existing green infrastructure, and creating/promoting an improved series of links between settlements, commons and the wider countryside;
- The importance of the green infrastructure network for health and quality of life, seeking to promote awareness and appreciation of the network;

- The need for an appropriate balance between community, access, recreation and biodiversity interests;
- The need for joined up working with key partners, landowners, the parish councils and local ‘green groups’ to deliver sustainable proposals;
- The educational potential of GI - the need to raise awareness of and promote linked agendas such as local food including recognition of the importance of historic orchards throughout the District.

3.2 The vision is necessarily aspirational and long term, since it will need to consider GI significantly beyond the current Local Development Framework. Proposals to begin achieving the vision and initial consideration of delivery are set out in the remainder of this section.

## DELIVERING THE VISION – THE NETWORK

### Rationale, key messages

3.3 The proposed green infrastructure network has been developed in response to the key messages from the document review and the functional need and supply analysis in **section 2**, and to deliver the points of the vision above. It has been proofed against the adjoining authorities’ green infrastructure context and other relevant spatial plans, policies, programmes and projects. The proposals have also been validated through stakeholder consultation (the main messages from the stakeholder workshop are in **Appendix I**).

3.4 The proposed Green Infrastructure Network is shown on **Figure 3.1** and the component action zones and green infrastructure types which make up the GI network are described below. Spatial projects and non spatial proposals which deliver the GI network are explained at the end of this section, with spatial projects cross referenced to **Figure 3.1**. This includes high level consideration of cost, phasing and delivery and management mechanisms. Recommendations to link the green infrastructure proposals to delivery through spatial planning are set out in **section 4**.

### Green infrastructure action zones

3.5 Several ‘action zones’ have been defined for the wider green infrastructure network. Shown on **Figure 3.1**, these are:

- **Wetland Habitat Zone:** Restoring and enhancing the quality of the river valley network (chalk and clay rivers) and associated wetland habitats which form part of Wetlands BAP. Aim to create landscape links to adjacent authorities (e.g. Welwyn, Essex and north London) and to sites such as Broxbourne Woods and the Lee Valley. The zone and component projects can also contribute to delivery of Natural England’s Thames and Tributaries Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area (IBDA) and are complementary to the aims and objectives of the Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan.

- **Woodland Enhancement Zone:** linking woodland habitats (e.g. lowland wood-pasture, heathland and acid grassland and alder wet woodland) and restoring landscapes/defining the network of valleys including regionally rare Wooded Chalk Valleys. This includes continued enhancement to the setting of historic GI assets such as Panshanger Park, Pishiobury Park and Broxbourne Woods – buffering and protecting such sites, through creating woodland linkages.
- **Valleys Conservation Zone:** conserving key GI assets as part of the movement, habitat and physical landscape network, also securing links to the river valley network and associated Wetland Habitat Zone. Links to landscape restoration and enhancement in the Lee and Stort Valley's and delivering landscape character assessment objectives in this area (considered jointly with Welwyn Hatfield).
- **Farmland Conservation and Enhancement Zone:** Conserving and reinforcing the rural green infrastructure network, securing landscape and habitat connectivity. Also encouragement of agri-environment schemes take up (at both entry and higher level) to deliver landscape and GI improvements across the farmland landscapes of the District.
- **Grassland Creation Zone:** Arable farmland is an intrinsic part of the landscape of East Herts and is woven into its fabric. Whilst it is important that it is recognised and retained, projects should also be identified for

grassland restoration to enhance landscape character and interpret aspects of historic character. The zone seeks to identify areas where enhanced grassland linkage/corridors could be considered, to reduce fragmentation of existing assets, balanced with consideration of farming viability. Primary areas are associated with woodland clusters such as Broxbourne Woods and the area north of Panshanger Park. Clearly delivery objectives for this zone will be dependant on appropriate grassland management (grazing).

- 3.6 These zones are colour coded on **Figure 3.1**. They indicate broad areas in which future small scale projects could contribute to the objectives of the zone. They do not relate to large scale or 'blanket' proposals. For example, the Woodland Enhancement Zone does not indicate mass woodland planting, rather an area where woodland enhancement and linkage, of even small scale, is desirable/meets a range of functional criteria, and should therefore be supported.

### Green infrastructure types in East Herts

3.7 A series of green infrastructure types have been defined to organise proposed green infrastructure projects in East Herts, these are:



**Urban greenways**



**Urban blue links**



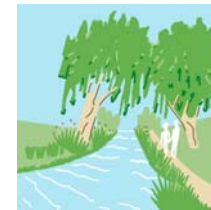
**Urban wildspace**



**Peri urban wildspace**



**Rural wildspace**



**Rural blue links**

### Proposed green infrastructure projects

3.8 Working with East Hertfordshire District and key professional and community stakeholders, a series of potential projects have been identified to take forward the GI network and to deliver the functions identified and analysed in **section 2**. These are described at the end of this section, which also identifies supporting non spatial GI projects. **Section 4** identifies potential future work for East Herts to consider in delivering green infrastructure. Due to the high level nature of this study, more detailed

work will be needed to test and develop proposals (e.g. further ecological work and advice to determine requirements for suitable habitat creation and enhancement at a local level).

- 3.9 The GI projects (shown on **Figure 3.1**), are as follows:
- **1. Hertford and Ware Wetland Enhancements**
  - **2. Stort Valley and Countryside Links**
  - **3. River Valleys Project – Lee, Stort, Rib, Beane, Quin & Ash**
  - **4. Lateral Links – Green Link between Bishop’s Stortford and Stevenage**
  - **5. Panshanger Park and Mimram Valley Greenspace**
- 3.10 These are described in the tables at the end of this section. A further, non spatial (thematic or interpretative) project (**project 6: Green Hertfordshire**) is identified at the end of this section.
- 3.11 Also identified at the end of this section are GI links with adjacent Hertfordshire authorities, to signpost where ‘joined up’, cross authority working will be required.
- 3.12 Projects are prioritised according to the functions and benefits they offer, with an indication of steps likely to be required to deliver. Broad consideration is also given to costings, to give a guide as to future levels of investment in

delivering capital works, using the following indicative rates/bands:

£ = Up to £50,000

££ = £50,000-100,000

£££ = £100,000 – 500,000

££££ = £500,000 – 2million

£££££ = £2million +

- 3.13 Note that costs are indicative/guidelines only and are based on LUC’s knowledge and experience of delivering comparable schemes. They represent a reasonable best estimate of investment costs to deliver the required green infrastructure functionality. It is also recognised that further, more detailed green infrastructure planning and cost planning will be required. Where a project is a series of component sub projects, this will have an effect on costs. As such, proposals are a ‘palette’ of projects which East Herts and partners can pick from as appropriate funding streams become available, but which will still help deliver the overall green infrastructure vision. In considering cost ranges, account has also been taken of match funding and grant aid in broad terms e.g. that where this applies, the net effect is to reduce costs of schemes in real terms. Potential funding sources are identified as appropriate in the project sheets at the end of this section.

3.14 Consideration is given in broad terms to further work needed to deliver projects in the following project sheets. As a general rule, in addition to the liaison, consultation and negotiations identified, each capital project will also require further survey work – land, ecological and archaeological surveys, in addition to impact assessment of proposals and projects in ecologically sensitive areas.

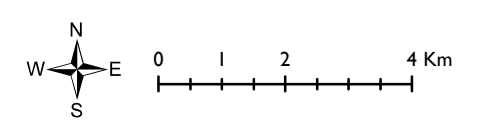
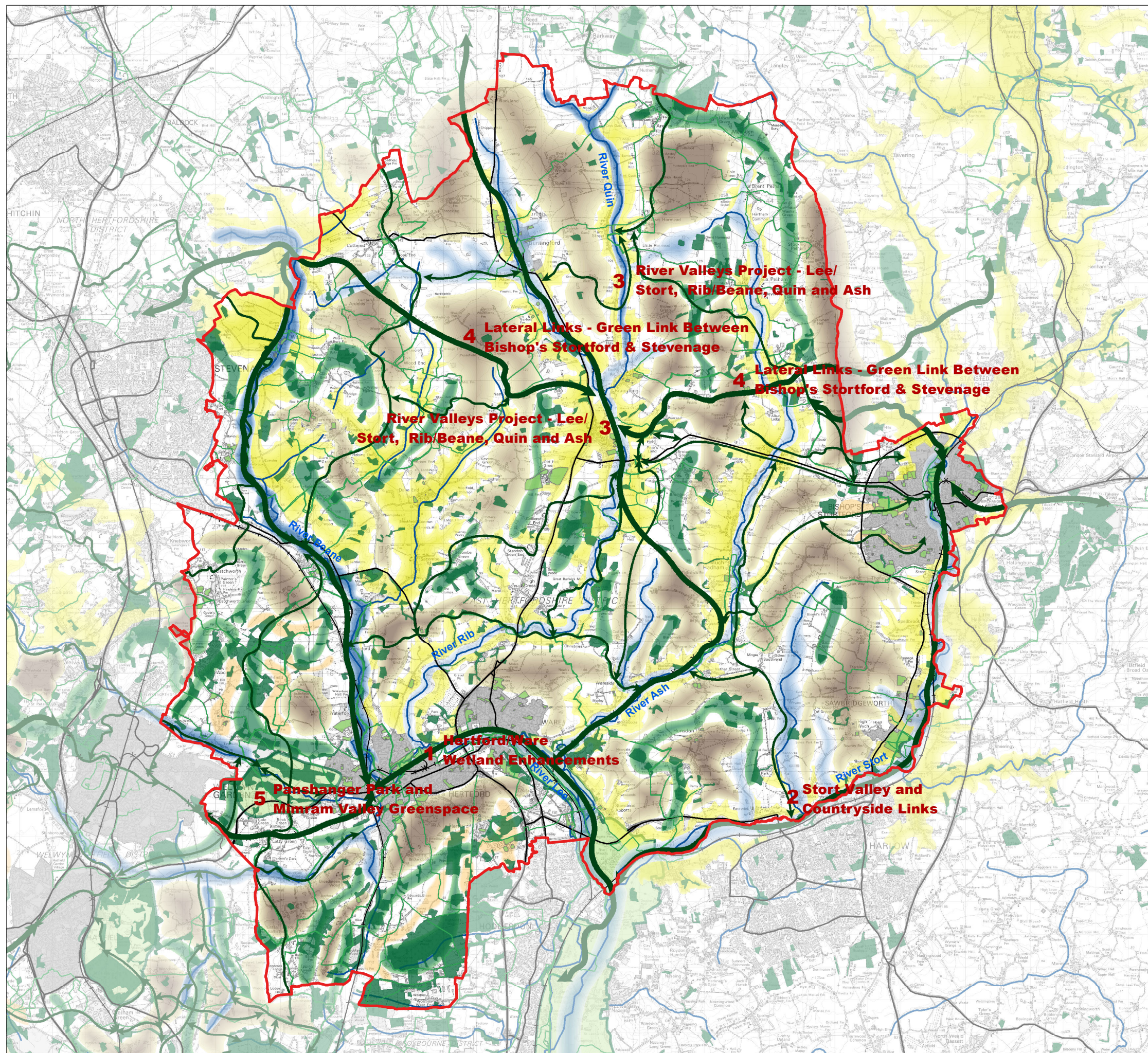


# Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plans - East Hertfordshire

## Figure 3.1: Proposed Green Infrastructure Network

### Key

- Proposals**
- Strategic link
  - Local link
  - 1** Green infrastructure projects
  - Strategic GI assets
  - Farmland conservation & enhancement zone
  - Wetland habitat zone
  - Woodland enhancement zone
  - Valley conservation zone
  - Grassland creation zone
- Existing**
- Long distance and promoted routes
  - Rivers
  - Accessible open space
  - Woodland
  - Main settlements
- Barriers**
- Major road network
  - Railway
  - Disused Railway



Date: 31/03/2011  
Revision:

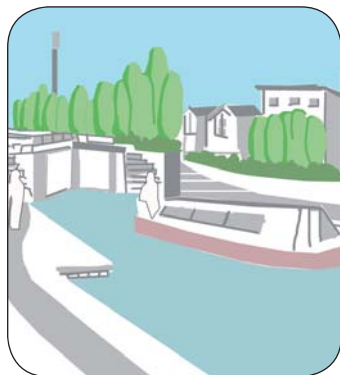






**PROJECT : 1. Hertford/Ware Wetland Enhancements**

**Urban Blue Link - Brief description / snapshot of the project :**



- Improve access and allow for a more positive approach to Hertford and Ware balancing formal and informal recreation and nature conservation interests while enhancing provision for informal natural play spaces for different age groups and interests
- Extension of existing wetland project at Hartham Common and links to Hertford 'Green Fingers'
- Conservation and enhancement of the distinctive wetland environment including enhanced physical and habitat links to urban stretches of the River Lee creating improved landscape, recreational and visual linkages between the settlements enhancing the urban setting
- Significant opportunity to further enhance wetland character to reduce potential flood risk associated with pinch points in urban areas by creating enhanced 'space for water'
- Appropriate management of wetland west of the A10 would create a transition between the managed recreational landscape at Hertford and the more naturalistic landscape at Ware
- Physical links to the wider GI network (e.g. Amwell Quarry) to serve strategic links to Lee Valley
- Proposals for improvements to network of access paths creation of lateral links to Project 2



**FUNCTIONS MET :**



**PLANS / POLICIES / PROGRAMMES WHICH THE PROJECT CAN HELP DELIVER :** Improving physical (upgrading of footpaths/routes) and habitat links to enhance the riparian character and wetland habitat connections between Hertford and Ware while also improving enhanced 'space for water' (responds to Environment Agency's (EA) Water Framework Directive (WFD) issues of ecological quality/flows). Green link enhancements will contribute to the Hertfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), while the creation of informal play areas will address deficiency identified in the strand analysis. Enhancing the functionality of the Common and access routes to it will help improve the available provision of natural greenspace to the area, contributing to the provision of Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG).

**ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH DELIVERY :** Need for landownership liaison and negotiation. Project will need an action plan. Project could be partly achieved through small scale funding through High Level Stewardship (HLS) and Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) or more locally based initiatives under a series of guidelines or a series of 'how to' guides for local green groups, volunteer organisations, parishes and Trusts (e.g. Groundwork). Need for link with local societies e.g. National History Society. Need for education and awareness raising in relation to enhancement/management. Funding and delivery of the different facets may need to be phased and assessed on merit within the wider scheme, with a clear delivery method stating key elements for a successful project. Appropriate management and resource capabilities will need to be funded. Large scale funding through government bodies, i.e. HLF might come up against competition from other projects within the county.

**DELIVERY PARTNERS AND MONITORING MECHANISMS :** Potential developer contributions through off-site Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).106. Need for liaison with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) to avoid conflict of users needs and nature conservation. Contact should be made with Environmental Agency, HMWT, Natural England, Parish Councils and relevant local scale partners who can deliver on small scale projects. HWMT and District Council, including government funded schemes (e.g. HLF). Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) is one of the main delivery mechanisms for landscape capital works. As part of the wider strategic plan, this could involve key bodies such as the EA, Lee Valley Regional Park, Woodland Trust, Natural England (through Access to Nature) and joint funding initiatives between Counties. A feasibility study should be a priority and monitoring for components is likely to be through visitor and species surveys, as well as take up of grant schemes such as HLS.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? PRIORITY / RANKING :** Priority for access improvements from Hertford town to Hartham Common including access along the River Lee also physical improvements to the footpaths/river crossing points. Need for early liaison with landowners and relevant partners.



**PROJECT : 2. Stort Valley and Countryside links**

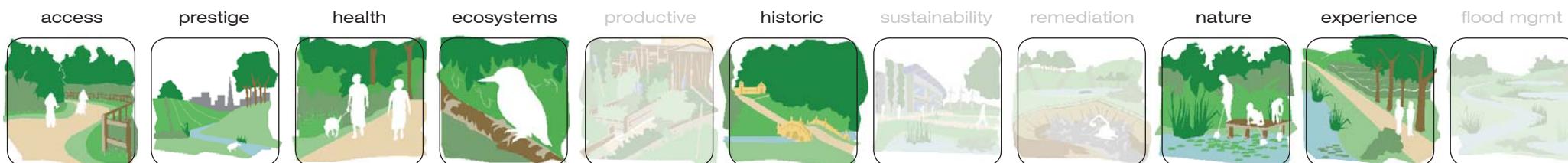
**RURAL WILDSpace - Brief description / snapshot of the project :**



- Recognising and valuing the rural landscapes in and around the Stort Valley and encouraging sustainable management of aspects of the habitat mosaic e.g. grassland and ancient woodland plus enhanced woodland and wet woodland linkage
- Enhanced pedestrian access and habitat links from the Stort Valley and Harlow to local GI sites of interest (Rivers Nursery Site, Lee Valley and river network) plus wider farmland landscape
- Selective landscape management which enhances legibility and permeability (balanced with nature conservation interests) and improved signage/interpretation which could extend to links from Hertford and Ware to Harlow and Sawbridgeworth (and outlying rural villages e.g. Gilston)
- Reinforcement of the green back drop to Harlow and Sawbridgeworth, where conserving Gilston Park's woodland and Pishiobury Park could enhance the rural character of the area
- Creation of a series of local walking links to nearby towns which could include a sculpture trail to recognise the rich cultural heritage of the area, e.g. connections between Henry Moore at Perry Green and 'parallel' modernist landscapes of Harlow New Town



**FUNCTIONS MET :**



**PLANS / POLICIES / PROGRAMMES WHICH THE PROJECT CAN HELP DELIVER :** Enhancing grassland and ancient woodland across the District will help support a number of important UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and will help reinstate habitats such as broadleaf woodland at Gilston Park. Re-generation of the ancient woodland and enhancement access links with the aspirations for the Stort Valley. Improved access and the creation of new routes, with circular walks and cultural trails will contribute to functionality of the Gilston Park making it more available to local and visiting users, contributing to the aims of the ROWIP. Projects links to and complements Harlow GI Plan and Stort Valley Plan while it also helps meet ANG requirements.

**ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH DELIVERY :** Land ownership and HLS uptake are key issues, while possible changes in land (e.g. access v grassing) use will require further consultation with land owners and user groups. A co-ordinated approach to the access, landscape enhancement and ancient woodland improvement projects will be important requiring EHDC and landowners to work together with Natural England (NE) and HMWT. Need for liaison with Woodland Trust, Farm and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Eastwick and Gilston Parish Council. Environmental Stewardship will enable delivery at a landscape scale. Also need for liaison with local friends groups e.g. Rivers Nursery Site

**DELIVERY PARTNERS AND MONITORING MECHANISMS :** Natural England (through HLS/ELS agreements, to encourage habitat restoration and capital payment for access, Forestry Commission, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, local Parishes, East Herts Council. Countryside Management Scheme, Sustrans and the Local Access Forum. Monitoring mechanisms could be through both species and visitor/user surveys and through take-up of relevant grant schemes such as HLS/HLF. Heritage sculpture trail has potential as an HLF project (also links with Henry Moore Foundation at Perry Green).

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? PRIORITY / RANKING :** Need for early landowner liaison to embed GI thinking in agri-environment schemes and with relevant partners such as NE, EA, HMWT and Woodland Trust. Smaller projects and those which could be delivered through HLS and HLF (given reduced match funding requirements) are high priority. Larger schemes and enhancements will require co-ordinated working with HMWT, NE and landowners under a coherent plan to deliver through initiatives such as the ELS, HLS and HLF.





**PROJECT : 3. River Valleys Project – Lee, Stort, Rib, Beane, Quin and Ash**

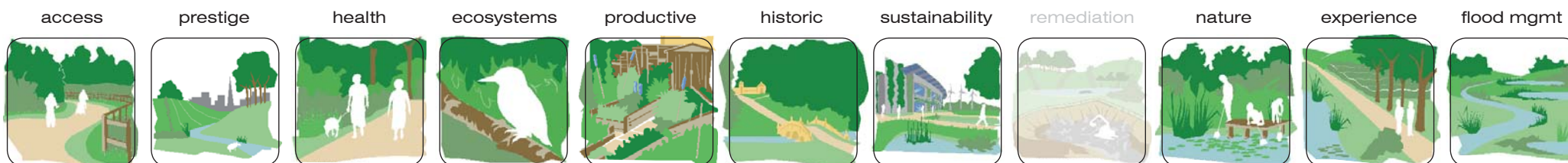


**RURAL BLUE LINK** - Brief description / snapshot of the project :

- Conservation and enhancement of the distinctive wetland environment including physical and habitat links
- The rivers provide the setting to the main settlements and could be enhanced to provide positive approaches
- Significant opportunity to enhance wetland landscape habitat mosaic near pinch points such as at Ware and Hertford, creating enhanced 'space for water' and improving biodiversity in the area
- Ensure appropriate management of rivers, particularly the Ash and Beane to improve biodiversity
- Low key proposals for river access (Beane) to provide the densely populated area of Stevenage with accessible open space (links to North Herts GI and Rib Valley)
- Opportunity to enhance aspects of historic character and recognise the value of traditional orchards
- Links to Project 4 (Lateral links - green link between Bishop's Stortford and Stevenage)



**FUNCTIONS MET :**



**PLANS / POLICIES / PROGRAMMES WHICH THE PROJECT CAN HELP DELIVER :** Enhancements will deliver improved and continuous access along the network of rivers linking with adjacent Districts and Counties. Improving the riparian character and wetland habitat connections while forming attractive, usable green links, as well as providing enhanced 'space for water' (responds to EA WFD issues of ecological quality/flows identified in functional analysis - key vulnerabilities of the Hertfordshire Rivers) and project will also satisfy Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) objectives. Project will contribute to improved functionality, making it more available to a larger number of users, satisfying ROWIP and ANG objectives. Stronger and more defined access links along the river corridors will connect to other key East Herts GI projects, such as the Lateral Links project (green link between Bishop's Stortford and Stevenage).

**ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH DELIVERY :** Land ownership negotiation (access/ way leaves) will be key. The project is primarily focused on improved access and upgrades to off-road links along river corridors and connections with the wider strategic county wide project of enhancing river corridors. As such, access upgrades, off road links, enhancements and creation can require significant funding to achieve a continuous standard which will satisfy fully a range of existing and new users. Where large scale funding is not available (CIL/s.106), river enhancements could be more locally based initiatives under a series of guidelines or a practical 'how to' for local friends groups, parishes Trusts (e.g. Groundwork) to take forward (e.g. repairing off road links / removal of invasive species as voluntary work). Also through enhanced agri environment (HLS) scheme uptake.

**DELIVERY PARTNERS AND MONITORING MECHANISMS :** Need for liaison with HMWT to avoid conflicting uses, East Herts Council, landowners and relevant bodies such as Natural England, Sustrans, Ramblers Association and Environmental Agency. Contact should be made with relevant local partners who can offer small scale delivery through their voluntary activity (e.g. Friends Groups), minimal funding, labour/clean up days and events. Groundwork may also be able to assist with securing funding for/delivering local community projects. East Herts Council could also help with coordination between landowners, encouraging green infrastructure ideals to be considered in HLS and Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) and cross compliance at the start of these agreements. Monitoring is likely to occur through take up of HLS agreements and also through species surveys (monitoring of biodiversity) after implementation.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? PRIORITY / RANKING :** Liaison with landowners (HLS) uptake is a priority, as is pre-application negotiations to get links and enhancements written into relevant future schemes. Priority for promotion to locally interested groups, approaching parish councils, liaison with Groundwork, friends groups and other user groups.





**PROJECT : 4. Lateral Links - Green Link between Bishop's Stortford and Stevenage**

**RURAL GREEN LINK - Brief description / snapshot of the project :**



- Enhanced off-road strategic green access link (pedestrian and bridleway links) between both settlements to tie together Hertfordshire Way and Harcamlow Way with the dismantled railway line running north/south along the Rib and Ash valleys
- Providing additional loops for walkers to enable enhanced recreational/commuting links between Stevenage and Bishop's Stortford and to the Green Arc (link with the Hatfield Forest)
- Project provides scope for greater interpretation of historic elements of the District such as the Roman Road east of Stevenage as part of the route
- Urban and countryside links create a series of waterway loops which provide important off road access between larger settlements – promotion of a sustainable transport network
- Link to wetland enhancement e.g. mirror the quality of wetland environment south Braughing (River Quin) and buffer planting along roads to reduce intrusion and connect landscape elements (woodland/grassland)
- Link to Project 3 River Valleys (create a series of recreational loops across the District).



**FUNCTIONS MET :**

access	prestige	health	ecosystems	productive	historic	sustainability	remediation	nature	experience	flood mgmt

**PLANS / POLICIES / PROGRAMMES WHICH THE PROJECT CAN HELP DELIVER :** Can contribute to enhancing lateral links across the District contributing to County wide strategic objectives in the ROWIP. Potential to assist in meeting ANG deficiencies in the District through enhanced links. Linked habitat creation e.g. woodland and grassland buffers to reconnect landscape features is complementary to LCA and BAP objectives and to climate change responsiveness. Landscape enhancement has potential to link Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA).

**ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH DELIVERY :** The project covers both green access links spanning the width of the District where a co-ordinated approach will be important requiring East Herts Council to work together with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and landowners (key landowners need to be identified). Land ownership and negotiations are therefore key issues. Need for further archaeological survey and feasibility studies in relation to the Roman Road. Need for enhanced HLS uptake to deliver works.

**DELIVERY PARTNERS AND MONITORING MECHANISMS :** Landowners and Natural England (through HLS/ELS agreements to deliver landscape capital improvements). East Herts Council (enabling role and in liaising with developers to embed links to local schemes), Sustrans and the Local Access Forum. Also Countryside Management Schemes (CMS) for continued green access routes are likely to be through potential CMS implementation and take up of Higher Level Stewardship agreements. Enhanced grassland management to field boundary buffers. Also planning conditions in relation to development in main settlements which could incorporate parts of the link.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? PRIORITY / RANKING :** HLS/ELS initiatives should be encouraged as a priority, as this could deliver many aspects of the overall project. Promotional projects (e.g. Green Hertfordshire - Project 6), to raise awareness of existing and new sustainable transport links (non car), will also be key. Need to get the idea of lateral link written into relevant development schemes at local level as they come forward - liaison with developers to factor in.



**PROJECT : 5. Panshanger Park and Mimram Valley Greenspace**



**PERI URBAN WILDSpace** - Brief description / snapshot of the project :

- A multi functional future for the historic designed landscape of Panshanger Park, linked to ongoing positive restoration of the site, and interpreting the historic resource
- Linking Panshanger Park with the strategic GI network and setting it in context through opening up access to the Mimram Valley (balanced with nature conservation interests)
- Providing strategic semi natural greenspace for East Herts and Welwyn Hatfield
- The project will be linked to conservation and enhancement of the Mimram Valley corridor which meanders through the parkland, and to additional wetland landscape creation, making use of mineral extraction to create areas of new landscape character
- Connection to Hertford via the Mimram and Lee and to adjacent former mineral sites creating a network of links (e.g. Waterford Heath, Presdales and St Mary's Lane sites)
- Also links to Welwyn Hatfield Borough River Valleys Project



**FUNCTIONS MET :**



**PLANS / POLICIES / PROGRAMMES WHICH THE PROJECT CAN HELP DELIVER :** Can address landscape quality and enhancement issues (contribute to landscape character assessment guidelines). Contribute to the quality of landscape and LCA objectives by restoring areas of fragmented landscape character and interpreting/enhancing historic landscape character (Brownian Landscape). Improving access and providing links would also help meet ANG deficiencies. Providing cross district links between Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts would assist in delivering ROWIP objectives.

**ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH DELIVERY :** Project will involve changes in landscape management (e.g. landscape enhancement and reinstatement while also improved connectivity delivered as capital projects through the existing minerals agreement at Panshanger Park and HLS in the Mimram Valley). Need for ongoing landowner liaison as Panshanger Park restoration progresses and for future aftercare/management. This is a key part of the process. Other issues relate to provision of enhanced signage and interpretation, both through Herts Rights of Way and Herts Highways. The project could link to the interactive green infrastructure web based map proposals (Green Hertfordshire: Project 6), which could potentially be developed and hosted, as part of a wider, multi-district project and subject to resources, with HCC and Countryside Management Service.

**DELIVERY PARTNERS AND MONITORING MECHANISMS :** Landowners and Natural England (through HLS/ELS agreements) to deliver landscape capital works working in partnership with Lafarge (to link to their ongoing programme of high quality landscape restoration works at Panshanger Park), Herts Rights of Way and the Local Access Forum. Also Mimram Valley, HCC/Landscape Unit and CMS for interactive and interpretative project (Green Hertfordshire - Project 6). Monitoring mechanisms are likely to be through the delivery of conditions associated with the minerals agreement of Panshanger Park. Take up of HLS agreements is the other key mechanism for landscape capital projects.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? PRIORITY / RANKING :** HLS take up should be encouraged as this could deliver many aspects of the work in the Mimram Valley. Need for continued liaison with Lafarge re. phasing of works and future adaptation when their workings/restoration finishes As such priority is high. The same applies to incorporating the project into a promotional/awareness raising project (Green Hertfordshire - project 6).



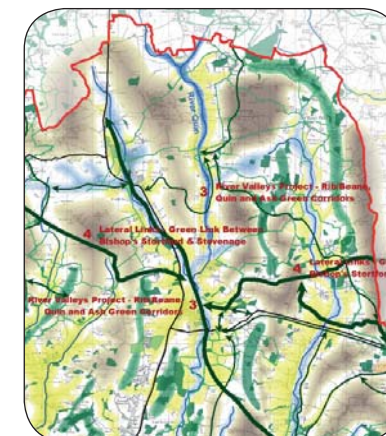


**PROJECT : 6. 'Green Hertfordshire' interactive map project (non spatial/interpretative project)**

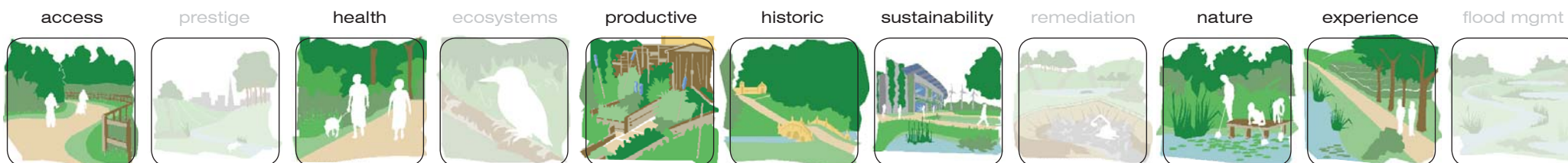


Brief description / snapshot of the project :

- Accessible electronic GI map based/navigator resource
- Web based and Smartphone app (application) based outputs for easy access and to reach the widest audience, including schools and colleges
- Translate information on the GI network and new green links for people, to users
- Provide information on GI assets (landscape, habitat, historic etc) to users, to aid understanding and appreciation of the natural environment - educational resource
- Development of a series of themed walking/cycling and riding trails and routes from pubs etc and promotion of these to offer low key, 'low environmental impact' fun/recreation for all ages
- Link to other relevant programmes e.g. Transition Towns web presence - use of the interactive mapping for people to identify 'green' ways of living life - green transport routes for commuting as well as recreation, places to buy local produce etc, community events in a greenspace setting



**FUNCTIONS MET:**



**PLANS / POLICIES / PROGRAMMES WHICH THE PROJECT CAN HELP DELIVER :** Contribute to objectives of Local Transport Plans and ROWIP, in promoting routes for people to use for green travel. Embed most of the aims of much of the spatial planning at county and local authority level (landscape conservation in the Landscape Character Assessments for example) in the wider sub conscious of the communities who use and enjoy these environments. Recognises the full functional potential of green infrastructure (interpretation/education/appreciation of historic environment/skills development - 'soft' skills) as expressed in the Green Infrastructure Guidance.

**ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH DELIVERY :** The main issue is with hosting, managing and updating a comprehensive, but relevant, usable and above all visually engaging and appealing on line resource, as well as marketing and promoting the use of the Green Hertfordshire brand/app to the widest possible audience. Need for specialist ICT, GIS and graphic design skills to help develop the package. Link to a potential GI marketing and communications strategy to launch the GI work and embed the concept. A communications strategy and user groups market research (e.g. school and youth groups) should be undertaken prior to and during development of the App. Map licensing protocols and restrictions on use of Ordnance Survey data would need to be worked around (lead in times associated with delivery of project are likely to be an issue). Need for compatibility with main Smartphone platforms. Could be compatible with traditional leaflet media using Smartphone scannable 'QR' codes with links to interactive material.

**DELIVERY PARTNERS AND MONITORING MECHANISMS :** The Hertfordshire Districts, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Technical Chief Officers Association (HTCOA) landscape group, and Countryside Management Service, as well as key agencies and organisations with an interest in promoting GI (e.g. Natural England, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT), British Waterways) and landowners of key sites within the Hertfordshire districts - potential for funding/'in kind' contributions and sponsorship. Liaison with local green groups e.g. Transition Towns. Possible private sector involvement.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? PRIORITY / RANKING :** This is a key project to translating GI to a wider audience beyond planners and decision makers. The initial skeleton of the interactive map (which could be added to and developed as and when new information and funding became available), should be developed as a high priority project across the districts, with liaison between HCC, the Countryside Management Service and HTCOA representatives.



### GI projects and cross authority connections

3.15 An essential part of effective GI delivery is a strategic, co-ordinated approach, to ensure that projects are resourced appropriately in terms of capital works and ongoing revenue activity. This section notes potential connections with adjacent authorities in terms of GI links and projects:

- **1. Hertford and Ware Wetland Enhancements:** Is a District specific project but will require working with parish councils and East Herts at a local level, as will all projects identified in this GI Plan.
- **2. North Harlow & Stort Valley links:** need for liaison with local authorities in Essex and Harlow Council and will require working with parish councils and local groups.
- **3. River Valleys Project – Lee, Stort, Rib, Beane, Quin and Ash:** need for links Welwyn Hatfield Borough, Harlow Council and also with local authorities in Essex.
- **4. Lateral Links – green link between Bishop’s Stortford and Stevenage:** Links with Stevenage Borough Council and local authorities in Essex, particularly in relation to strategic links
- **5. Panshanger Park and Mimram Valley Greenspace:** Links with Welwyn Hatfield Borough through liaison with Lafarge and local groups and Parish Councils

3.16 In addition, delivery of the objectives of a number of the action zones described earlier in this section, will require cross authority and cross county links. For example the Wetland Habitat Zone links to Bedfordshire, whilst the Woodland Enhancement Zone requires links with Dacorum, Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere Boroughs (and with the latter two LPA’s in particular to help deliver community forestry aspirations set out in the Watling Chase Community Forest Plan).

3.17 Account should also be taken of parallel GI projects in adjoining Hertfordshire authorities, e.g. the River Valleys Project in the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Green Infrastructure Plan, which could link to the Panshanger Park and Mimram Valley Greenspace Project. Also the Lateral Links Project which provides strategic links to Stevenage Borough Council and local authorities in the Green Arc Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan.

3.18 In addition, two of the projects in this plan should also be cross referenced with proposals contained in the county wide Strategic Highlights Green Infrastructure Plan (also referred to as the Strategic Plan). Project 3 forms part of the Thames Tributaries River Valleys and Corridors project in the Strategic Plan. Project 5 also relates to strategic proposals for the Mimram Valley.





## 4 Linking the green infrastructure proposals to local spatial planning and development management

4.1 It is intended that this Green Infrastructure Plan will form part of the evidence base for Development Plan Documents (DPDs) in the Local Development Framework (LDF) and for green infrastructure issues to be included and addressed in the Development Plan Documents. In order for any **future** policies that deal with green infrastructure to be found to be ‘sound’ when going through public examination they will have to comply with the three tests:

- To be consistent with National Policy; a green infrastructure approach is clearly advocated by national policy.
- To be justified; evidence needs to be provided to prove why it is justified for there to be a green infrastructure policy (why something is being proposed and that there is a problem or a need)<sup>ix</sup> (see **sections 2 and 3**).
- To be effective; where a policy proposes tackling a green infrastructure issue there is a need to ensure that the mechanism for tackling the issue will be effective and that there is some basis for taking this course of action.

4.2 The tests of soundness point to the need for a clear link between policy formulation and the evidence that has been gathered.

4.3 PPS12, the Planning Inspectorate<sup>x</sup> and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) all give more detail on what is meant by effectiveness and the Green Infrastructure Plan has sought to ensure that all these aspects have been addressed through the development of the Plan. The proposals developed in this Plan have been proofed against other relevant plans, policies and programmes. The Green Infrastructure Strategies and Plans of neighbouring authorities have been reviewed to ensure consistency between this Plan and those of neighbouring authorities. A robust and transparent methodology has been used to ensure that proposed solutions are clearly linked to addressing issues and needs identified in the evidence base. A workshop and consultation with delivery partners has ensured that proposed solutions (**section 3**) are deliverable, flexible and that potential delivery partners are identified. Suggestions for monitoring have also been included in the Plan.

4.4 The key findings of the Green Infrastructure Plan that are relevant to planning policy, are set out here. This will aid plan makers, those assessing the plan (SA/SEA practitioners) and consultees in successfully embedding green infrastructure into the DPD process.

## Evidence Base

- 4.5 The Green Infrastructure Plan is to be included as part of the evidence base for the LDF. There may be benefits to including or referring to parts of the evidence gathering and analysis undertaken for this Plan in other LDF supporting documents such as Sustainability Appraisal baselines. The following may be useful:
- An overall justification for following a green infrastructure approach is provided in **section 1**.
  - Background information on environmental character can be found in **Appendix 2**.
  - Key green infrastructure issues are set out by function in **section 2** and **Appendix 3**. These issues should be used by plan makers, SA practitioners and consultees to identify what the broad green infrastructure (and environmental) issues are in the District.
  - The assessment of need for green infrastructure is given by function in **section 2** and **Appendix 3**.
  - **Section 3** sets out the proposed green infrastructure vision, network and supporting projects. This may be useful for plan makers when they are developing policies, and for SA practitioners and Consultees when reviewing policies to help ensure options have been presented that take full advantage of potential opportunities and are most likely to help solve current and future problems.

## Core strategy

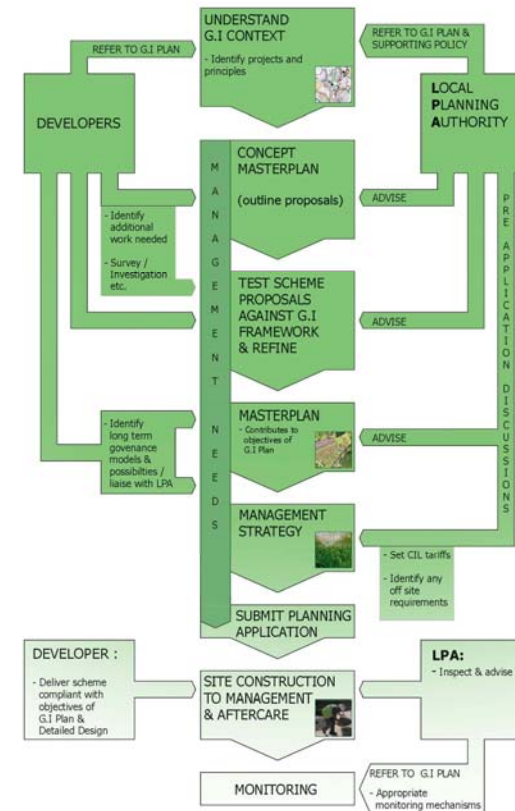
- 4.6 Key GI points for the Core Strategy to take into consideration are:
- Wetland enhancement and sustainable water management in the Lee, Stort, Rib, Beane, Quin & Ash Valleys, making 'space for water' up and downstream of the main settlement pinch points;
  - Increased green links to the countryside from high density settlements in particular Hertford and Ware, & Bishop's Stortford, seeking enhanced links along the river valleys network, where these do not conflict with nature conservation interests;
  - Improved strategic links with adjunct District/County (such as the Lateral Links project), facilitating greater levels of car free access;
  - Using green infrastructure to contribute positively to landscape character enhancement, restoration and linkage (e.g. areas for farmland, grassland restoration and woodland enhancement as shown on **Figure 3.1**);
  - Green infrastructure to interpret and appreciate significant cultural heritage assets (e.g. Henry Moor cultural trail and reinstatement of Roman Road);
  - Context, sense of place and local distinctiveness: Recognition, conservation and enhancement of the key assets of river valleys, woodlands, grasslands and commons.

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

4.7 The green infrastructure zones and component projects identified in **section 3** form a basis for evaluating future development proposals against the proposed green infrastructure network, and to ensure that they contribute to the desired environmental outcomes and functions. A model process for ensuring that green infrastructure is embedded in development management, and that appropriate account is taken of green infrastructure recommendations, is set out in **Figure 4.1**. A standardised approach to the design and implementation of a generic green infrastructure development project is shown in the central column of this Figure, with respective responsibilities of the applicant and the District Council, as they relate to GI, shown to the left and right hand sides respectively.

4.8 **Figure 4.1** is designed to assist Development Management officers and planning applicants to ensure that green infrastructure is embedded in the scheme design from the outset, as part of the development process. The diagram can be applicable to any scale of proposed development. The starting point is to identify the green infrastructure zone or elements in which a specific site lies and whether it relates to, can contribute to or affects any proposed projects in this GI Plan. Reference should be made to the key messages for the relevant projects e.g. the important green infrastructure assets and links to conserve and enhance, and this should be used as a starting point for site

planning and design – a ‘greenprint’ or a green infrastructure led basis for masterplanning, to ensure that green infrastructure assets are considered and protected from the first.



**Figure 4.1: Embedding GI in Development Management**

## NEXT STEPS

4.9 The following steps/alternatives are recommended in order to take forward green infrastructure delivery within the District:

- Creation of a dedicated **Green Infrastructure Delivery Officer** role at County level (subject to resources – this may be a desirable long term aspiration);
- **Taking the GI Plan forward in the District through existing mechanisms** (Hertfordshire Environmental Forum) and with assistance and advice from the Countryside Management Service;
- Attendance at and participation in a potential new Hertfordshire wide/cross district **GI Delivery Panel** (potentially linked to HTCOA’s landscape group and other stakeholders such as the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, as well as the Parish Councils). Management of this panel could be commissioned from a relevant commercial organisation such as Groundwork or other GI implementation consultancy. This should have a practical focus in securing on the ground delivery.

4.10 Whichever approaches are selected, clearly there will be a need for close partnership working with other organisations with parallel interests and objectives (East Herts in an enabling/facilitating role, liaising as appropriate with adjacent Districts and Boroughs). By doing this and through intelligent use of existing mechanisms and

processes, a SMART approach to GI delivery could be achieved in the District, as described below. Possible future responsibilities in relation to green infrastructure delivery, whether through a Delivery Officer or through participation in a Delivery Panel, at District level, are as follows:

- **Actively promote green infrastructure**, liaising with relevant members of the Local Strategic Partnership, to ensure that green infrastructure contributes to the objectives of spatial planning;
- Preparation and implementation of a **Communications Strategy for green infrastructure** in the District, to raise public awareness of the concept. This should link to the interactive GI mapping/web/app based project described in **section 3** (Project 5: Green Hertfordshire). Focus on projects with a community emphasis, to engender greater public support and ownership, as well as embedding positive informal management/stewardship, in addition to any more formal management structures identified;
- **Advise and assist a nominated green infrastructure ‘champion’**, (ideally a Council member, to ensure greater potential for ‘buy in’ from members);
- Provide constructive advice to the Council on GI delivery, considering the points below:

- **A checklist** for evaluating development proposals in terms of GI and against the components of the GI network in this GI Plan. Possible components of such a checklist are set out under 'Potential future work', at the end of this section;
- **Consider potential for further work** and additional studies to bring GI forward, including more detailed GI planning work, as highlighted at the end of this section;
- Identification of constraints, challenges and potential conflicts of interest in relation to practical delivery, making early links with appropriate bodies (e.g. in relation to ecological advice, surveys and flood risk etc). **Land ownership liaison and negotiation** (this is a key stage);
- Where appropriate, as part of liaison with landowners **seek to encourage take up of grant schemes** which could contribute to the aims of the GI Plan e.g. agri-environment and woodland grant schemes;
- As a consultee, comment on relevant planning applications through the pre application and application processes, using the proposed GI Network;
- **Liaise with developers early in pre application stage**, ideally at site acquisition, so that GI is factored into schemes from the start, and as part of section 106 contributions (identification of the proportion of GI to be met through the Community Infrastructure Levy - CIL, section 106 and through the local authority New Homes Bonus). Cross refer to the work of Sustainability East for embedding sustainable development considerations in relation to business development<sup>xi</sup>;
- Ensure that developers and others bringing forward green infrastructure not only take account of the key messages in this GI Plan, but that they also identify sustainable, resourced mechanisms and models for long term governance to deliver design intentions and desired environmental outcomes;
- **Make appropriate links with future delivery and funding partners** identified in the projects in **section 3** of this GI Plan, in relation to **co ordination of funding bids**, and also in **making links with adjacent authorities** for projects on authority boundaries/in considering adjacent District GI projects which could impact on/benefit East Herts;
- **'Grass roots' delivery:** Continue to develop links with Parish councils and relevant community and volunteer groups such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), allotment societies, local schools (tree planting activities) and existing Friends Groups and formation of new Friends Groups, where appropriate. Also potential for formation of **local green groups** working with a Delivery Officer/panel. As part of this grass roots approach, ensure that reasons for changes to greenspace management etc are translated to the community (perception and awareness raising);

- Liaise with the relevant Local Strategic Partners, **noting and using where appropriate existing processes** that may be of relevance to GI delivery, for reasons of efficiency and avoiding duplication of work;
- Develop appropriate consultancy briefs for masterplanning and detailed design services in relation to key GI projects, making appropriate reference to key messages in the GI network and projects at **section 3**;
- Create an audit trail of appropriate monitoring mechanisms in relation to green infrastructure delivery, making use of existing tools such as site inspections to adoption, and visitor surveys. This will help monitor performance of the green infrastructure proposals in relation to the environmental functions, to inform and refine future iterations of the spatial plan for East Herts;
- With the Council, convene regular updates, meetings and opportunities for progress reporting during the life of the GI Plan and wider spatial plan, to disseminate results, good practice and lessons learned (e.g. with reference to good practice case studies, such as Broxbourne Woods and Amwell Quarry regeneration).

## POTENTIAL FUTURE WORK

### GI checklist for development management decisions

- 4.11 In addition to the general pointers shown on **Figure 4.1**, this could cover the following subject areas:

- Sense of place: Including historic character and landscape management;
- Nature conservation enhancement and management;
- Sustainable resource management and climate change adaptation;
- Healthy and cohesive communities including access for all;
- Choices for responsible travel;
- Sustainable design and construction techniques and specifications.

### GI Design and Delivery Guide

- 4.12 This could take the form of accessible, concise, written and illustrated design principles aimed at developers and to inform Development Management Officers in evaluating planning applications in terms of green infrastructure. The aim with such a document should be to ensure that the most positive consideration is given to GI planning, design and management, from the outset of the development process.

### GI Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 4.13 It may be desirable for the District (possibly with adjacent authorities) to consider production of a green infrastructure SPD, although this must not detract from the wider need to embed green infrastructure more generally within the LDF, the Core Strategy and relevant

policies. It may be more useful to include aspects of the Green Infrastructure Plan and potential future work within other SPD (e.g. Planning Obligations/Developer Contributions, or a Design SPD).

#### **More detailed and local level GI planning work**

- 4.14 This is a strategic level GI Plan and more detailed and 'site specific' GI planning work, drawing on this plan, is likely to be required within the District, particularly as growth locations and areas of change become more fixed.

#### **Outward facing projects to 'launch' the GI concept**

#### **Interactive/web/app based mapping project – GI for people – 'Green Hertfordshire'**

- 4.15 This is described in the 'Green Hertfordshire' project (Project 6) at **section 3** of this GI Plan. This project could also be linked to promotion through established greenspace events in the District, such as those held in Hartham Common. Another focus of the project could be to promote local suppliers and producers (local food).





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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/gifframework.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/NE176>

<sup>iii</sup> NE176, **Op Cit**

<sup>iv</sup> Natural England/The Landscape Partnership **Analysis of Accessible Natural Greenspace Provision in Hertfordshire**

<sup>v</sup> Source: V4C Project. Study produced for Hertfordshire County Council

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.hertsdirect.org/libisleisure/heritage/landscape/hlca/>

<sup>vii</sup> Groundwork Hertfordshire 2004 **Trees Against Pollution: A Strategy for Tree Planting and Air Quality**

<sup>viii</sup> Liz Lake Associates 2009 **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Re Restoration Sites - Hertfordshire**

<sup>ix</sup> Planning Advisory Service 2008 **Local Development Frameworks: Evidence Base**

<sup>x</sup> The Planning Inspectorate 2008 **Local Development Frameworks: Examining Development Plan Documents – Soundness Guidance**

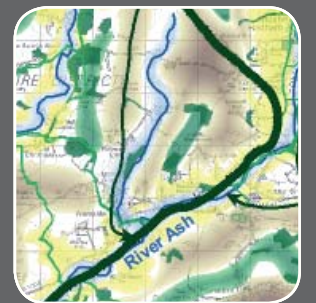
<sup>xi</sup> [http://www.sustainabilityeast.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=22](http://www.sustainabilityeast.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=22)







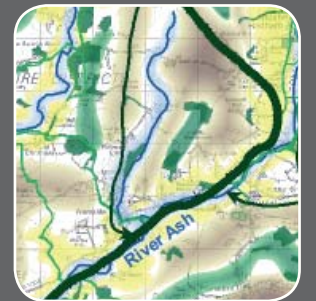
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# EAST HERTS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN APPENDICES

Prepared for East Herts Council  
by  
Land Use Consultants

March 2011



[www.landuse.co.uk](http://www.landuse.co.uk)



## LUC SERVICES

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Landscape Design

Landscape Management

Masterplanning

Landscape Planning

Ecology

Environmental Assessment

Rural Futures

Digital Design

Urban Regeneration

Urban Design

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# **1 Stakeholder consultation record: Stakeholder event, East Herts Council, 27th January 2011**



## 4993 East Herts GI Plan: Stakeholder event, 27<sup>th</sup> January. Record of discussion and LUC responses (in bold)

### Stakeholder workshop report

The workshop was held at EHDC's offices on 27<sup>th</sup> January from 1.30-4.30pm, facilitated by Bryan Thomsett, Jenny Pierce and Ian Sharratt (EHDC) and Andrew Tempany and Fearghus Foyle (LUC). Attendees were split into 5 groups and considered three subject areas/exercises to inform development of the GI Plan, following a short introduction to the work by LUC. Exercises considered: Visioning, Proposals and Projects and Delivery. Findings and LUC responses (where appropriate) are summarised by group below.

### Group 1: Visioning (LUC responses in bold)

- We should protect areas that are not yet protected. **Yes, agree with principle**
- Identify all protected landscapes (other than Panshanger) **LUC to check**
- Too specific – provide examples **Yes**
- Define 'protected'
- Separate routes for cyclists **Detailed consideration for future work**
- Why particularly Beane Valley **The importance of all river valleys is recognised and will be referenced**
- More thought about, e.g. linking neighbouring strategies (cross-county) **Cross district links are identified in parallel Herts district GI work being undertaken by LUC**
  - e.g. North Herts / Broxbourne
  - re-word – adjoining districts
- Identify SSSI locations to avoid conflict from increased access **Yes, these have been identified as part of the functional mapping undertaken for the project**
- Biodiversity should be stressed more as a key message **Can emphasise more**
- Are other documents linked e.g. Living Landscapes? **Yes**
- What does low key and informal mean?
- Conservation of 'heritage' landscapes not mentioned, e.g. historic landscape character. **HLC is being referenced in the GI Plan Report and the functional analysis**
- Wider assets?
- Growth points – ensuring new developments are designed to link with and enhance green infrastructure. **Agree with principle**

Want to see:

- Need for good evidence base **This has been provided in document review and functional analysis which will form part of the full GI Plan report**
- Could maps be made available online to see more detail **This is not within the contract scope. The GI proposals map has been circulated by EHDC for information**
- External river valleys “outside” of the map boundary **LUC to check**
- More emphasis on “quality of place” – v important to residents. **Can emphasise more**

### **Group 2: Visioning**

- Stevenage and Lee Valley (the natural place rather than the park itself ) links **Agree, these form part of the network**
  - Promote as an asset separate to Lee Valley Regional Park. **Agree with promotion of the valley itself in principle**
- Ownership – shared ownership with council and stakeholders
- Buntingford (all urban areas in the district)
  - Urban envelope
  - Enhance / maintain rural character **Agree**
  - Urban / rural links – reinforce importance of countryside **Agree**
- Land Use **Recognise its importance as a key component of GI and planning for the future**
  - Wider land use issues for the future
  - Water / water quality will be a significant driver in land use **Agree**
- GI should inform development and not the other way round. **Agree**
- Access – promotion of existing and improvement **Incorporated into GI proposals**
- Education **Agree with importance and need for awareness raising**
  - Rights of way
  - Farming – promotion
- Identity / place / setting – crucial to development proposals **Agree**
- Belonging **Agree**
  - Ownership
  - Localism
  - Shared ownership – Council, EH & Stakeholders

- Urban – rural links **Yes**
- Development
  - GI informs development plans **Agree with principle**
  - GI evidence base for development
- Access – promotion of existing and additional routes **Agree**
- Taking forward
  - Agri-schemes/HLS **Agree**
  - Section 106 **Yes, agree**
  - No longer publicly supported route to delivery
  - HLS
- Education **Yes, very important**
  - RoW
  - Farming – promotion (agri-environment)
  - Those in receipt of funding should be reminded
- Place / setting - ensure landscape is a primary element in deciding development **Agree with principle. GI forms a part of that process**

### **Group 3: Visioning**

- Buffering of communities – e.g. Stevenage and the way it accesses wider resources. Could this be stronger? More on requirement of community **LUC to check**
- Vision is quite comprehensive for this level/spatial scale
- ‘How to get there?’ **A point for consideration of delivery**
- Sensitivity of landscape north of Harlow **Agree this is important in terms of GI assets**
- Links with Stort Valley & Harlow area GI work **Yes**
- Joined up approach – linking to project delivery at Stort Valley **Agree with principle**
- Good to express more clearly along Lee Valley
- Farmland: more on local food initiatives **Agree with principle**
- Rural tourism
- Value of farmland for linked habitats **Importance has been identified**
- Linking HLS areas **Agree with principle**

- Link to other activities – skills / training etc **Yes, agree with principle**
- Need for co-coordinating role – (CMS?) e.g. how to achieve projects. Land ownership & discussion & Parish councils are key. **Agree**
- Partnership working irrespective of development. **Agree with principle**

#### **Group 4: Visioning**

- Are we acting for and on behalf of London spreading north using Herts GI assets or vice versa? – **Providing a network of open space within Hertfordshire with links to and from adjoining districts. GI aims to remove boundaries**
- Barge over-crowding on the Stort
- River network is a ready-made GI network **Agree**
- Needs to be a link between development extraction levels harming the very environment they want to take advantage of
- Importance of Broxbourne & Herts woodlands NNR **Signpost to strategically important assets as appropriate**
- Increasing corridor effect for wildlife / plants migration – issues getting land owners to sign up, particularly funding solutions (Climate change)
- Landowners funding
- Links to ‘localism’ to maximise asset use **Agree with principle – parishes and local community involvement in future**
- Needs to be actioned – not another study on the shelf – need to give much greater priority to GI **Agree with principle. GI Plan will identify initial steps to begin bringing the network forward**
- Needs more reference to biodiversity. **LUC to check**

#### **Group 5: Visioning**

- Sense of place **Agree with importance**
  - Rural once out of town
  - Physical barrier around edge of town
  - Happy with consultation proposals
- How are we going to link the wooded areas? Farms already encouraged to do this
- What about the concept of “landscape view” as GI **Unsure of meaning**
- To add:
  - Act to improve, enhance information dissemination esp. Permissive Rights of Way – (in conjunction with Herts Rights of Way Improvement Plan). **RoW and Herts RoWIP considered as part of document review undertaken for**

**the project. Agree that promotion and awareness raising are key principles for GI**

**Group 1: Proposals and Projects**

Project 1: Kings Mead

- Hartham wetland – care in research? **Unsure of the meaning of this**
- Would like Rivers Nursery mentioned specifically as historical site. **This may be too detailed for a strategic vision**

Project 2: More emphasis on enhancing and protecting the area and its rural environment. **Recognise and reference as appropriate**

Project 3: Why Stort Valley not mentioned? Lee also **Agree, will add**

Project 4: Roman Rd East of Stevenage would potentially impact on archaeology – needs assessing **Agree**

Project 5: What is envisaged? **LUC to check**

- Link to wetland enhancement – make clearer.
- Emphasise historic environment

- Could be more a specific project to identify and regenerate the ‘lower quality’ landscapes? **LUC to check**
- Why not mapping Entry Level Stewardship schemes This did not form part of the specification for the contract
- Mention traditional orchards (BAP) **Yes, account has been taken of this in the functional analysis**

**Group 2: Proposals and projects**

Project 1

- King’s Mead – Amwell Quarry
- Greening River Lee around Hertford and Ware
- Encompassing a broader area to include a number of different bodies to bring projects forward
- Herts Civic Society

**LUC to check/take account of the above, as appropriate**

Project 2

- Scale / size of projects
- Stort valley / Harlow GI Plans act as an overall vision
- Investment in Harlow North countryside

- Lack of funding
- What do zones mean – compulsory consideration or optional
- Green belts – results in overcrowding in urban areas

**LUC to check/take account of the above, as appropriate**

### Project 3

- Beane – runs dry
- EA in consultation with CC to reduce abstraction
- Stort is over licensed
- All Herts Rivers over abstracted
- Programming money to reduce abstraction
- Habitat quality & habitat management
- Run off mgmt
- Tributary mgmt - Beane in particular
- Physical habitat & farming mgmt
- Developing suitable industries along river valleys

**LUC to check/take account of the above, as appropriate**

### Project 4 (grassland mgmt)

- Lateral links **Agree**

### Project 5

- Panshanger
- Mineral abstraction
- Designated mineral sites (future sites allocated in the Minerals Core Strategy) – what happens in the in-term? E.g. can they be used as part of GI network until extraction commences?
- Long term ambition for mineral sites



- Abstraction issues

**LUC to check/take account of the above, as appropriate**

### **Group 3: Proposals and Projects**

Project 1: Link to existing work being done in Hartham **Agree, reference this**

- Land ownership an issue **Agree**
- Links to others e.g. Beane an opportunity
- Hertford Green Fingers study **Make reference as appropriate**
- Information is a key part to “translate why GI assets are special” **Agree**
- Support for idea of links to Amwell NR + Lee Valley Regional Park
- Expand on the good people links of navigation
- Explore links along valley via nature reserve **LUC to check**
- Possible link along A414, but many barriers – railway.
- BVWB – works on links at Roydon. Potential further work on Sustrans route
- Also at Bishop Stortford – opportunity for good link in town centre where river un-canalised (Grange Paddocks) **LUC to check**. Could this also link to 2020 vision for Bishops Stortford? (some towpath works being delivered to canalised part). Make sure gaps are joined for users of network **Agree with principle**
- To do rest of towpath is a key aspiration of the Stort Valley Plan, but no funds to deliver
- Need for signage / interpret – action. Awareness raising is absolutely key **Yes, agree**

Project 2: Pole Hole (mineral ext.) & ex Harlow Town rubbish tip. Key opportunity on floodplain site and restore higher ground to farmland **Could be assessed further at a later, more detailed stage**

- Therefore need to formalise as part of valley
- Other aspects of project cover points well
- Land ownership + negotiation key **Agree**
- Wording sounds a bit “Harlow North”? – could it be cast it more in Eastwick / Gilston perspective (local resonance) **Agree, will check**
- Interesting idea re wider landscape sculpture trail
- Potential “tourism angle” – local business input? **Agree, an opportunity**

Project 3: Ecosystem services - should link to vision, e.g. what landscape and habitat provide for people (flood risk management).

Same issues re land ownership. **Agree**

- Link to existing Beane Valley trail / walk (Walkern etc) – Hertford (1996 leaflet- needs updating!)
- Beane arable but some significant HLS in the valley

Project 4: Principle sounds good

Project 5: Project is good but how will it be delivered? **GI Plan will identify initial thoughts and recommendations re: delivery of the network. Links with Lafarge will be key for this project in future**

- Sounds good if phased and more use of quiet roads also.

Panshanger

- Good to have woodland and landscape connections
- Links to phased restoration of site
- What about management – grazing (viability)?

Project 6: Non spatial project

- App idea sounds sensible / appropriate
- Current/relevant idea a cost effective proposal for which there is broad support
- Potential for communities to come together to share info, in addition to hosting by tourism board
- Good for awareness raising
- Potential to act as “portal” for different interest groups **Agree with principle**
- Educational value – enhanced understanding / perception.

#### **Group 4: Projects and Proposals**

- Bias towards wetland projects **Landscape as a whole has been analysed however, East Herts water courses are a prominent landscape feature and clearly form a key part of the strategic GI network**
- Need natural history societies input **A point for future engagement**
- Perhaps group river valleys / wetland projects into an overarching project leaving room to accommodate woodland and other projects **LUC to consider**

- Add Mimram to Panshanger Park to link East Herts to Welwyn Hatfield **Agree, this proposal has been developed for the strategic County GI Plan and should cross reference to this district scale GI Plan – proposal can be amended to include**
  - Stort sewerage issues preventing floodplain from functioning properly as it would harm valley biodiversity
  - Is the west at risk of being missed due to focus on river valley **Appropriate promotion and use of river valleys can impact positively on the GI network**
  - Add a project on farmland and stewardship schemes **LUC to check, possibly more an overarching point re: delivery**
  - Increase the involvement of voluntary organisations (Natural History Societies) **Agree with principle, for future engagement**
  - DEFRA – funding for environmental stewardship schemes – 10 yr revenue & capital
1. Wetland and river valleys
  2. Woodland
  3. Farmland (environmental stewardship)
  4. North of Harlow
  5. Lateral links
  6. Panshanger Park
- Need to draw out use of renewables in new developments **Agree with general principle**

#### **Group 5: Projects and Proposals**

##### Project 1: Hetford Ware

- Possible conflict with public access / wildlife **Principle of project is about striking appropriate balance between such interests and avoiding conflict**
- Need for more 'permissive paths' as preferred by farmers / landowners
- Agree with project generally
- 'Natural' approach to flood management prevention important. Need to increase vegetation to slow run off. Reduce canalisation. **Agree with principles**

##### General:

- Need for more co-ordination between separate landowners and stewardship scheme

- Problem now that access is missing from Stewardship Schemes.

**Agree in principle with the above points**

Project 2: North of Harlow

- 'Legibility' What is this concept? **A more detailed explanation will be given in GI Plan Report**
- Make sure 'access' is considered at the start of any development, so public access is available to surrounding countryside

**Agree with principle**

Project 3: River Valleys – R. Beane

- Too much abstraction from River Beane – this causes massive damage **Agree, an important issue**
- There is no more water from aquifers
- All waste water is lost from the catchment as ends up in R. Lee
- Climate change making this a more pressing issue **Agree**

Project 4: Lateral Links to Bishops Stortford

- Strongly support the proposal east-west link
- Conflict with some future development opportunities; whilst conversely it may benefit others in the rural economy **This need not conflict as link can work with and around any future development, if principle of link is established early enough**

Project 5: Panshanger

- Agree with proposals

Project 6: Non-spatial project

- Need more awareness of water management and use. East Herts a very dry area.
- Need for web based register of Permissive Paths, linked with HCC existing web site of Rights of Way
- Agree with concepts, especially on education / local produce.
- Awareness with regard to litter & dog mess **A micro level consideration, although use and misuse issues should be recognised in greenspace management**

### **Group 1: Delivery**

- Parish Council – putting link on Parish websites, path, workgroups involvement in access issues in Standon. **Strongly agree with promotion and publicity for GI, and agree that local level engagement will be key in future**
- County archaeology
  - Checking evidence base
  - Advice for projects re. archaeology **Agree with principle, although this would be a focus for later, more detailed and site specific proposals/work**
- Consultation at an early stage **Yes**
- RSPB – expertise on land management
- North Herts
  - Learning experience, joint working **Agree**
- Rivers Nursery
  - Objectives re living landscapes etc
  - Supportive role
  - Herts Orchard Initiative (link)

### **Group 2: Delivery**

- Buntingford (other town plans)
- Two levels
  - Delivery of vision
  - Delivery of projects **We see the two levels as linked e.g. implementation of projects on the ground will be able to help deliver the vision**
- Living landscape
- Agri-environment
  - PR exercise
  - Public money been spent on the ground – utilise it
- Showcasing existing work to bring forward additional projects **Agree with principle**
- Harlow local initiative – good example of localism
- Delivery bodies
  - Partnership

- Stort Valley
- Project leader / mentor
  - How?
  - Ownership of plan?

### **Group 3: Delivery**

- Identify partners to deliver objectives / projects **Agree with principle**
- Portfolio of projects – strategic approach **Yes, agree**
- Need coordinating role (sub groups) **Agree with principle**
- Resource dependent. Need someone with overview. **Yes, agree, as per above point**
- Prioritisation and costing **Agree, early consideration of prioritisation is part of the work. More detailed feasibility studies and costings will be required as a later stage, although broad cost range can be identified to help guide future investment**
- Use of existing mechanisms as well to help mobilise e.g. Herts Env't Forum **Agree**
- Link to CMS / HMWT
- Scope for delivery panel? **Idea should be referenced as an option**
- Role of CMS in 'doing role' (cf. North Herts) **Agree, a key player**
- Another tier of work? – Delivery plan? – gap between GI strategy and on ground delivery **Yes, key future stage after this study**
- Cluster projects together (strategic) = larger funding bid (cf. Stort Valley) **Agree with principle**
- Factor in staffing costs **Agree with principle for future detailed costings**
- Fully costed project plans advantageous for tie in re S.106 (link to Planning). Developers need to factor GI costs into "bottom line" **Agree with principles**
- How to make it happen. Identify interested parties
- Look at other successful models
- Identification of resources (& capacity) to deliver / lead.
- HCTOA
  - Consider possible GI officer appointment? **Idea is interesting if resources were available**
  - Could they oversee strategically?
- Need for & ability for GI to happen irrespective of development
- Parish plans inc. GI element. Could parishes enable through liaison with CMS? **Reference**

### **Group 4: Delivery**

- Need to be opportunistic – don't ask, don't get
- Identify key landowners and opportunities **Key principle for future work**

- Willingness to participate
- Funding – where from / how to spend –
- Natural England: Key issues/interests
  - Landscape
  - Environmental Stewardship Schemes
  - Higher Level Schemes
- Partnership working
  - Lafarge e.g. at Panshanger & HCC
  - Commercial – S.106
  - County & District
  - NE, EA, Forestry Commission, HMWT, FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group), HBRC, CMS, Ground Work.
  - Local groups – Green space groups / community groups
  - Farmers Markets use / support local producers
- Need to keep at it as landowners change
- Capture Development Gain S.106

**LUC to take account of the above, as appropriate**

**Group 5: Delivery**

<u>Project</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>How + mechanisms</u>
Project 1; Hertford / Ware	Existing groups in place	Need to link with landowners / developers
Project 3: River Valleys	Andrew Bott	Political pressure & coordination with water company / EA.

General points

1. Farmers / landowners
  - How to help deliver. Need subsidy. Arable land use is key use in East Herts. Grain prices high.
  - Council – can help with coordination between landowners – get them together. Encourage green infrastructure ideas to be considered in HLS & ELS & cross compliance at start of these agreements **Agree with principle**
2. Adaptation to climate change
  - Landowners will be reactive



3. Need to keep communities moderate in size so people can walk to 'town centre'.



## 2 Summary findings from the document review

This section also includes messages useful for future, local level GI planning, and which go beyond the scope of this high level GI Plan. Where relevant, appropriate projects and proposals in the GI Plan (section 3 and **Figure 3.1** in the main report) are also identified.

### KEY MESSAGES FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW, BY THEME

#### Access and recreation (open space)

- 2.1 *The following documents were reviewed: East Herts Open Spaces Strategy, East Herts Council, 2009, East Herts PPG17 Audit and Assessment, 2004, Hertfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2008.*
- 2.2 The open space strategy identifies extensive open space provision in East Herts. Of the 21117 acres in East Herts, this includes 986 hectares of semi-natural open space which accounts for over 30% of the landscape. East Herts has developed quantity provision standards for publicly accessible open space, most of which are met, with the exception of provision for young people and children, where there are deficiencies identified at Hertford and Buntingford. A number of open spaces across the District have also been identified for quality improvements.

- 2.3 There is good overall provision of public rights of way and the network is extensive, but disjointed in places, where a need to improve off-road cycle access, particularly around Bishop's Stortford, is required. Roads and other barriers affect the use of rights of way in many parts of the District, particularly in close proximity to larger settlements.
- 2.4 GI opportunities in **section 3** of the GI Plan which aim to improve access to open space include River Valley Links and Lateral Links across the District which aim to create an a network encompassing the entire District with strategic links incorporated. These broad principles are expressed in **projects 3 and 4** and on **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan.

#### Landscape character, experience, settlement setting

- 2.5 *The following documents were reviewed: Landscape East/Natural England, 2009: East of England Regional Landscape Framework: Landscape Typology Final Report, HCC, 2001: Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, EHDC Landscape Character SPD, CPRE, 2007, Intrusion Mapping, CPRE, 2000, Night Skies Mapping.*
- 2.6 The landscape context of the main settlements in East Herts (Hertford and Ware, Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford) is a relatively simple and unified, intact and strongly rural, often tranquil chalk landscape of lightly settled Wooded Plateau Farmlands, cut by a network of well defined Wooded Chalk Valleys. The

wooded plateau farmlands are characterised by small scale, traditional settlement and have a gently rolling landform, with blocks of ancient broadleaf woodland, often connected by a strong network of hedgerows, imparting an intact, historic feel to the landscape. The chalk valleys generally have a quiet character, and in some instances definition is provided by wooded valley crests and adjacent plateau woodlands. A number of the chalk valleys are associated with the Valley Meadowlands of the principal river valleys and chalk streams which cut the District, such as the Beane, Quin, and Rib. The principal nucleated settlements are often located in larger valleys, such as the Stort. Other aspects of the local landscape experience include intact and larger scale arable plateau farmlands and a network of parkland estates and areas of designed landscapes overlooking the valleys (e.g. Gilston in the Stort Valley).

- 2.7 Key issues relevant to green infrastructure are fragmentation of the parkland estates and their settings due to mineral extraction, agriculture and development, the severance of intimate valley landscapes such as the Stort and the Ash by transport corridors, and exposed settlement edges which jar with landscape character.
- 2.8 Key opportunities are to use the parklands as primary foci for the GI network and to enhance their setting and understand such landscapes through interpretation. Historic gems such as Gilston and Pishiobury and (with ongoing positive restoration) Panshanger will form primary components of the GI network, as will the tranquil lowland

river valleys – clear opportunities for interlinked ‘necklaces’ of landscape and habitat, threading through countryside and settlements (see **projects 3 and 4** in the GI Plan).

### The historic environment

- 2.9 *The following documents were reviewed: Historic Landscape characterisation (HLC), Hertfordshire County Council, 2001: Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, Conservation Area Appraisals where available: Hertford and Bishop’s Stortford, The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record.*
- 2.10 A rich historic landscape resource exists across the District, with some of the most intact areas of historic landscape in the county. The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has identified large scale presence of intact early enclosure field systems across the rural landscape, allied to historic parklands and designed landscapes, ancient woodland and a network of river meadows.
- 2.11 Much of the historic character of East Herts is the legacy of Roman occupation, where the landscape is crossed by a network of Roman roads such as Stane Street in Bishop’s Stortford and Ermine Street in Hertford. These should be considered key cultural assets and where accessible these should be integrated into District wide non motorised routes (see **project 4** in the GI Plan) and **Figure 3.1**. Greater accessibility to the numerous river valleys across the District and in particular the integration of the Lee

Valley with the wider landscape will be a key element of green infrastructure planning. Although the quarried sites across the district have become a key feature of the landscape over time particularly near Hertford, their restoration should be considered where their recreational functions could be better utilised – woodland and landscape linkages (see **project 5** in the GI Plan).

### Health and deprivation

- 2.12 *The following documents were reviewed: East Herts Open Spaces Strategy, East Herts, 2009, East Herts PPG17 Audit and Assessment, 2004, Hertfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2008.*
- 2.13 According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, there is no significant health deprivation in East Herts. In addition, there is extensive provision of open space in the District, although there are some localised deficiencies which may affect the health of the population, including lack of provision for young people and children at Hertford and Buntingford. Public consultation indicates that 1/3 of respondents had not visited an open space of any type in the last 12 months. The majority of residents also access the public rights of way network by car, and healthier, sustainable transport options should be promoted (see **project 4** in the GI Plan). GI opportunities include enhancing links to nearby initiatives, such as the Lee & Stort Valleys and Gilston Park proposals and Harlow GI Plan (see **project 2** in the GI Plan).

### Functional ecosystems and flood risk

- 2.14 *The following documents were reviewed: East Herts Level 1 Strategic Floodrisk Assessment (SFRA) 2008, EA Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan, EHDC Landscape character SPD, Hertfordshire County Council note on drought sensitive landscape character areas.*
- 2.15 East Herts is hydrologically complex, cut by a network of chalk valleys (Beane, Mimram, Quin, Rib and Lee) and clay valleys (Ash and Stort), with five river valleys converging on the town of Hertford. The wide floodplains of the valleys are a key part of floodrisk management, although the clay catchments are prone to flash flooding (see **project 3** in the GI Plan for further details).
- 2.16 Key issues are in respect of abstraction pressures resulting from existing urban areas and potential future settlement growth, the vulnerability of the valley landscapes to climate change, and consideration of urban flooding (due to lack of space for water) where rivers flow through towns such as Hertford (see **projects 1 and 3** in the GI Plan).
- 2.17 Primary opportunities for the Green Infrastructure Plan are therefore to conserve, enhance and extend floodplain landscapes, to create more space for water, specifically flood storage in the event of drought. SuDS should be an integral consideration in planning any new development. This would both assist with flood storage functions and with management of run off/groundwater re charging, alleviating pressures in respect of water abstraction and therefore

assisting in conservation of landscape character and biodiversity.

### Productive landscapes

- 2.18 *The following documents were reviewed: PPG17 Audit and Assessment - East Herts Council, 2005, Natural England mapped data on traditional orchards, HLS Target Area mapping ([www.natureonthemap.org.uk](http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk)) and statements, Woodland For Life: The Regional Woodland Strategy For The East Of England, November 2003, East Herts Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Document, August 2010, Hertfordshire Low & Zero Carbon Technical Study – Final Report, March 2010.*
- 2.19 Small areas of the District along its eastern and southeast border (e.g. Sawbridgeworth) fall within the Essex Coast and Growth Areas HLS Target Area. HLS schemes which will be supported within this area include those which seek to maintain, restore or create wet woodland or ancient semi-natural woodland (see **project 2** in the GI Plan). An opportunity therefore exists to benefit both biodiversity and the production of timber and/or biofuels by tree planting, support for natural woodland expansion or the bringing of existing woodland under management such as coppicing.
- 2.20 There is an opportunity to enhance the existing woodland from potential adverse effects of any future settlement growth at Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, while there is also an opportunity to provide new biomass fuel sources (e.g. woodland managed as short rotation coppice) to meet the energy needs of existing high density heat demand areas

identified in the Low and Zero Carbon Study and areas targeted for high density new development (see **project 2** and broad principles relating to woodland enhancement zones outlined in **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan).

- 2.21 Opportunity identified in the East Herts Core Strategy Issues and Options to supply new development in villages from community energy schemes using combined heat and power technology fired by newly planted woodland. New woodland could also help to provide climate change adaptation through shading and cooling effects in summer while also softening the urban edge.

### Land remediation

- 2.22 *The following documents were reviewed: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Minerals and Waste Development Framework for Hertfordshire – Waste Core Strategy, East Herts LDF – Core Strategy, Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), National Land Use Data (NLUD).*
- 2.23 The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows that overall the District has very few areas of deprivation. Much of the land is used for agricultural practices; however areas in the south west of the District surrounding Hertford and Ware have higher levels of deprivation. These include Hertford Sale, Hertford Castle, Stanstead Abbots and Hertford Kingsmead. Areas of Bishop's Stortford in the east of the District such as Bishop's Stortford Central and Bishop's Stortford Meads are areas which present opportunity for regeneration. The District's landscape is rich and diverse, reflecting a variety of natural features and

thousands of years of human activity. It is an undulating, complex, and widely dispersed mix of fields, woodland, river valleys and settlements, with the main river valleys of the Lee and Stort containing the major settlements where limited higher levels of deprivation exist.

- 2.24 Existing mineral sites in the District could be monitored in terms of landscape quality to minimise any long term impacts on the landscape and allow for restoration to be planned at an earlier stage of the life of mineral sites such as the ongoing positive restoration work at Panshanger Park (see **project 5** in the GI Plan).
- 2.25 A number of sites (e.g. Waterford, Presdales Pit & St Mary's Lane) within the District which have formerly been used as mineral extraction sites and have since been restored, provide interesting landscapes with an enormous GI resource potential in landscape, recreational and biodiversity terms. However, due to the pervious and outdated restoration techniques used, many of them have the potential to be re-restored once again and become key GI assets throughout the District.

### Nature conservation

- 2.26 *The following documents were reviewed: East of England Biodiversity Mapping Project 2005, Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2006, Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes, Statutory designated sites (Natura 2000, SSSI, NNR, LNR), County Wildlife Sites.*

- 2.27 The primary land use across East Herts is agricultural. Hertford, the county seat, and Ware form the primary urban foci, and, to a lesser extent, Bishop's Stortford in the north east. Each of these settlements enjoy linear stretches of naturalised habitat into the built up area, several of which are centred on the river corridors. There is a wide network of chalk rivers across East Herts. The principal rivers of the Stort, Lee, Rib, Mimram, and Beane support a range of associated wetland features and woodland assets. However, areas of reduced ecological value do occur, largely as a result of water abstraction or pollution (see **project 3** in the GI Plan for proposals for river valley enhancements).
- 2.28 The East of England Biodiversity Map identifies core biodiversity areas through the south west of the District, in addition to the principal river valleys – the Lee, Beane and Rib. The two most common threats to ecologically-valued habitats across the District is first the relatively small and isolated patch size, which has inherently limited viability in the long term, and second, the conflict between recreational use and nature conservation. The Woodland and Heathland BAPs identified additional key threats as the lack of active management and changing management practices. The Wetlands BAP identified additional threats of low water levels and drainage, natural succession, nutrient enrichment, acidification and pollution.
- 2.29 Key opportunities include ensuring the consideration of green infrastructure provision within the strategic / Masterplanning of proposed development. Also expanding

of existing wetland features to a varied wetland mosaic, for example, including wet grassland, carr and open water could also improve biodiversity. Key areas for expansion identified in the Wetland BAP include the Stort valley, Lee and Stort confluence (Rye Meads and the Lee between Hertford and Ware, including the Rib and Beane confluences) and the Mimram Valley (see **projects 1 and 3** in the GI Plan).

- 2.30 Key areas within the District which have been identified for heathland, grassland and woodland enhancement and expansion include the north east chalklands, Benington and Ardeley plateau, the East Herts river valleys, River Stort flood plains, Lee Valley, and the Mimram Valley and Bramfield plateau (see **Figure 3.1** and Green Infrastructure Zones at section 3).
- 2.31 Alleviation of severance along transport infrastructure and use of such linear features as foci for connectivity, for example, expansion of wildlife corridors along the existing transport network, using the principles of the Trees Against Pollution<sup>1</sup> initiative pioneered in St Albans District are also important measures to be considered (see **projects 2 and 4** in the GI Plan).



### 3 Summary findings from the functional analysis

#### THE FUNCTIONS – SUMMARY OF NEED, SUPPLY AND OPPORTUNITY IN EAST HERTS

- 3.1 For each function the methodology behind the GIS spatial analysis is summarised in italics, with summary findings and pointers presented afterwards. This appendix cross references to the mapping shown in section 2 of the GI Plan (main report). For each function, consideration was also given to broad situations where functional need and supply mismatch may be exacerbated (potential longer term growth using initial options considered in the emerging Core Strategy where known).

#### Access to recreation

- 3.2 *The analysis considered the 2.5 km envelope around the main settlements in East Herts (Hertford, Ware, Buntingford, Bishop’s Stortford, Sawbridgeworth). Accessible open space was mapped using open space datasets in the Open Space Study, together with other datasets such as Local Nature Reserves. Access links (paths and rights of way, promoted routes and cycleways) were mapped, as was point data for ROWIP priority projects. A number of open space provision standards were also applied, mainly in the form of Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG) and Woodland Trust Accessible*

*Woodland Buffers. GIS spatial and visual map analysis was then used to identify gaps in provision and barriers to access, to identify potential foci for proposals.*

- 3.3 In Hertford, there is a deficiency in space for children and young people, and in local ANG. There appear to be few off-road links between the urban area and the surrounding countryside, and this is particularly true to the north and west of Hertford, which is severed from the countryside by the A414 and B1502 road (see proposed GI network at **Figure 3.1**). Cycle provision is also limited to one route which runs north-south through the town. Potential growth locations surrounding the town should aim to improve ANG provision as well as rights of way to support these new communities. Four ‘green fingers’ have been designated in local policy, and the GI functions of these areas should be maximised to help ensure that all residents have access to recreational sites.
- 3.4 There is good provision of open space within Bishop’s Stortford, but deficiencies in strategic ANG exist, and there is a lack of provision for people to travel off-road by cycle or foot between the town and countryside. Links to the River Stort, Gilston Park, Harlow and the woodland sites to the south and east should be enhanced, and there is a potential need for a new strategic ANG site to serve existing and future communities (see **projects 2 & 3** and **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan).
- 3.5 Growth is being considered to the north, south and east of the town, and access links to the countryside as well as

cycle routes should be enhanced with consideration to potential new communities as well as existing residents.

- 3.6 There is poor provision of ANG at Buntingford, as well as in space for children and young people. This should be alleviated through creating better public access to the countryside resource that surrounds the settlement. There is also a lack of cycle route and rights of way to the north and south east of the settlement. If growth was considered to the settlement edge, rights of way / green corridors should be created to ensure these new homes have sustainable access. ANG and open space for children and young people will also need to be provided alongside any new residential areas.
- 3.7 There is a deficiency in strategic ANG (500ha) and the M11 is a barrier to movement/access to the countryside. This deficiency should be alleviated either through enhancing existing assets or through the creation of new strategic ANG to serve the existing and future populations of Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and Harlow. Small amounts of growth are being considered to the west and north of Sawbridgeworth, as well as a potential larger extension to the north of Harlow, and there is a need for strategic ANG sites to cater for existing and new communities (see **project 2** in the GI Plan).
- 3.8 There is poor provision of ANG at Ware, as well as in space for children and young people. This should be alleviated through creating better public access to the countryside resource that surrounds the settlement,

including the Lee and Rib rivers. The A414 and B1502 are barriers to access to the countryside (see **project 1** and **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan).

### **Prestige on Settlement Approach Corridors**

- 3.9 *The analysis considered the 2.5 km envelope around the main settlements in East Herts. Using data developed for the earlier Hertfordshire V4C project, a series of assets and detractors were mapped around settlement fringes. Assets included open space and areas of woodland planting, as well as water bodies and main rivers. Detractors included degraded land such as mineral workings and industrial sites. These were mapped within a 500m buffer of main road and rail corridors on settlement gateways, to understand where experience of GI assets may be impaired currently and to inform the spatial direction of proposals. Detractors were also considered with landscape character areas of lower quality as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, to target areas where landscape enhancement could contribute to GI proposals development.*
- 3.10 In Hertford, key issues are in relation to verge management and character e.g. to introduce a less urban character to the A414 and A10, as well as to re connect woodlands as part of the ongoing positive restoration scheme for Panshanger Park and to buffer/foil detracting features, as well as to enhance the setting of Hartham Common (see **projects 1 and 5** in the GI Plan). Also re-connection of woodlands to the south of Hertford around Hertford Heath and restoration of valley floor features

where eroded by detracting features, to provide more positive sense of arrival e.g. Rivers Beane and Rib (see **project 3** in the GI Plan).

- 3.11 Key issues in Ware relate to severance of main assets by transport corridors (e.g. Hartham Common and King's Mead by the A10). Seek to enhance crossing and interface with road corridors (landform/heathland/low level planting). Also restore and reinstate wetland habitats associated with workings in the Rib Valley to give a better settlement approach (see **project 1** in the GI Plan). Similarly in the eastern Lee Valley and the Navigation.
- 3.12 Main issues relate to enhancing and buffering of primary assets such as Pishiobury Park at Sawbridgeworth. Also beyond the settlement envelope, to include consideration of the relationship to Gilston Park (and buffering from detractors south and east of Gilston). The setting of the Stort Valley is impaired to the north of Sawbridgeworth and could be improved with small scale wetland planting as part of a package of measures to deliver the Stort Valley Project as identified in the Harlow GI Plan and the Stort Valley Feasibility Study, e.g. that structural green infrastructure provision, whilst buffering detractors and edges, should not detract from the more open landscape character here. There may be considerable potential for detracting features in the valley floor to be restored and used as part of the greenspace network/Stort Valley Park (see **projects 2 and 3** in the GI Plan).

- 3.13 Severance and fragmentation of landscape structure due to the bypass at Bishop's Stortford is an issue relevant to GI – opportunity to reconnect areas of woodland to enhance perception of tranquillity and settlement approach. Assets and detractors are at close proximity in the Stort Valley, which also contains a number of transport corridors. A key opportunity is to extend wetland vegetation and wet woodland habitat to enhance settlement edge/interface with the valley at this point and to consider this as part of proposals for access links in the Stort Valley Park proposed in the Harlow GI Plan. To the east of Bishop's Stortford within Essex expanded woodland planting could re connect Hatfield Forest and provide attenuation in relation to the M11 interchange (see **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan).
- 3.14 In Buntingford, the landscape has a simple and open character with few detractors. GI enhancement issues will relate mainly to integration of the hard southern edge of Buntingford with localised foiling and using such landscape structure to make better visual connections with wet woodland in landscapes such as the Quin Valley (see **project 4** in the GI Plan). Also occasional small scale woodlands to link the existing relatively sparse distribution in the settlement envelope whilst maintaining simple, open landscape character. Enhanced hedgerow planting would be beneficial to the A10 bypass to improve the setting of and approach to Buntingford in the landscape.

## Health

- 3.15 *The analysis considered the 2.5 km envelope around the main settlements in East Herts. In addition to paths and rights of way and other access routes such as cycle routes, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) were mapped, considering the 40% most deprived wards in the settlement within the District. Taking this with mapped information on barriers such as arterial transport corridors enabled the analysis to target areas where green infrastructure could potentially address deprivation issues through enhanced linkages.*
- 3.16 Within Hertford poor health is not currently a problem, with the exception of Sele ward. However, lack of adequate open space provision for children and young people should be addressed to avoid problems arising in the future. Growth is being considered to the north, south and west of Hertford, and open space provision as well as routes for healthy transport options should be delivered alongside this potential growth (see **project 2** in the GI Plan).
- 3.17 In Bishop's Stortford, the Central and Meads Wards have been identified as areas of deprivation. Poor health is not generally a problem in Sawbridgeworth or Ware; however improvements to the cycle and path network should be delivered to enable people to live healthier lifestyles. Where growth is proposed, healthy new communities should be enabled through provision of quality open space, cycle and path routes. Enhanced links are shown at a strategic level on Figure 3.1 in the GI Plan.

## Sound ecosystems

- 3.18 *The analysis considered the whole District. Environment Agency Water Framework Directive (WFD) GIS data was used for the main rivers and their catchments, to understand issues of ecological quality, low flows and abstraction pressures. High intensity traffic flows and main roads were also mapped to provide a broad picture of air quality issues. These two datasets enabled targeting of strategic GI proposals and zones in terms of wetland enhancement and large scale tree and woodland planting.*
- 3.19 The analysis indicates a need for positive management of all the rivers in the District, particularly the Ash due to the high level of environmental contaminants (see **project 3** in the GI Plan). The riverine environment of the Lee, Stort, Mimram, Rib, Beane, Quin & Ash Rivers are identified as being of poor ecological status and vulnerable to abstraction and low flow pressures. Key areas for expansion identified in the Wetland BAP include the Stort valley, Lee and Stort confluence (Rye Meads and the Lee between Hertford and Ware, including the Rib and Beane confluences) and the Mimram Valley.
- 3.20 Opportunities include reinstatement of native wetland and riparian river valleys (see **project 3** in the GI Plan). Also additional wetland creation in the Ash and Lee to reinforce habitats in light of high abstraction pressures.
- 3.21 Whilst large parts of the principal transport corridors are partly wooded (M11 & M25) there is a need for additional woodland and hedgerow belts to re connect existing

woodlands and improve air quality (e.g. connecting Panshanger Park to the eastern edge of Ware via the A414).

- 3.22 Although the Trees Against Pollution (TAP) project (pioneered by St Albans District) does not fall within this District, the principles relating to tree selection and management could be implemented along roadsides throughout the District. The TAP project notes that only trees adjacent to transport corridors are effective in absorbing pollution. It also identified species which can positively contribute to air quality as Scots pine, common alder, larch, Norway maple, field maple, ash and silver birch. With reference to the TAP report species which can have a detrimental effect on air quality are English oak, crack willow, goat willow, poplar, red oak, sessile oak and white willow.
- 3.23 Future development in Ware, Hertford and Bishop's Stortford could place further abstraction pressures on the Lee, Ash and Stort Rivers, further heightening the need for positive management and wetland expansion (see **projects 1 and 3** and broad principles set out in **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan).

### **Productive green environments**

- 3.24 *This analysis considered the whole District, mapping provision of allotments, traditionally managed orchards and farmlands covered by higher level stewardship agreements, as well as land in organic stewardship. Patterns were noted in terms of*

*distribution and opportunities for new provision noted. Performance against recommended provision standards (e.g. for allotments) was also considered.*

- 3.25 Consideration of the wider farmland landscape in East Herts reveals that a relatively large proportion (864.50 ha) of the District's landscape is managed through Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). These areas are notably parts of the estate at Benington and associated farmland in the Ash Valley east of Ware, while there is also a small area at the Rivers Nursery Site at Sawbridgeworth protected. As such, there is an opportunity to enhance HLS uptake to improve functionality of farmland, particularly where this could deliver enhanced landscape connectivity or interpretation of historic landscape assets (linked to 'conserving historic landscape character' analysis). There is also potential to improve uptake of organic level stewardship with the District currently having only one site (81 ha). This also forms part of the focus for a series of GI 'action zones' (including for farmland conservation and enhancement), shown on GI Plan **Figure 3.1**.
- 3.26 At the local level, allotments, as part of Bishop's Stortford's 'green wedges', are cited by the East Herts Core Strategy Issues and Options as an important feature of the relationship between the town and the surrounding countryside. They are also cited as a valued leisure facility in Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, Ware and Hertford, with council-owned sites in Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth having waiting lists. This is at odds with the older evidence from the PPG17 audit that the

quantity of allotment provision is sufficient so additional orchards could be integrated in applications for new large scale development in the larger settlements.

- 3.27 The Rivers Nursery site at Sawbridgeworth has historic importance for fruit production and breeding and is cited by the East Herts Core Strategy Issues and Options as one of the open spaces of particular importance to the settlement's character and promoting its identity as an important GI asset could help improve the setting and approaches to Sawbridgeworth (see **projects 2 and 3** in the GI Plan).

### Conserving historic landscape character

- 3.28 *This analysis considered the whole District. Designated historic assets such as registered parks and gardens and Conservation Areas were mapped and the qualifying features of designation relevant to green infrastructure noted. Consideration was also given to non designated assets important to urban green infrastructure heritage in general (e.g. links to green spaces project in Harlow New Town).. Ancient woodlands were mapped, and the proportion of both these and registered parks and gardens actively protected through schemes such as environmental stewardship identified. As much of this function is about understanding and conserving historic legacy, the Historic Landscape Character types identified as regionally rare by Hertfordshire County Council, were mapped. The aim was to understand distribution of historic landscape elements and boundary networks which could contribute to the green infrastructure network.*

- 3.29 Rare historic landscape types in East Herts are Co Axial Enclosures, which occupy around 1% of the District area. The Co Axial Enclosures (boundaries of adjacent fields make a series of long, roughly parallel lines) form part of the Farmland Conservation and Enhancement Zone on **Figure 3.1**.
- 3.30 Although there is a large number of Registered Parks and Gardens (15) alongside a high number of Conservation Areas, little of the ancient woodland heritage resource is protected and only four of the sixteen registered parks are in an agri-environment scheme. There is a very large and rather dispersed ancient woodland resource, with two covered by Conservation Areas (Moor Hall Wood and Hadham Cross Wood) in addition some sites enjoying other protection e.g. through SSSI designation (High Wood, Moor Hall Wood, Plashes Wood, Wormley Wood, Hodesdon Park, Broxbourne Wood and Great Hormead Park).
- 3.31 Any urban extension to the settlements within the District, particularly surrounding Hertford would need careful consideration to integrate the design proposals with the historic landscape with emphasis placed on the retention and protection of ancient woodlands and consideration of parkland settings. Any such development would require the creation of additional features which would enhance the setting of the site using historic landscape framework as template. Any additional road or infrastructure corridors which create severance within the historic fabric of the landscape pose a threat to the protection of this

resource and may require further woodland creation to buffer and enhance such sites.

### Sustainability and responding to Climate Change

- 3.32 *Within the 2.5km envelope of the main settlements, accessible woodlands were mapped using National Woodland Inventory data. Visual analysis of aerial photography was also undertaken, to understand the distribution of street trees and the opportunity for urban greening. Gaps were noted as possible opportunity areas for green infrastructure.*
- 3.33 In general, the settlements display a relatively high density of tree cover in terms of woodland blocks and corridors, in principal open spaces and along infrastructure routes. However tree cover within the public realm is generally limited to these and streetscape planting including higher density of planting in the suburbs.
- 3.34 Most settlements appear to have very high levels of tree cover in private gardens but are lacking in parts where street verges are limited. Issues and opportunities relate mainly to conserving what exists and managing this appropriately / planning for succession planting and ensuring new tree planting in relation to redevelopment sites – use of the TCPA standards for enhanced urban tree planting of 80 street trees (of appropriately robust grade) per linear km. Any future growth and redevelopment should plan for street tree planting as an integral part of the masterplan to ensure climate change adaptation,

seeking to apply the TCPA tree planting standard as referenced above.

### Land remediation

- 3.35 *This analysis considered the whole District. East Herts has been mapped and analysed for this exercise in order to identify where former waste, restored minerals and contaminated land sites could be restored and aid the development of the GI network. Any disused mineral sites within the District were identified and their current use and surface condition were assessed. Also considered in the analysis were the IMD (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) and the quality of the Landscape Character Areas in which the sites were located.*
- 3.36 As referenced in the Liz Lake Landscape and Visual Assessment Report, the former mineral sites within the District are each in relatively good condition and could be considered for re-restoration. Restored sites, particularly Waterford Pit and Presdales Pit could contribute to the GI network within the District and any future urban extensions could incorporate plans for links to these areas which are in close proximity to urban settlements and provide interesting landscapes with great potential for improvement (see **project 5** in the GI Plan).
- 3.37 Areas of lower landscape quality as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment tend to have been previously worked for minerals. These occur in close proximity to the larger settlements of Buntingford, Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and to a larger extent



around Hertford and Ware. As such they form part of the focus for ongoing landscape conservation, enhancement and restoration zones as shown on **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan.

### Nature conservation

- 3.38 *Consideration was given to the whole District, noting distribution of internationally, nationally and locally designated assets. Cross referring to the earlier document review, main issues and vulnerabilities were noted. Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan Key Biodiversity Areas and Living Landscape areas were mapped, to understand where there may be potential for enhanced landscape and habitat linkages through green infrastructure.*
- 3.39 Key issues for the GI Plan to focus on are alleviation of pinch points on river corridors through urban areas – Hertford and Ware in particular (see **project 3** and **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan for broad principles).
- 3.40 Where future growth points may potentially link distinct urban areas - maintenance/enhancement of ecological connectivity through this belt may entail ‘stepping stones’ as well as linear features through GI incorporated into new development proposals (e.g. to reconnect landscape features).
- 3.41 Key locations for GI to deliver biodiversity benefits are throughout the Mimram / Lee Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). Extended west along the Mimram valley to alleviate pinch points through Hertford and extend to Welwyn

through the adjoining KBA. Extend north east along the Lee valley to strengthen GI through the urban areas of Harlow, Sawbridgeworth and Bishop’s Stortford. Strengthen the Rib KBA close to the A10 corridor (existing severance), south of Buntingford (several growth points), while also through the Ash KBA extending north to Little Hadham (which overlaps Little Hadham KBA) and south to link to the Mimram/Lee KBA / LL (which encompasses the locally designated sites to the south east of Ware).

- 3.42 Additional areas include potential future growth points – along the east county boundary (Harlow, Sawbridgeworth and Bishop’s Stortford), Hertford and Buntingford. Potential for greatest impact is where currently distinct urban areas become linked, e.g. Harlow and Bishop’s Stortford, with associated potential fragmentation of ecological/landscape features.

### Experience

- 3.43 *The analysis considered the whole borough. Using the Regional Landscape Typology as a starting point, the 27 rural landscape types of the region were assigned rarity based on percentage distribution. The three rarest landscape types were considered for analysis as these often form a potential focus for place and conservation orientated green infrastructure proposals (e.g. chalk landscapes). Their distribution was noted as was the percentage distribution as a proportion of the total regional distribution of the landscape type. Tranquillity, intrusion and*



*night skies mapping were also used to build a broader picture of landscape experience and quality.*

- 3.44 The main regionally rare landscape types<sup>ii</sup> in East Herts have been identified as Settled Chalk Valleys and Wooded Chalk Valleys landscape types. The Settled Chalk Valleys represent approximately 19% of the District area (note that this also represents approximately 43% of the total regional distribution of the landscape type) and the Wooded Chalk Valleys represent approximately 4% of the District (note that this also represents approximately 10% of the total regional distribution of the landscape type).
- 3.45 The Regional Landscape Typology identifies key characteristics of the Wooded Chalk Valleys as steep sided, wooded valley landforms, seasonal watercourses in upper valleys and permanent watercourses/flood meadows in larger, lower valleys. Also an interlocking pattern of ancient woodlands on the steepest valley slopes, creating an intimate spatial character. The valleys often form transport corridors, impairing tranquillity, which is apparent in this District.
- 3.46 The Settled Chalk Valleys and Wooded Chalk Valleys should be conserved, managed and enhanced to maximise their functions (character, floodplain, biodiversity, access). However, the tranquillity of the Wooded Chalk Valleys is often impeded by road and transport corridors, with all of this landscape type within the District lying within areas of intrusion as defined by the CPRE intrusion mapping. There

is an opportunity to enhance access in a way that maintains the tranquil character of the valleys

- 3.47 A key opportunity may be to facilitate enhanced access in appropriate locations, such as the expansion of the riparian habitat through HLS (e.g. Beane Valley). There may also be an opportunity for some restoration of woodland linkages and to re connect ancient woodlands on ridges, to provide enhanced definition of the valley network.
- 3.48 Both the Settled Chalk Valleys and Wooded Chalk Valleys form primary aspects of the District's green infrastructure network (in terms of landscape character, floodplain, biodiversity, and, to a degree, access. They should therefore be conserved, managed and enhanced as such. A key opportunity may be to facilitate enhanced access in appropriate locations, ensuring this was of a low-key character, maintaining the often more tranquil character of the tributary valleys. Also expansion of riparian habitat through HLS (for example in the Beane Valley). Whilst the landscapes surrounding the valleys are often open and of relatively large scale there may be the opportunity for some restoration of valley crest woodland linkages and to re connect ancient woodlands on ridges, to provide enhanced definition of the valley network, where a more intact landscape framework already exists as a template (see **Figure 3.1** in the GI Plan).
- 3.49 If growth was considered in valley settlements such as Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth, this could place pressure on the existing green infrastructure resource and

necessitate expansion of valley landscape and habitat to ensure landscape fit, although the floodplain constrains development within the valley proper. Any growth within Sawbridgeworth should seek to respond to the aims and objectives of the Stort Valley project e.g. to maintain space for a linked and multi-functional network of valley landscapes (see **project 2** in the GI Plan). Growth to the fringe of Bishop's Stortford may provide the opportunity to enhance the settlement interface with the Stort Valley – positive new green gateways as part of the GI network. Similarly any growth to the northern fringe of Bishop's Stortford should aim to secure enhanced links to the local green infrastructure resource e.g. the Stort Valley. The same principles would be applicable to Hertford, at the confluence of five valleys. If large scale growth was considered to the north of Harlow, key objectives would be to conserve and enhance the character of the valley and associated assets such as Gilston Park, as well as to maximise linkages and connections to and across the valley, as part of the GI network and the Stort Valley Park proposed as part of the Harlow Green Infrastructure Plan.

### **Flood attenuation and water management**

- 3.50 *This considered the flood zones in the 2.5km envelope of the main settlements, and proximity to designated nature conservation sites, to understand vulnerabilities in the context of water level fluctuation.*
- 3.51 East Herts falls within the River Lee and Stort Catchments, part of the wider Thames catchment and Thames River

Basin. The River Lee, rising north of Luton, flows in a southerly direction through the District towards London, fed by a number of chalk tributaries which cut the landscape of East Herts. These are the River Mimram, rising in Welwyn and joining the Lee at Hertford, the River Beane, rising in North Hertfordshire and running into the District east of Stevenage at Walkern, before joining the Lee at Hartham Common, the River Ash, flowing through the Hadhams and Furneaux Pelham, meeting the Lee at Amwell Nature Reserve (near the northern extents of the Lee Valley Regional Park), the River Rib, which flows through Buntingford and south of Braughing before joining the Lee east of Hertford, and its associated tributary, the River Quin. Finally the River Stort, which rises from Royston and flows along the Harlow boundary before meeting the Lee at Rye Meads.

- 3.52 Hertford is located at the confluence of a number of tributaries and as a result the flood zone poses a significant threat to development. A review by the EA has identified most of the river water bodies in this area as been at risk in terms of low flows and abstraction pressures. Pinch points along the rivers routes are common in Hertford and developed land near Mill Bridge and Cow Bridge is at risk of flooding due to the narrow width of the river channels.
- 3.53 The flood zone in Ware acts as a multi-functional GI asset where expansive areas of open space benefit from flooding. Amwell Quarry, a former abstraction site, now acts as a flood attenuation area and nature reserve. Much of the Lee in this area has been heavily modified and its course

altered over time. To the west of this area the flood zone widens at Kings Meads and any flood risk is alleviated by the expansive open space.

- 3.54 Any further development within the flood zone could potentially exacerbate the risk of flooding in the area. The tributaries of the Lee which run through the town centre pose significant risk to residential properties in this area and increase the risk of surface water flooding. Retrofitting SuDS where possible and ensuring permeable paving is used where possible should be considered.
- 3.55 The flood zone within Buntingford is primarily open space along the river valley which runs through the settlement. Acting as a multi-functional space, the river is a key GI asset in the town. A number of flood defences have been built along the course of the river which has its course modified over time; however the flood zone poses a risk to a number of residential properties along its route.
- 3.56 Any sites identified for future development surrounding the settlement could potentially be at risk of flooding due to proximity to the flood zone. Potential sites are located outside the flood zone; they could however lead to increased pressure on ground water resources as the area is considered to probably be at risk of abstraction and low flow pressures. Mitigation could include SuDS and additional flood attenuation areas to contain run off and fluvial flooding during times of high flows.
- 3.57 On the northern side of Bishop's Stortford, the flood zone is a wide valley which follows a natural meandering course

through the centre of the settlement. Where the river runs through Hockerhil and New Town, and its natural course has been altered, pinch points (bridges, weirs etc.) have been created which could exacerbate flood risk during times of high flows.

- 3.58 Any proposals for development to the north of the settlement near Foxdellas Farm could be at risk of flooding due to the proximity to the flood zone. Any proposals would need integrated flood attenuation areas and would need to be sympathetically designed with the natural flow of the river. Other areas zoned for potential development do not lie directly in the flood plain but could exacerbate pressures on abstraction levels in the area and could create problems in relation to surface water flooding.
- 3.59 The flood zone in Sawbridgeworth extends over expansive areas of open space along the eastern boundary which is a key GI asset in this area. Within the flood zone, The Stort Valley Way and the Three Forests Way provide access to this recreational area. Much of the river valley here benefits from flooding and although the river is heavily modified, existing abstraction pressures probably do not pose a risk. Development however has encroached on the flood zone in Lower Sheering and a number of residential properties are at risk of flooding.
- 3.60 Development is confined by the railway line which could increase pressures on the flood zone. A potential urban extension to Sawbridgeworth located on the western boundary near Chalks Farm, may pose surface water

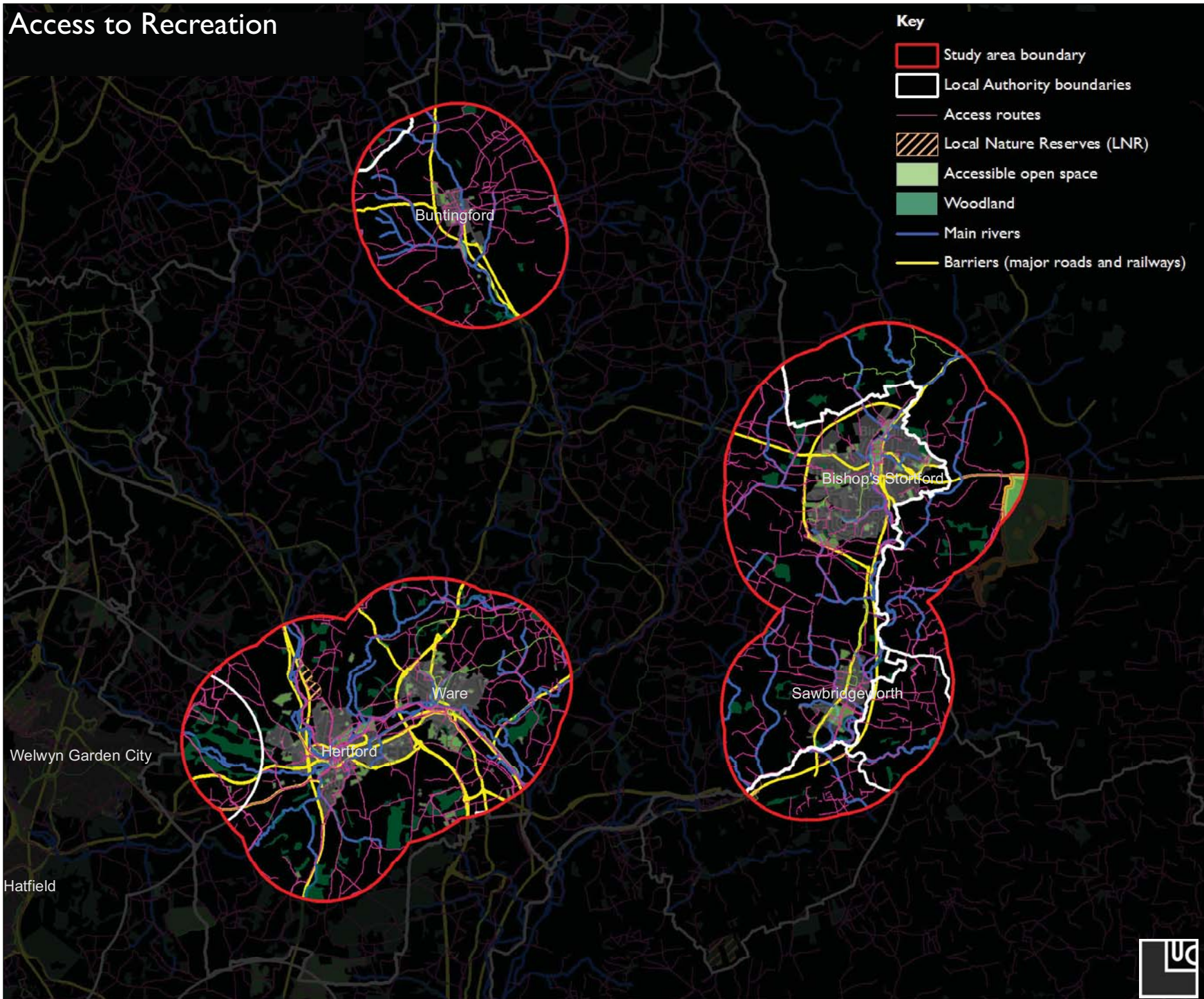
problems in this area. Also development to the north near Three Mile Pond Farm may pose a risk to properties in relation to fluvial flooding and ground water flooding in this area. Additional flood storage areas may provide an opportunity to divert water away from this area and create additional wetland habitats. These broad principles in relation to wetland habitats and valley conservation are outlined in greater detail the description of GI action zones and shown in **Figure 3.1**.

**Functions Mapping:**

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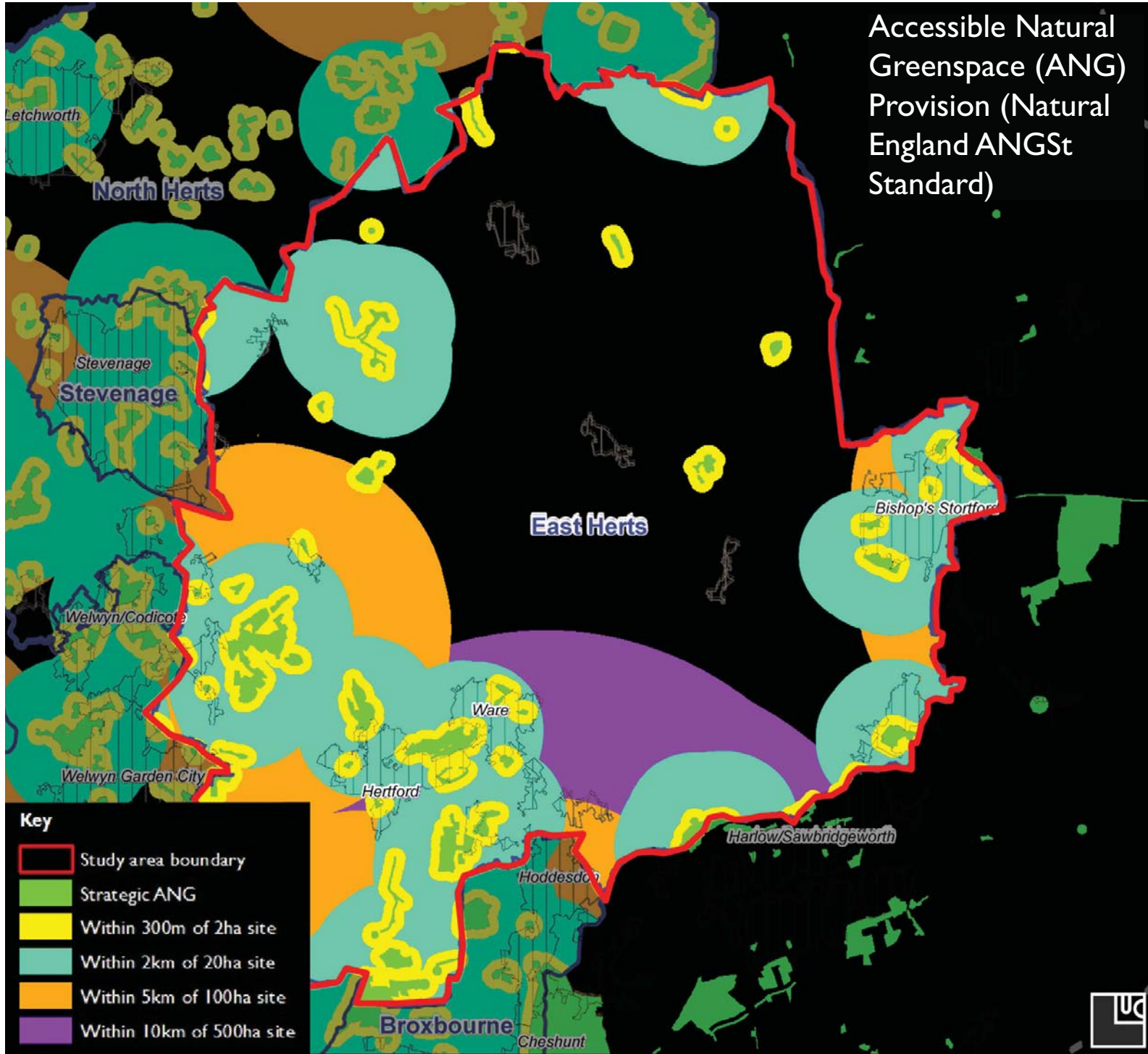
# Access to Recreation







Accessible Natural  
Greenspace (ANG)  
Provision (Natural  
England ANGSt  
Standard)



**Key**

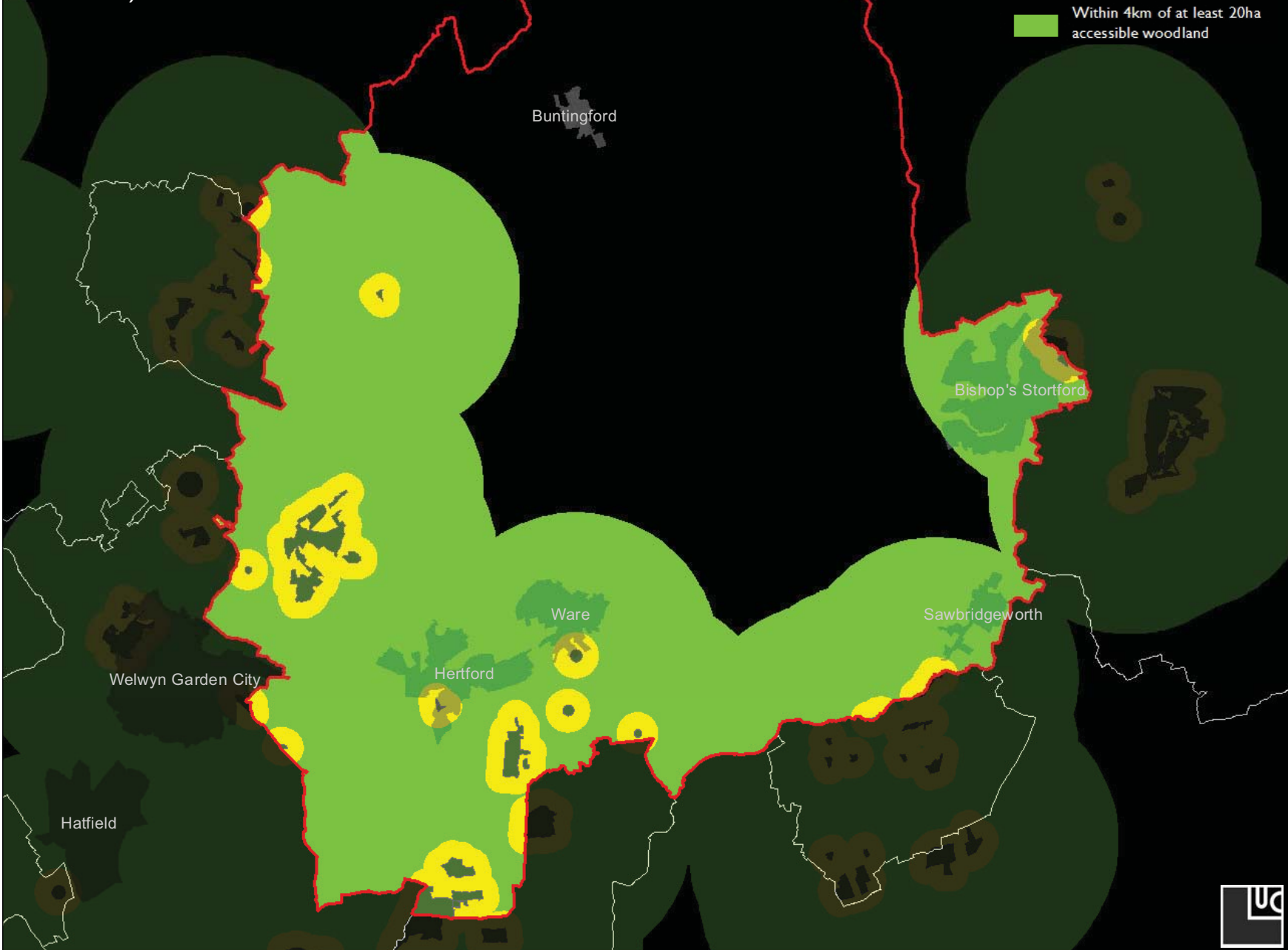
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- Strategic ANG
- Within 300m of 2ha site
- Within 2km of 20ha site
- Within 5km of 100ha site
- Within 10km of 500ha site





# Accessible Woodland Provision (Woodland Trust Standard)

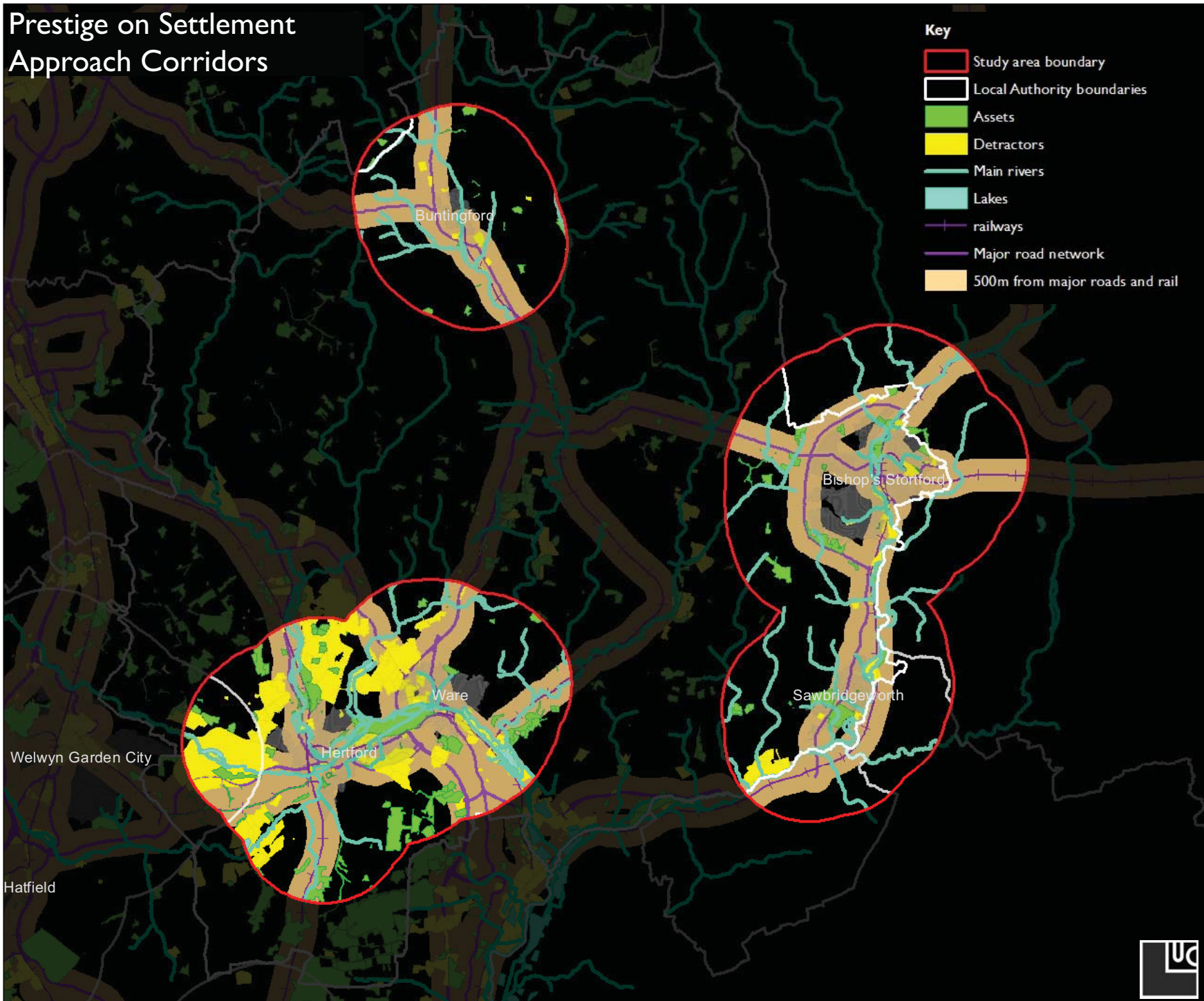
- Key**
- Study area boundary
  - Within 500m of at least 2ha accessible woodland
  - Within 4km of at least 20ha accessible woodland







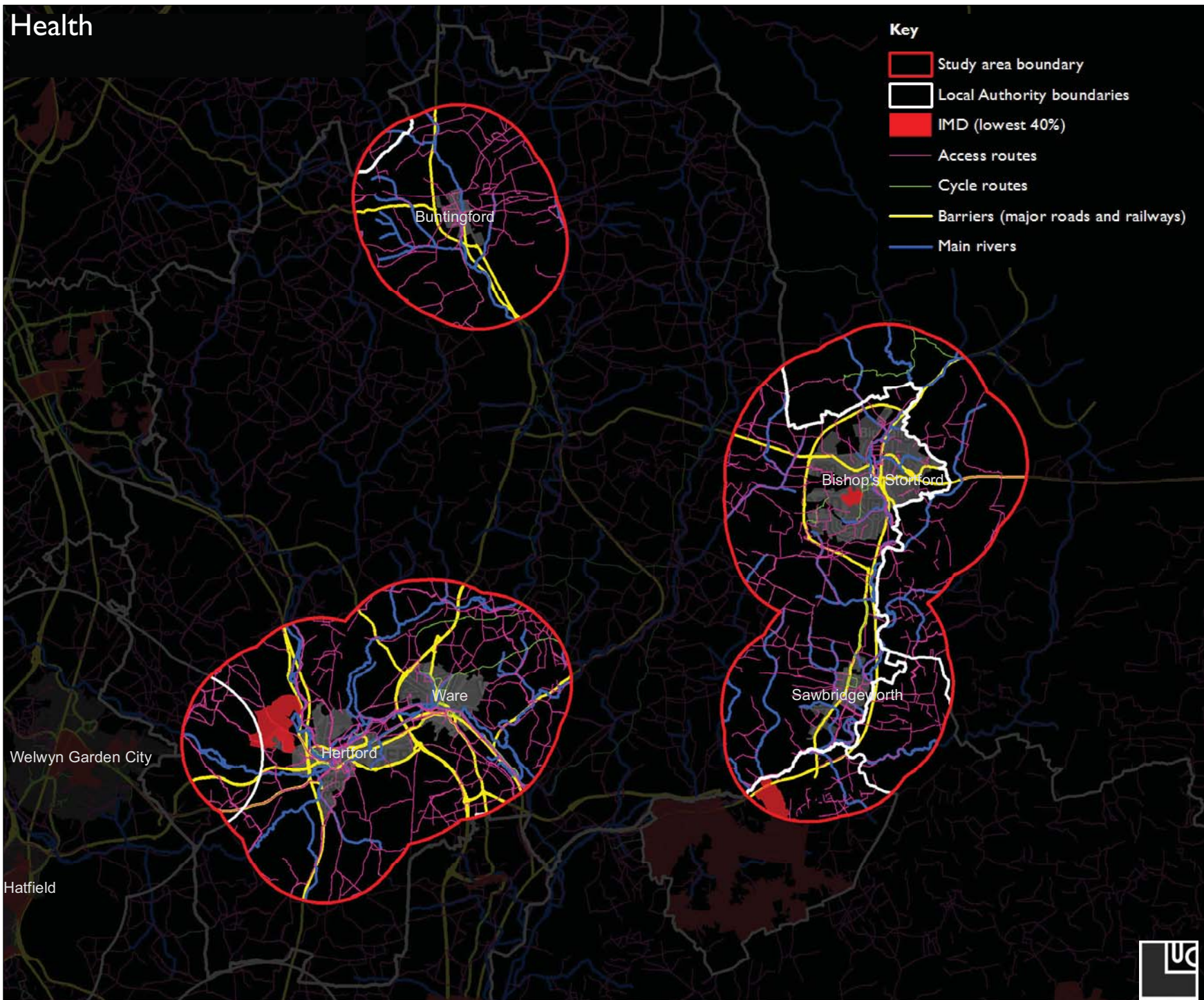
# Prestige on Settlement Approach Corridors







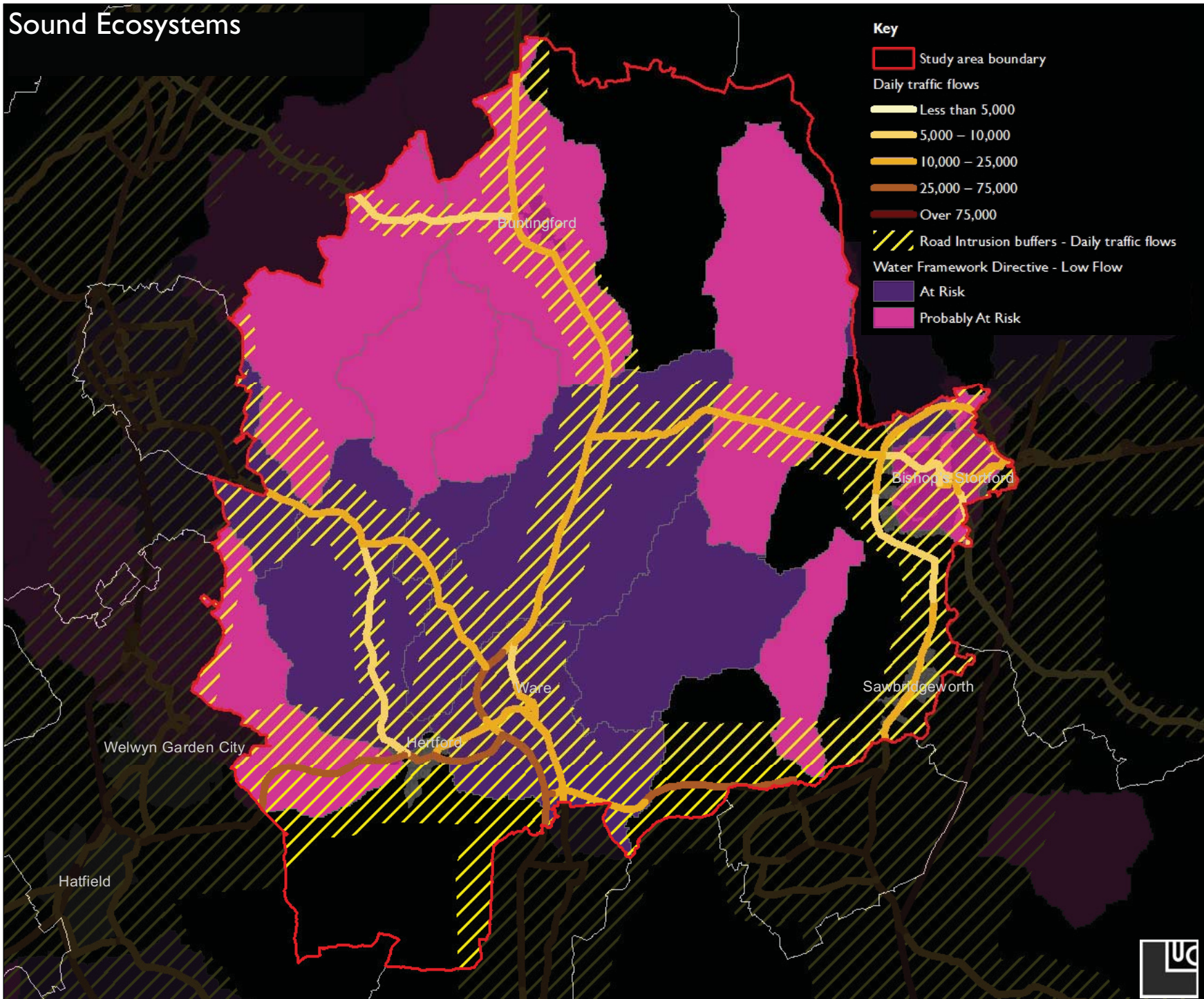
# Health





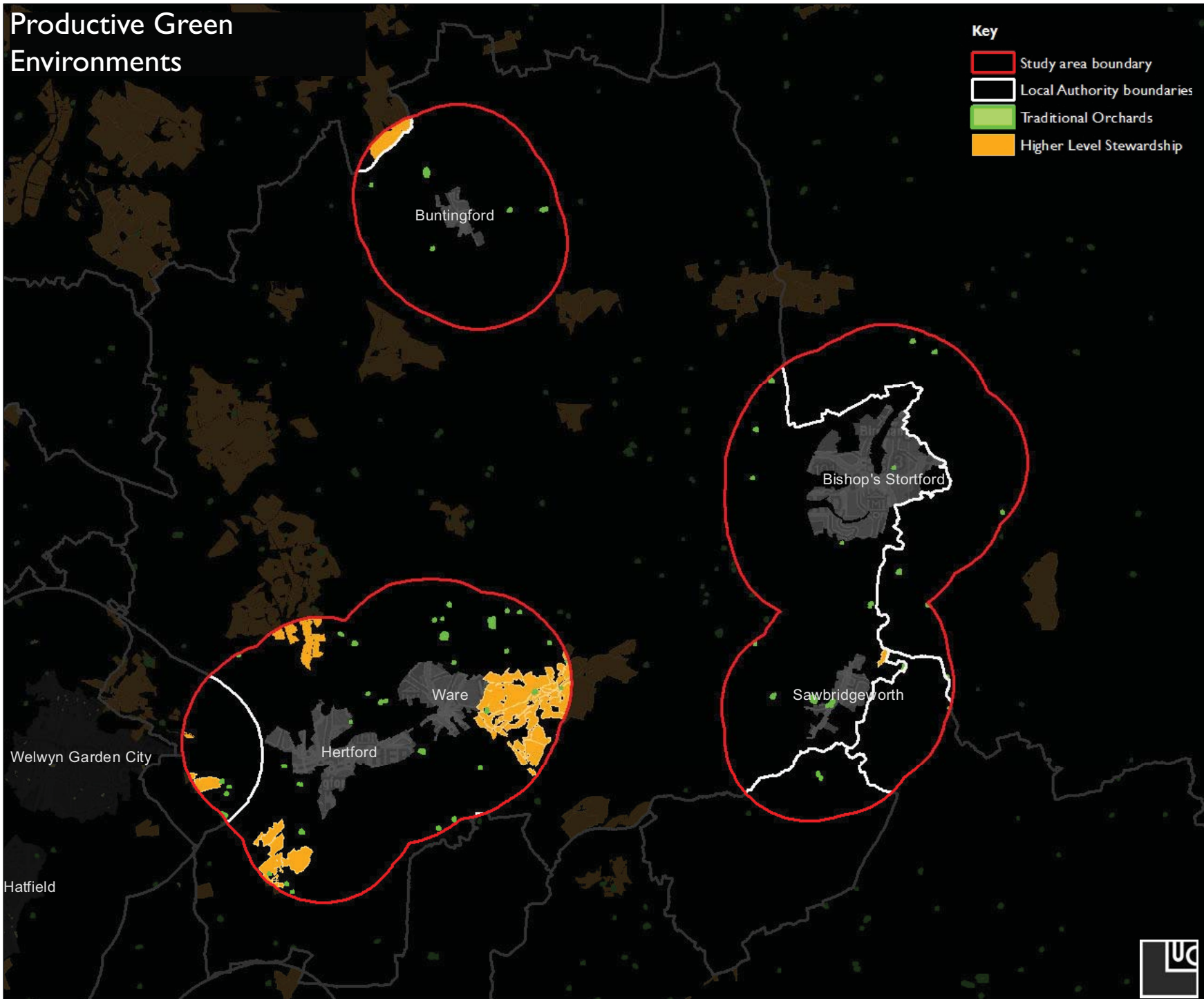


# Sound Ecosystems





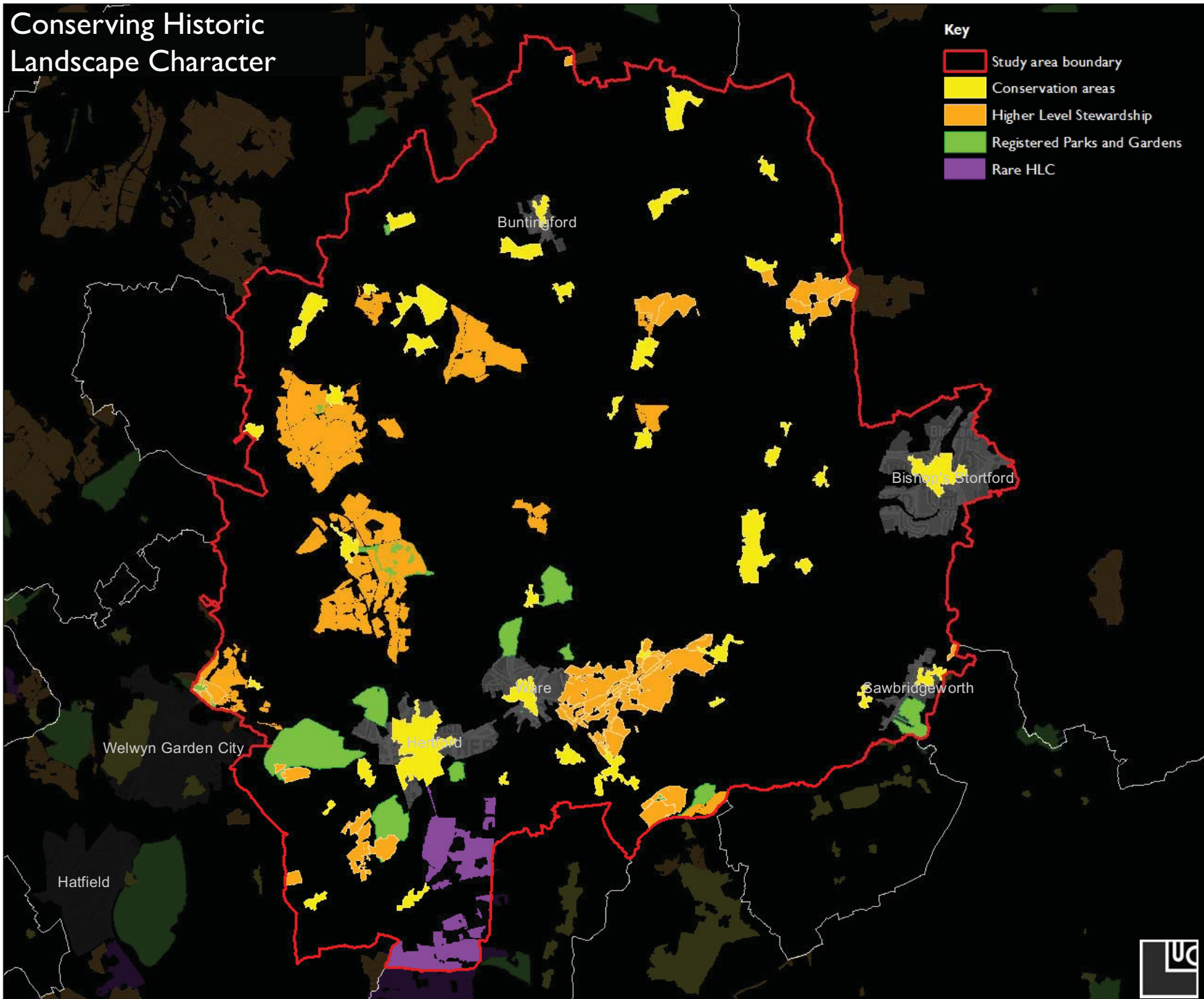
# Productive Green Environments





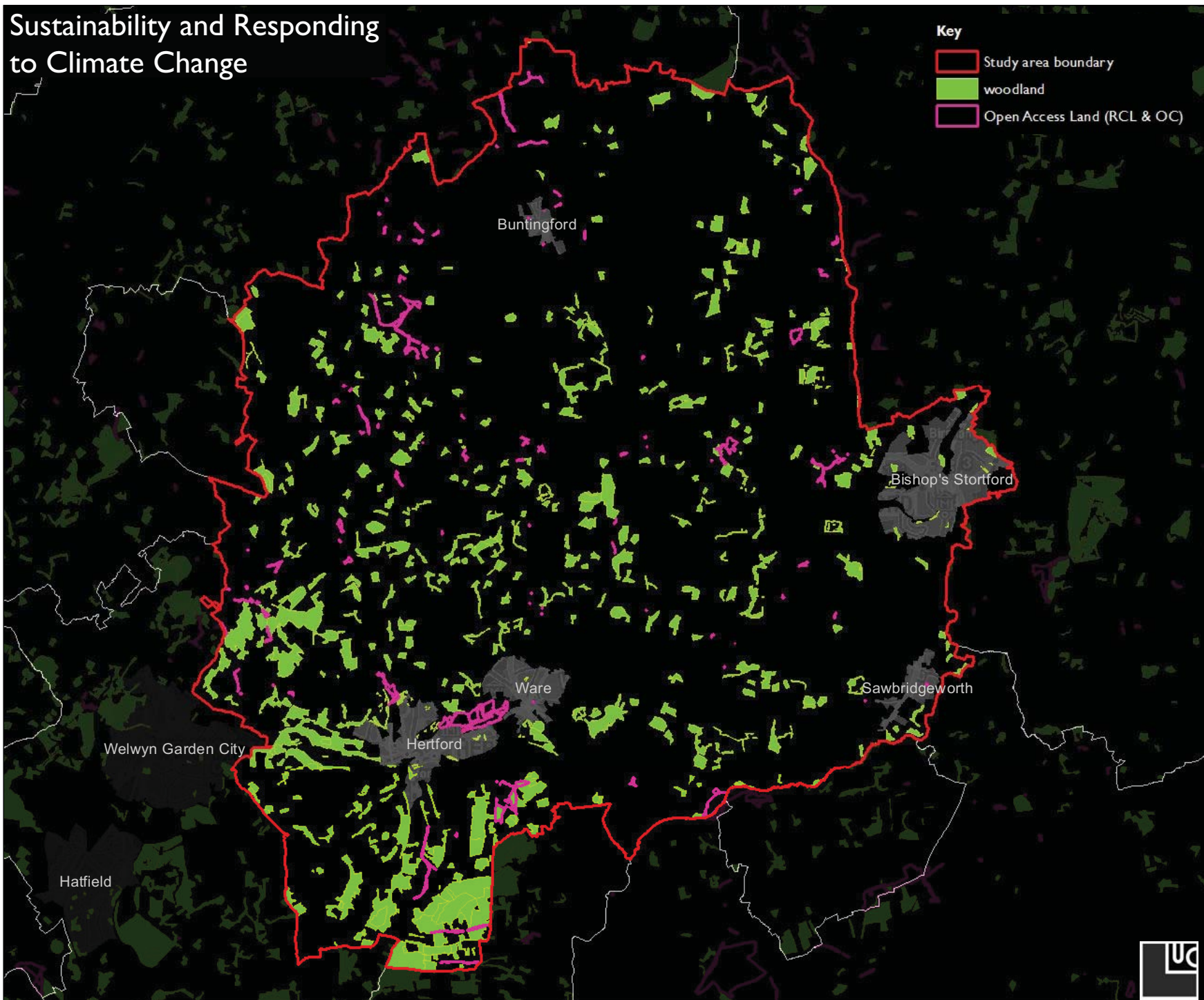


# Conserving Historic Landscape Character





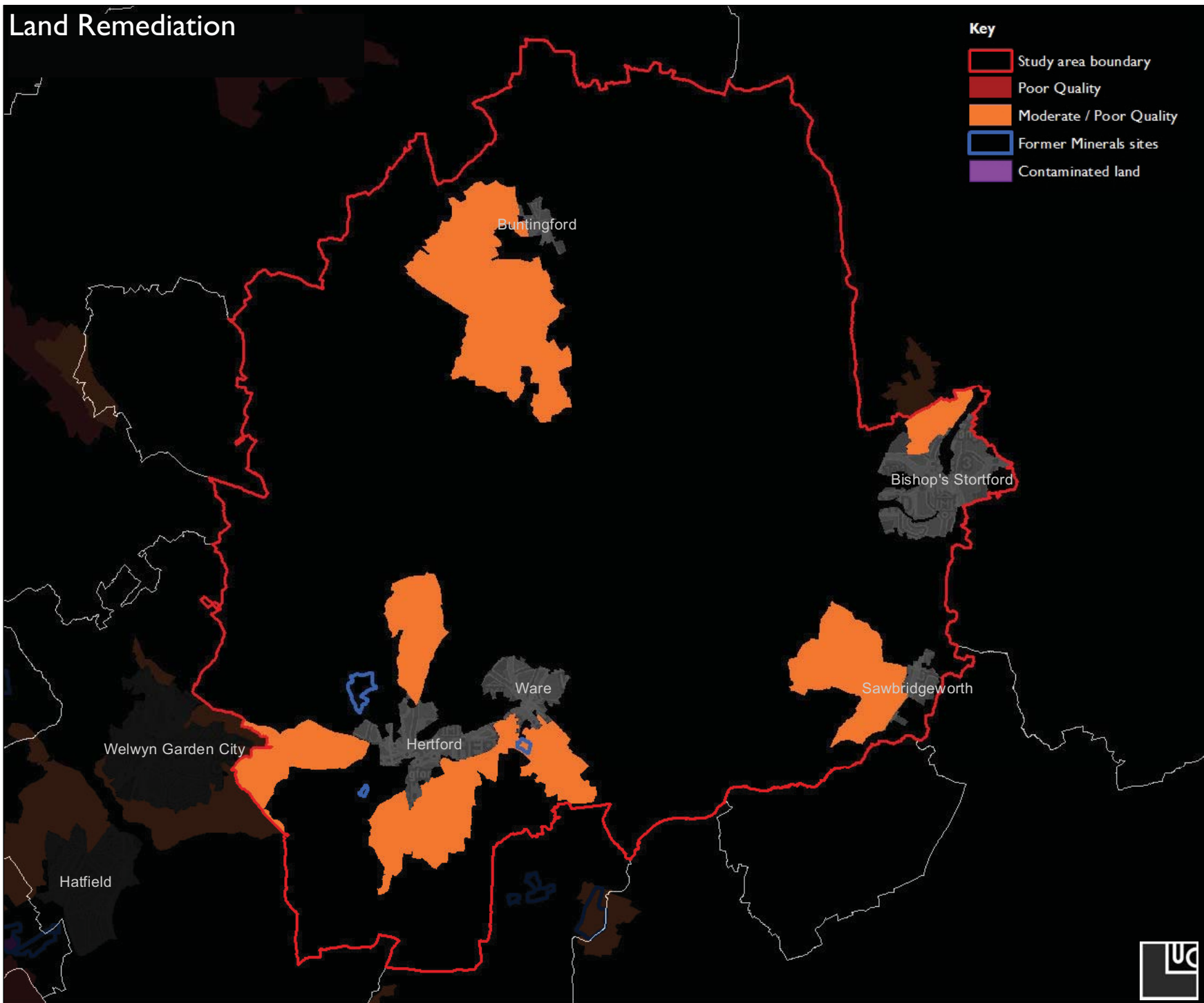
# Sustainability and Responding to Climate Change





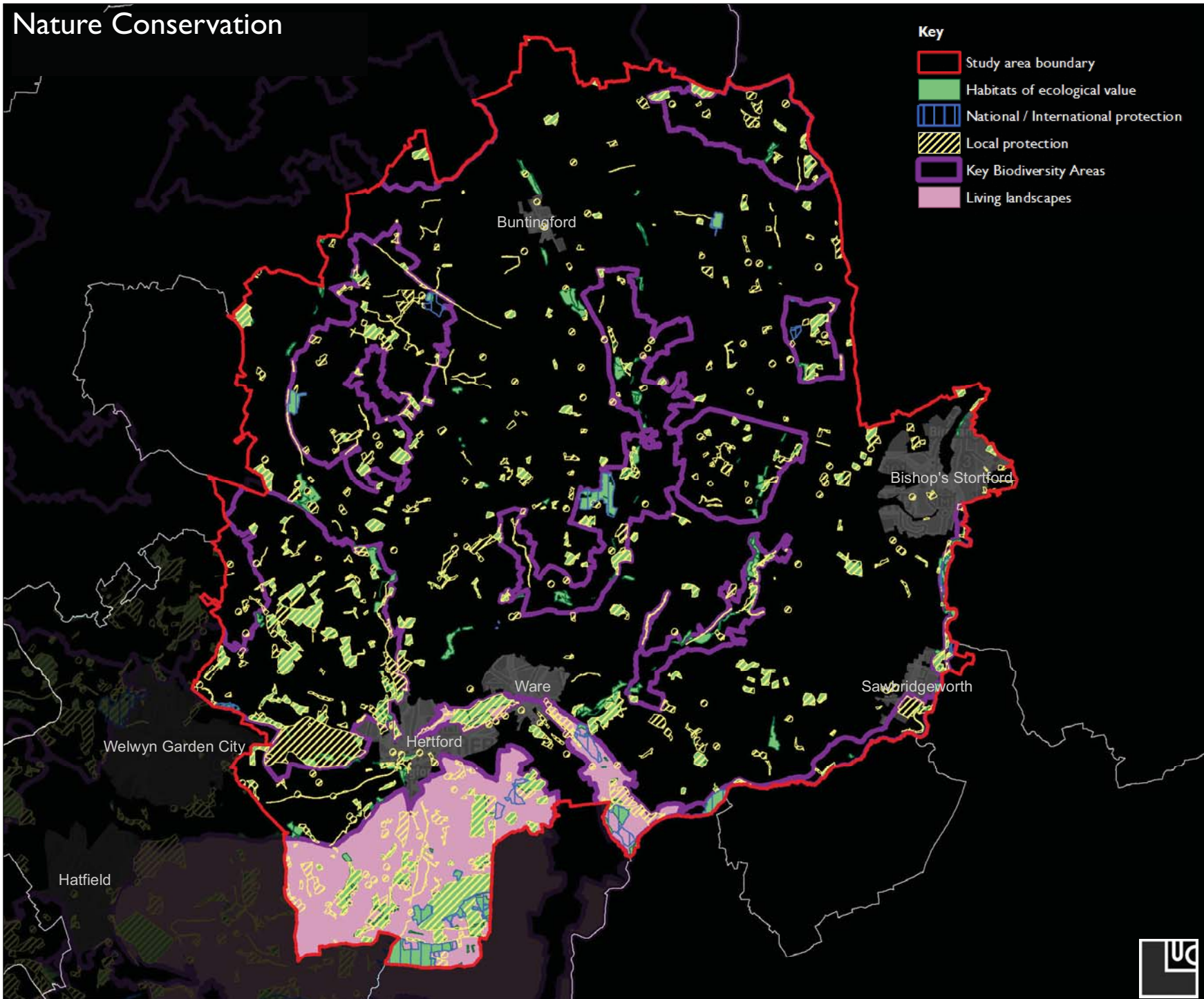


# Land Remediation



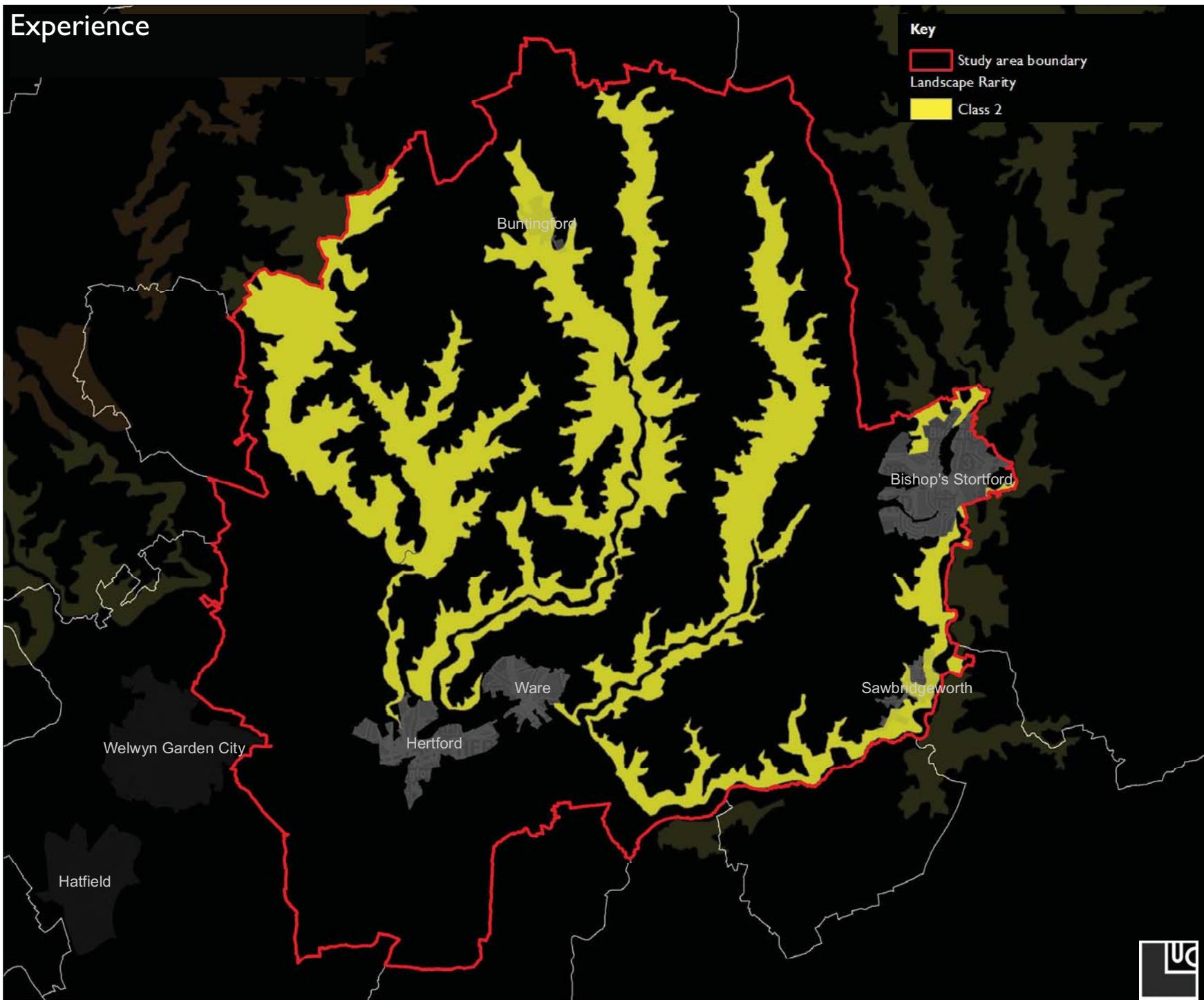


# Nature Conservation





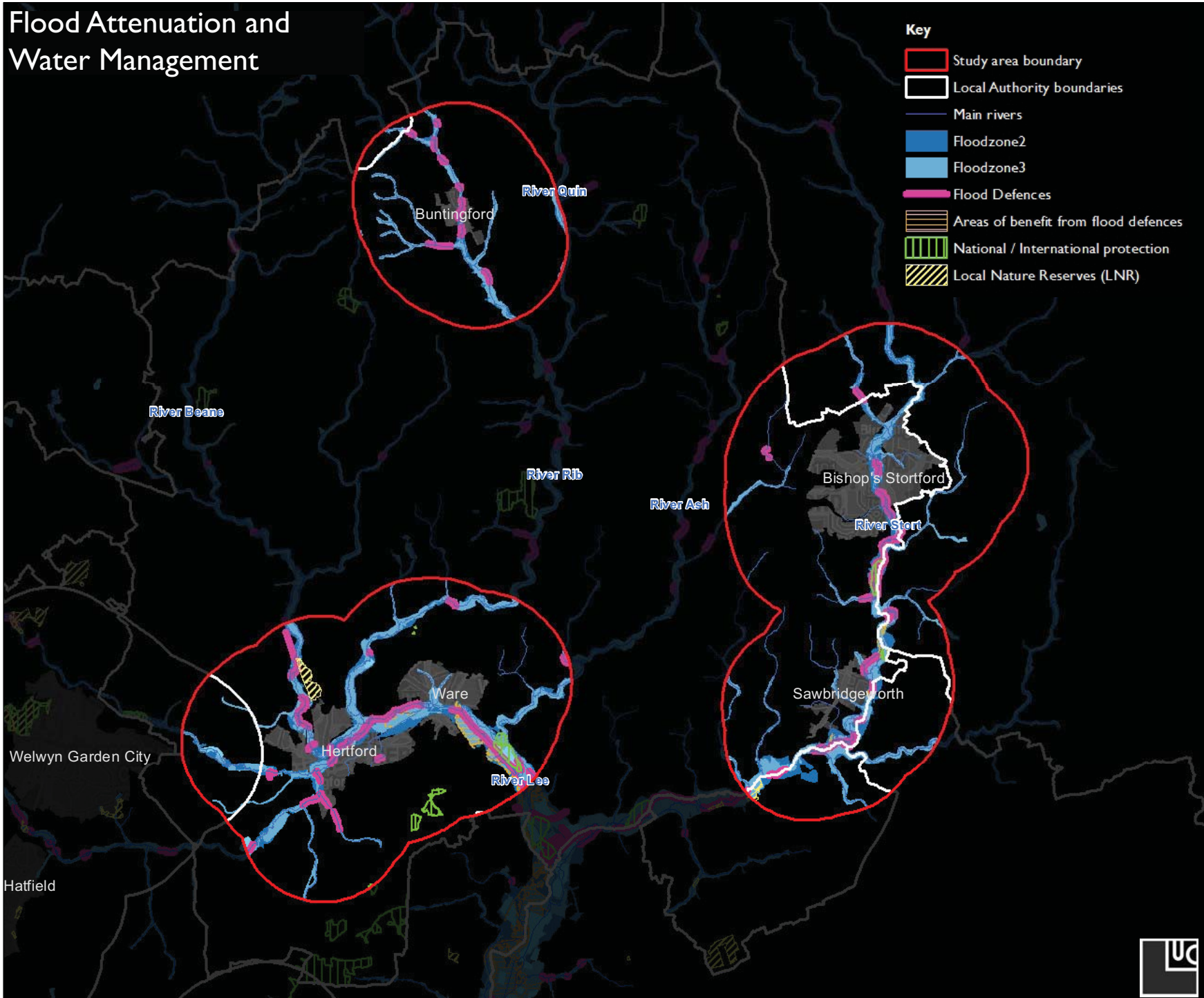
# Experience







# Flood Attenuation and Water Management







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<sup>i</sup> Groundwork Hertfordshire 2004 **Trees Against Pollution: A Strategy for Tree Planting and Air Quality**

<sup>ii</sup> Hertfordshire County Council, 2001: **Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment**







[www.landuse.co.uk](http://www.landuse.co.uk)

