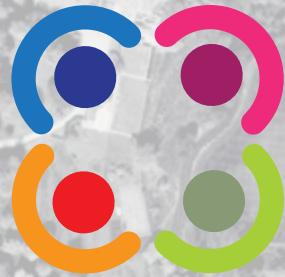


# WALKERN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2017–2033



SUBMISSION VERSION

# Contents

	Page
<u>Foreword</u>	3
1. <u>Introduction</u>	4
2. <u>Process Summary</u>	6
3. <u>Vision and Objectives</u>	9
4. <u>The Parish of Walkern</u>	11
5. <u>Neighbourhood Plan Policies</u>	14
<u>Policy 1:</u> Sustainable Development	15
<u>Policy 2:</u> Views, Vistas and Landscape Features	17
<u>Policy 3:</u> Walkern Conservation Area and Heritage Assets	19
<u>Policy 4:</u> Protected Recreational Open Space	20
<u>Policy 5:</u> Designated Local Wildlife Sites	21
<u>Policy 6:</u> Green Corridors	23
<u>Policy 7:</u> Local Green Space	24
<u>Policy 8:</u> Framework for Land South of Froghall Lane	27
<u>Policy 9:</u> Housing Infill Sites	31
<u>Policy 10:</u> Rural Homes	31
<u>Policy 11:</u> Affordable Housing	31
<u>Policy 12:</u> Design of New Development	32
<u>Policy 13:</u> New Businesses	34
<u>Policy 14:</u> Diversification of Farm Businesses	34
<u>Policy 15:</u> New Infrastructure	35
<u>Policy 16:</u> Flood Risk	35
<u>Policy 17:</u> Traffic Impact and Sustainable Transport Provision	37
<u>Policy 18:</u> Assets of Community Value	38
<u>Policy 19:</u> Community and Recreation Facilities	39
<u>Policy 20:</u> Maintaining Existing Health Services	40
6. <u>Implementation</u>	41

	Page
<a href="#"><u>Appendix A</u></a> Abbreviations and Glossary	42
<a href="#"><u>Appendix B</u></a> Policy Process Map	44
<a href="#"><u>Appendix C</u></a> Policies Map	46
<a href="#"><u>Appendix D</u></a> Views, Vistas and Landscape Features	48
<a href="#"><u>Appendix E</u></a> Protected Recreational Open Space	52
<a href="#"><u>Appendix F</u></a> Local Green Space	54
<a href="#"><u>Appendix G</u></a> Designated Wildlife Sites	58
<a href="#"><u>Appendix H</u></a> Froghall Lane Framework 2017 (Tibbalds)	61
<a href="#"><u>Appendix I</u></a> Car Parking Standards	64
<a href="#"><u>Appendix J</u></a> Walkern Flood Plain Map	65
<a href="#"><u>Appendix K</u></a> List of Background Documents	66
<a href="#"><u>Appendix L</u></a> Acknowledgements	67

# Foreword

Walkern Parish comprises the village of Walkern and the two small hamlets of Bassus Green and Clay End. As in most areas of the South East of England we have seen population growth and development. Walkern has grown considerably over the last 60 years. We recognise that this is likely to continue up to 2033 (our Neighbourhood and District Plan period) and beyond.

The Localism Act, which came into being in November 2011, devolves greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood development plans come out of the Government's determination to ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions that affect them. The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to establish a vision for the whole Parish and to help deliver the local community's wishes and needs for the plan period 2017 - 2033. The Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory document that will be incorporated into the District Planning Framework and must be used by East Herts Council to determine planning applications.

Our plan has been produced by local residents, with the support of the Parish Council, incorporating the views of the residents of Walkern Parish. The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Group has consulted and listened to the community and local organisations on a wide range of issues that will influence the wellbeing, sustainability and long-term preservation of our rural community. Every effort has been made to ensure that the views and policies contained in our Neighbourhood Plan reflect those of the majority of the Walkern Parish residents.

We have not limited this development plan to shaping just new housing development. The vision and objectives set out in this document broaden the plan to include social, economic and environmental issues such as transport, employment, education, flooding, landscape, heritage and wildlife.

By consulting with East Herts Council, our local Parish Council, the community and other key stakeholders, we have ensured that the Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the objectives of the Localism Act 2011. When adopted, this in turn will sit alongside East Herts Council's own District Plan.

**Michele Rist, Chair of Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Group**

# 1. Introduction

## Purpose

- 1.1 The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan (hereinafter referred to as the Neighbourhood Plan) has been written in response to the rights given to local communities through the Localism Act 2011 to shape development in their areas. It has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and sets local policies to be used in determining planning applications.

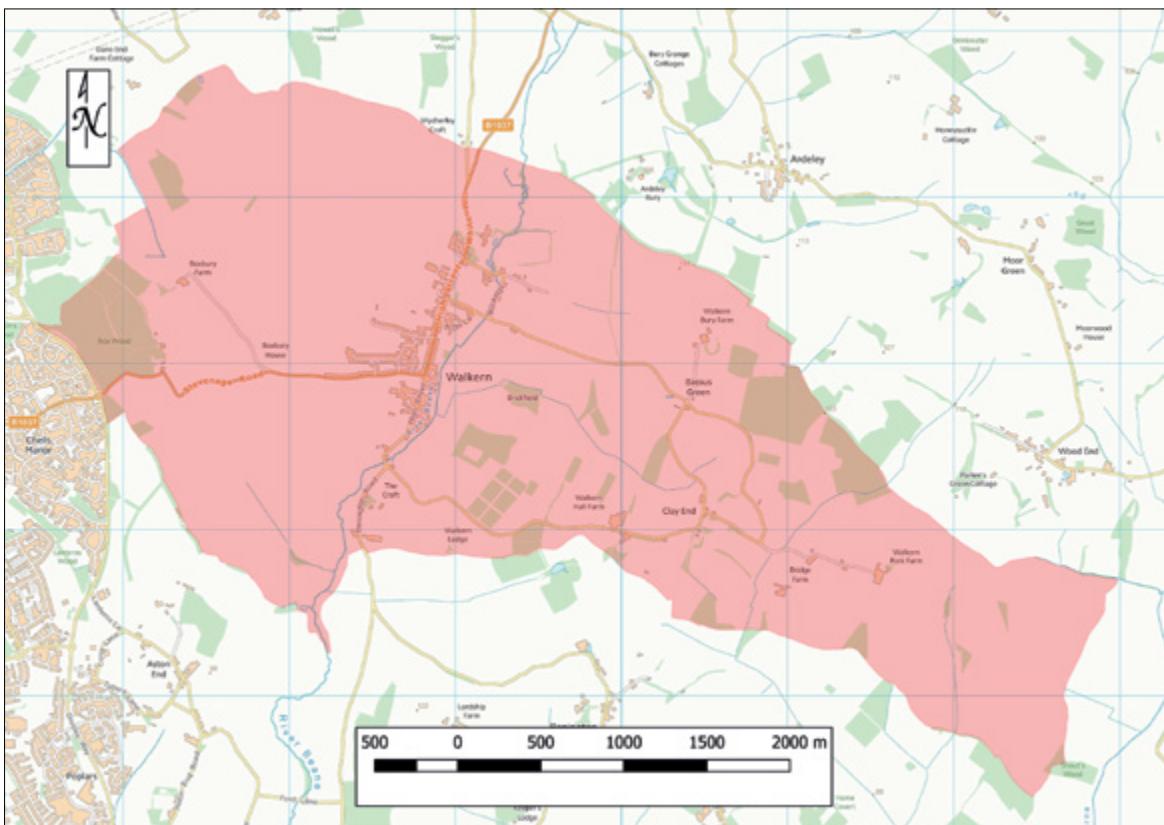
## Submitting Body

- 1.2 Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Group (WNPG) on behalf of Walkern Parish Council (the qualifying body) has prepared the Neighbourhood Plan.

## Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 1.3 The whole Parish of Walkern has been formally designated as a Neighbourhood Area through an application made under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (part 2 S6), and approved by East Herts District Council on 6th January 2015. The Neighbourhood Area is shown on the map below.

### Walkern Neighbourhood Area



## Planning Policy Context

- 1.4 Walkern Parish is in the District of East Hertfordshire and the County of Hertfordshire. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in parallel with the preparation of East Herts District Plan 2011-2033, which has undergone its final consultation and was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 31st March 2017. The Neighbourhood Plan is in accordance with the strategic policies in both the adopted East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007 and the emerging East Herts District Plan and does not deal with County Council planning matters. The County Development Plan deals with waste and minerals. The current planning documents can be found on the East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council websites.
- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to both the Core Planning Principles and the 13 themes of delivering sustainable development in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Further details of how the Neighbourhood Plan accords with national planning guidance can be found in the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement.

## Plan Period, Monitoring & Review

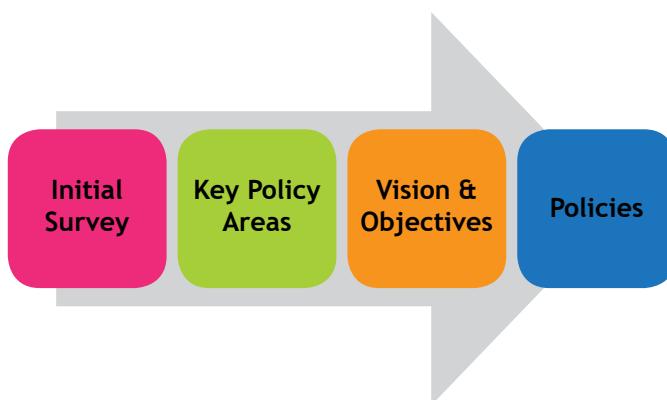
- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2017-2033. The end date is in line with the East Herts District Plan. Walkern Parish Council will monitor the Neighbourhood Plan to determine its continued relevance and undertake a review in five years' time or when the East Herts District Plan is reviewed, whichever is the sooner.

## 2. Process Summary

### Planning Development Process

2.1 Walkern Parish Council resolved to prepare a neighbourhood plan in May 2014. A group of residents, the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Group (WNPG), was formed to prepare the plan on behalf of the Parish Council. The process chart below shows how the preparation of the Plan progressed.

Process Chart for Preparation of Plan



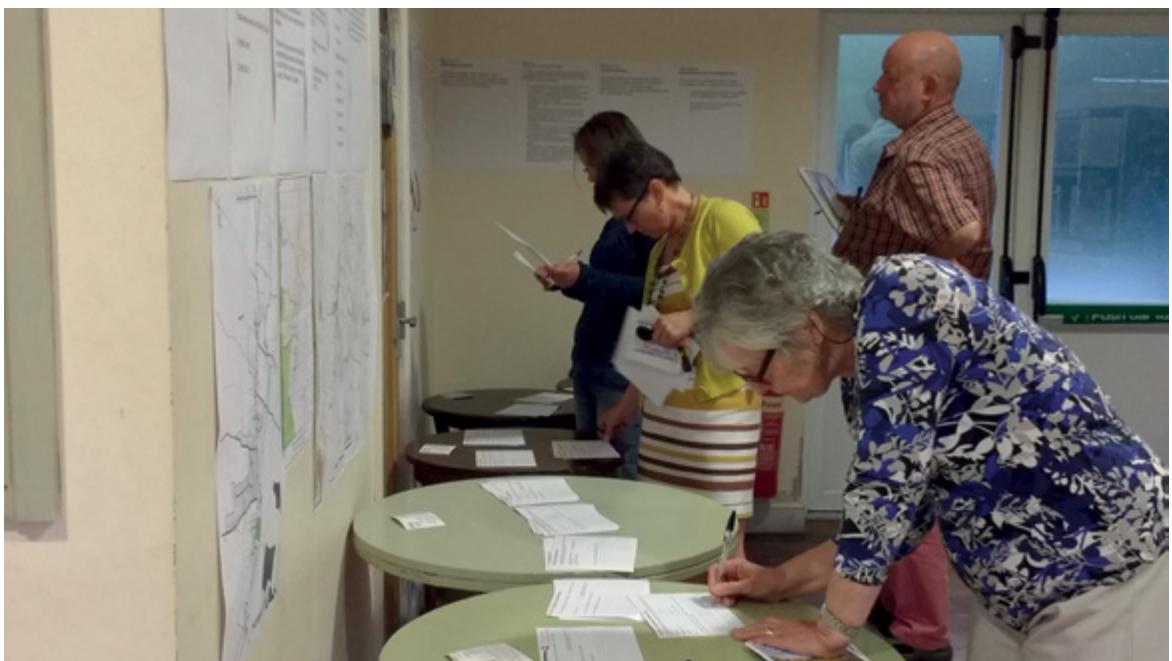
- 2.2 An initial survey was undertaken to gather views about the Parish: the important characteristics of Walkern; housing; facilities; education; the environment; business; and transport.
- 2.3 An experienced neighbourhood planning consultant was appointed to guide the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan in January 2015.
- 2.4 In the absence of a Parish plan or design statement, the survey results formed the basis of the key policy areas for the Neighbourhood Plan. The key policy areas in the Neighbourhood Plan are:
- Environment (including environmental quality and heritage)
  - Housing and Development (including design)
  - Employment and Business (the local economy)
  - Traffic and Transport
  - Facilities and Services (including community and leisure).
- 2.5 In a workshop guided by the planning consultant a vision and a number of objectives were developed under each key policy area. Both were subject to consultation with the community. A Policy Process Map, which was produced to show the policy options considered against each objective, can be found in Appendix B.
- 2.6 The preparation of the potential development sites in the plan was delayed when a large site on Froghall Lane was refused outline planning permission

and the applicant lodged an appeal against the decision. Following a public inquiry the appeal to build up to 85 new homes was granted. East Herts Council have acknowledged that this level of development would satisfy the housing requirement for the village as set out in the emerging District Plan. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for housing development.

- 2.7 The village development strategy and policies set out in the emerging District Plan will be examined later this year by a Planning Inspector. Therefore there is still the potential for modifications to be proposed to the policies in the District Plan, which may have implications for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.8 Many ideas and suggestions on how to improve the lives of people living and working in the Parish were collected during the plan preparation process. Those issues and suggestions that could not be achieved through the planning process have been captured in a Project List which is attached as an Appendix in the Consultation Statement.

## Community Engagement

- 2.9 A Consultation Statement has been produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. The statement outlines the process of community engagement, lists consultees, and describes the engagement techniques used and events held including reports of engagement events.
- 2.10 The Parish Council received regular reports on the progress achieved by the WNPG. The WNPG has kept residents informed of every stage of the neighbourhood planning process through a mix of traditional methods (e.g. Walkern Journal), an online presence ([www.walkernneighbourhoodplan.com](http://www.walkernneighbourhoodplan.com)) and social media. It has held three interactive community consultation events at which key elements of the Neighbourhood Plan were shared with local residents. Feedback gathered from the community at these events shaped subsequent iterations of the Neighbourhood Plan, refining its objectives and strengthening its policies.
- 2.11 The pre-submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan was subject to a six-week consultation exercise which commenced on the 9th January 2017 and included an open day on the 14th January, to answer any question the community had on the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan and the next steps in the process. Full details of the consultation and the comments received can be found in the Consultation Statement.



Public Meeting at Walkern Sports and Community Centre 2016

## Evidence Base Overview

- 2.12 Evidence to support the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan was gathered continuously throughout the preparation process. The analysis, objectives and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have drawn on a wide variety of sources. These include:
- The evidence base for East Herts District Plan
  - Hertfordshire County Council
  - The Office for National Statistics: 2011 Census
  - Walkern History Society
  - Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
  - Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
  - The Environment Agency
  - The Community Development Association
  - Natural England
  - Local Service providers (the doctors surgery & the school)
  - The views of local residents, landowners and businesses from questionnaire responses, workshops, exhibitions and meetings.
- 2.13 More detailed information on the evidence base can be found in the Consultation Statement and in the Appendices and supporting documents accompanying the Neighbourhood Plan.

# 3. Vision & Objectives

## Our Vision

- 3.1 Our vision is to help inform the decisions reached by East Herts District Council across all areas of development in the Parish of Walkern. It is to ensure the village grows gradually in order to preserve the character and the rural feel of the Parish. Future development must be sustainable based on the principle that better lives for residents now, do not mean worse lives for future generations. We believe that the planning system is about positive growth, making economic, environmental and social progress to enhance every aspect of the Parish of Walkern. Our vision statement is:

**The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan will shape the evolution of Walkern over the next 16 years by meeting the aspirations and needs of the local community. We are committed to preserving Walkern's historic character and strong rural identity by ensuring that development in the Parish is sustainable, protects valued natural features, strengthens a sense of community and enhances wellbeing of new and existing residents. We want to make sure Walkern Parish remains a great place to live.**

## Planning Objectives

- 3.2 The objectives focused in on specific parts of the vision statement and provided the context for the development of the planning policies.
- 3.3 Two objectives were deleted following the planning decision to allow up to 85 homes to be built on Land South of Froghall Lane, because they were no longer relevant. These were to identify several small housing sites to satisfy the need for at least a 10% increase in new homes in Walkern village up to 2033, as required by the East Herts District Plan; and to locate and phase new development to minimise the impact on the already limited road infrastructure in the village, so that traffic congestion is not exacerbated. The final list of objectives that were formed from our vision statement is to:
- a Ensure new development protects and enhances local landscape character, valued nature conservation sites and the rich biodiversity of the Parish
  - b Protect and enhance the village conservation area and its setting, and listed, and locally listed buildings
  - c Protect and enhance the Parish's open spaces and views for public access and informal recreational use
  - d Ensure the River Beane, a rare chalk stream that runs through Walkern Parish, is preserved and protected from over-abstraction
  - e Enhance and improve the environmental quality of the Parish, minimising noise and air pollution

- f Ensure the mix, size and type of new housing meets local needs, including a sufficient supply of affordable housing and preferential access to some new homes for people with a strong local connection
- g Require new development to be of high quality design, built to a high sustainability standard and to be sympathetic to, and improve, the look and feel of the Parish
- h Ensure the design and location of new developments are resilient to the effects of climate change and flooding
- i Support existing businesses, creative industries and home working, and encourage new local employment opportunities for residents
- j Preserve and enhance public transport services to and from the village for residents who do not have use of a car, and encourage walking and cycling
- k Ensure that community facilities (e.g. school, GP surgery) enhance the health and wellbeing of local residents
- l Ensure the village has indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that meet the needs of young children, teenagers and adults, and strengthen the sense of community.
- m Give the Parish the opportunity to access Community Infrastructure Levy Funding to maintain and improve Parish facilities.

### 3.4

The last of these objectives was formed under the assumption that East Herts Council would, at some point, set a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Until such time as a CIL is set, this objective is still relevant to ensuring the best use of Section 106 funding from new development, the New Homes Bonus and any other form of funding that can contribute towards the enhancement of the Parish. The Project List attached as an Appendix to the Consultation Statement includes projects that have been identified by the community as enhancements to life in the Parish.

# 4. The Parish of Walkern

## Location and Main Features

- 4.1 Walkern Village lies a little over a mile to the east of Stevenage with the Parish boundary abutting the town at Box Wood. Apart from Walkern Village there are two small hamlets of Clay End and Bassus Green, located in the east of the Parish. The rural nature of the Parish is a stark contrast to the new town situated on its boundary.
- 4.2 The predominant natural feature of the Parish is the valley of the River Beane, a rare chalk stream that bisects the area, running north to south parallel to Walkern High Street.
- 4.3 The area of the Parish is approximately 12,100 hectares with 1541 usual residents living in 621 households, at the last census (2011).

## The History of Walkern

- 4.4 Walkern is noted as the home of Jane Wenham, who in 1712 was the last woman in England to be convicted of witchcraft and condemned to death. It is also one of only 22 places in England with a direct link to the Magna Carta. The effigy of Baron William de Lanvalei, one of the Barons elected to enforce the law of the Magna Carta eight centuries ago, lies in St Mary's Church.
- 4.5 The parish Church of St Mary the Virgin is one of the oldest village churches in Hertfordshire, with a Saxon wall and rare chalk crucifix dating back to the mid-10th century. The village had several mills for grinding wheat with the original medieval mill first located near the church and then moved down stream to the southern end of the village and later rebuilt and converted to steam power. This continued in operation until the Second World War. To the west of the High Street is a rare octagonal dove house built around 1700. The High Street itself was not metalled until 1930 and streetlights were installed in 1938.
- 4.6 After the war in 1946 Walkern was self-sufficient as an agricultural village with 34 businesses providing the everyday needs of its residents. Trades included a shoe shop, general store, butcher, baker, greengrocer, tobacconist, rug maker, seamstress, coal merchant, wood yard, beekeeper, plus a brewery, four pubs, several churches and large farms employing many residents.

## Walkern Today

- 4.7 The village today still has a number of shops, including a convenience store/post office, a hair and beauty salon, a DIY shop, a tearoom, two pubs, a garage and petrol station, a seasonal Christmas shop and an Art Gallery. Farms still operate, but with very little staff. The Piggeries on Bennington Road and commercial units at Manor Farm on Dove House Lane accommodate small businesses but altogether, these provide very little employment and so most residents travel outside the village to work, or work from home.



Walkern High Street Southwards

- 4.8 Public transport in the village is poor and without a car, residents have to rely on a limited daytime bus service or taxis to reach Stevenage town and rail station. Coaches ferry children to and from the middle school and college in Buntingford. On-street parking and traffic congestion is part of daily life in Walkern, particularly in the High Street and in the vicinity of the school. This is exacerbated by traffic including heavy lorries using the B1037 as a back route out of Stevenage.
- 4.9 People like living in Walkern Parish and value their rural surroundings highly, according to the Neighbourhood Plan survey and feedback from consultation events. With approximately 32% of respondents to the CDA Herts Housing Need Survey 2017 (CDA 2107 p.12) having lived in Walkern for more than 20 years, this indicates the relative stability of the community. House prices in the Parish are high. There were 26 properties sold in Walkern in the 12 months to June 2017 with an average price of £410,696. Six of these were flats with an average price of £172,750; the remaining 20 house sales averaged £482,079.
- 4.10 The recommendations of the CDA report on housing need in Walken indicate that, in order to serve the local community, 16 affordable units should be identified for local residents. This was further clarified as the most significant need being for two bed homes for small three person families (7 units), one bed homes for single people (5 units), and three bed homes for four person families (4). Of the 31 respondents who desired affordable homes, only 2 asked for bungalows and 7 asked for flats. Almost 50% of respondents who commented on where the affordable housing should be located identified the land at Froghall Lane.
- 4.11 The village store is an important facility for residents and has been designated an Asset of Community Value, providing a local meeting point as well as an essential service for those who do not have private transport. Other private community facilities that are particularly valued are the Yew Tree and White Lion pubs and

the United Reform Church (URC), which has been completely renovated with a new kitchen and now offers facilities for local groups to meet. The WNPG were fortunate to be able to hold their meetings in the URC on a regular basis.



United Reformed Church Renovated

- 4.12 Improvements have been made to the primary school, which offers preschool places and a toddlers group and takes pupils from outside the village. The Walkern Sports and Community Centre football pitches are well used but the centre has little in the way of outdoor equipment or facilities for other sports.
- 4.13 As a result of the Neighbourhood Plan, consultation exercises ideas and suggestions were made for improvements to facilities and services in the Parish. These have been captured in a Project List of diverse projects. Grant funding through schemes such as Biffa and the Heritage Lottery Fund and funding from new developments (S106 and New Homes Bonus etc.) will be directed to projects that will benefit the greatest number of residents and businesses. These projects will be complimentary to and implemented in parallel with, to the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan to achieve the objectives set out in section 3.

# 5. Neighbourhood Plan Policies

## Context

- 5.1 This chapter sets out the planning policies for the Parish of Walkern for the period 2017-2033, which are aligned with the end of the plan period for the emerging East Herts District Plan. The planning policies, together with the reasoned justification for them, are set out below. The policies reflect the main issues, which were raised in consultation, and provide the means by which objectives A - M will be achieved. Appendix B sets out how policy options were mapped to objectives.
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as the adopted East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007 and the emerging East Herts District Plan provide the overall policy context for the Neighbourhood Plan. Regard has also been given to National Planning Practice Guidance (introduced on-line by the Government since March 2014).
- 5.3 In these documents, particularly in paragraph 14 of the NPPF, there is a commitment to the principles of sustainable development. These were originally included in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the Future (2005). The five guiding principles of sustainable development are as follows:
- Living within the planet's environmental limits
  - Ensuring a strong, healthy, and just society
  - Achieving a sustainable economy
  - Promoting good governance
  - Using sound science reasonably
- 5.4 At the heart of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be a common theme, running through plan-making (including neighbourhood plans) and decisions taken on planning applications for development. These overall principles are reflected both in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007 and the emerging East Herts District Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is strongly committed to these principles and to the delivery of sustainable development. In accordance with its stated objectives the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and maintain the strong community, which binds the village together, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment of the Parish for the future. At the same time the Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of the economy and local facilities and services in ways that protect the overall character of the area.

## POLICY 1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Support will be given to development proposals which accord with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the (emerging draft) East Herts District Plan.

### Landscape

- 5.5 From the responses to public consultation, it is clear that the countryside and landscape of the Parish of Walkern are greatly valued by the local community and by visitors to the area. The rural nature of the Parish is described in great detail in the East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, adopted by the district council in 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).



The Beane Valley

- 5.6 According to the SPD, the Parish of Walkern is located in two landscape character areas. The bulk of the area, including Walkern village is within Landscape Character Area No. 39, the Middle Beane Valley. The rest of the Parish is within Landscape Character Area No. 140, the Ardeley and Cottered Settled Plateau, with Walkern Hall at its southern extremity.
- 5.7 The area No. 39 is described as “open farmland with small grouped woodlands, linked by hedges.” Characteristics include “medium to large-scale field patterns” and “strongly undulating slopes”, with “a remote character, despite proximity to Stevenage.” The low impact of built development and lack of land use change

is an essential feature, which must be retained in the gap between Walkern and Stevenage to preserve the character and rural nature of the area.

- 5.8 Area No. 140 is described as an elevated plateau between the valley of the River Beane to the west and the more open arable plateau to the east. It is summarised as a “settled plateau landscape with a strong sense of historic continuity”, also a “tranquil and traditional landscape with few detractors.” This landscape is considered to be unusual in Hertfordshire.
- 5.9 The character assessments confirm the perceptions of local people about the landscape, particularly about the Beane Valley, and the open and tranquil nature of the countryside. In both landscape character areas, the SPD recommends that the landscape should be “conserved and strengthened.” The Parish Council supports this approach and East Herts planning policies, which seek to conserve the rural landscape. In particular, Policy GBC14 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2017 and Policy DES 1 of the emerging District Plan seek to protect the overall landscape character of East Hertfordshire, guided by the detailed assessments in the SPD.
- 5.10 Within the Parish, the relationship between the settlements and the surrounding rural landscape is particularly important. Walkern itself has a linear form, running along the valley of the River Beane. The village is surrounded by a combination of farmland and woodland, with many mature trees within and around the settlement. These elements are also important features of the hamlets of Clay End and Bassus Green, which are situated on the higher ground to the east of Walkern.
- 5.11 It is important that any new developments in the Parish are sympathetic to this local landscape character. Walkern has a minimal impact on the views across the river valley as it nestles in the gently rolling landscape. The Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of key views, vistas and landscape features, listed in Policy 2, detailed in Appendix D and shown on Policies Map (Appendix C). In order to maintain the integrity of these cherished views, vistas and landscape features and insure new development does not impinge on the rural setting of the village, development proposals must include an assessment of any impact and how that impact will be mitigated.

## POLICY 2: VIEWS, VISTAS AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Six important views and vistas are identified on the Policies Map (Appendix C) and detailed in Appendix D. These are:

- View 1: West from opposite the United Reformed Church (High Street) through Manor Farm paddock**
- View 2: East along Church End over the ford**
- View 3: North from the meadows to St Mary the Virgin Church**
- View 4: East from Box Wood towards Walkern**
- View 5: East of the River Beane to Wrights Tower House above the Finches**
- View 6: North from the entrance to Walkern along Bennington Road**
- View 7: South west from Froghall Lane towards Stevenage**

In addition, the River Beane Valley is the primary landscape feature in the Parish and provides a strategic gap between Walkern and Stevenage.

Any development proposal in the Parish should include an assessment of the impact of the development on the key views and vistas or harm to the valley landscape. Proposals where a harmful impact is identified will only be permitted where appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered.

## Conservation and Heritage

- 5.12** From the consultation responses it is clear that the community places considerable value on the historic environment and built heritage of the Parish. Central to this concern is the Walkern Conservation Area, which covers the historic core of the village and its setting. Along the High Street, there are many listed buildings, dating from the 15 to the 19 centuries, reflecting the vernacular architectural style of construction in this part of Hertfordshire. One of the most significant buildings is the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, which is the oldest village church in the county. At the southern end of the village, at Church End, there is a ford on the River Beane, which is below the mediaeval Bridgefoot Farm.
- 5.13** To the east of the Parish, the hamlets also contain features of historic interest. Bassus Green is close to the remains of Walkern Castle, and is characterised by a small collection of pre-16 century thatched cottages and farm buildings. Clay End also has a mixture of historic cottages and farm structures. Both hamlets are accessed by an ancient pattern of narrow country lanes and historic footpaths and bridleways, screened by hedgerows.



Thatched Cottage at Bassus Green



Clay End

- 5.14 The Parish Council supports the aims of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007, Built Heritage chapter and the policies in the draft East Herts District Plan, which seek to protect the heritage assets of the District (Policy HA1). The District Plan also contains a pledge, in Policy HA2, by the District Council to engage with local communities on the protection of non-designated heritage assets. With regard to Conservation Areas, the District Plan (Policy HA4) states that new development, alterations and extensions to existing buildings will be permitted where they preserve or enhance the established character of an area. Proposals outside a conservation area which affect its setting will be treated likewise.
- 5.15 The Parish Council supports the saved policies in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007 and policies HA4, HA5 and HA6 of the emerging District Plan, which seek to control the design of shop fronts and the regulation of advertisements in conservation areas. Policy HA7 of the emerging District Plan is especially supported in view of the many listed buildings in the Parish.

### **POLICY 3: WALKERN CONSERVATION AREA AND HERITAGE ASSETS**

In accordance with the policies in the East Herts District Plan and the guidance in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposal 2016, the Walkern Conservation Area and its setting will be protected and enhanced.

Proposals for development which affect designated heritage assets in the Parish, including listed buildings and the two scheduled monuments (Box Wood and Walkern Bury Farm), and non-designated heritage assets will be permitted provided that they conserve or enhance the quality of the asset or its setting.

- 5.16 There are three open spaces within the village which are recognised as important for recreational purposes. Two of these are also identified as Important Open Spaces in Chapter 5 - Walkern Conservation Area, Character Appraisal and Management Proposal 2016, published by East Herts Council. These spaces are shown as Protected Recreational Open Space (PROS) on the Policies Map (Appendix C) and detailed in Appendix E. Green spaces within the village that are accessible to all residents should be retained.

## POLICY 4: PROTECTED RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACES

The following sites, detailed in Appendix E and shown on the Policies Map (Appendix C) are allocated as Protected Recreational Open Space:

- The park on the High Street next to Walkern Stores, no 79 High Street (PROS1)
- The children's play area in Aubries (PROS2)
- The sports field at Walkern Sports and Community Centre (POS3)

Development that would result in the loss of all or part of these spaces will not be permitted unless they are replaced with better facilities which are as accessible to the local community as the current recreational open spaces.

- 5.17 Across the Parish, there are a number of potential sites of archaeological interest. A general policy on the protection of archaeological sites and assets is contained in the East Herts District Plan (Policy HA3). The policy requires a desk-based assessment of any proposal, which may affect a site of potential archaeological interest. There are a number of Areas of Archaeological Significance in the Parish, which are shown on the East Herts District Plan Policies Map.

## Biodiversity

- 5.18 The wider countryside of the Parish contains many features of significant value for wildlife and nature conservation, many of which were identified by local residents in consultation. Underground springs and wells from the chalk aquifer, and the River Beane, an important and rare chalk stream, and one of about 200 remaining worldwide, provide a perfect habitat in which an abundance of flora grow and fauna, including slow worms, newts, and frogs are found. The woodlands, hedgerows, and the agricultural landscape of the Parish support a diversity of life forms, the survival of which has been assisted by conservation work. The local planning authority, in collaboration with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, has also designated local Wildlife Sites.
- 5.19 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, members of the WNPG compiled a detailed inventory of plants, animals, birds, and insects, which could be found in the parish. The survey also listed the sites of nature conservation value, Ancient Woodland Inventory Sites, and the designated local Wildlife Sites. Maintaining and improving the quality of wild-flower rich natural or semi-natural habitats including designated sites is an important priority for the National Pollinator Strategy 2014 published by Department of Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- 5.20 The draft East Herts District Plan recognises that nature conservation is an integral part of the planning system. Thus, the most important areas for biodiversity are identified on the draft District Plan Policies Map. Policy NE1 of the document

affords protection to International, National and Locally Designated Nature Conservation Sites. Development will not be permitted unless there are reasons, which clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of a site. The policy also includes provision for compensation or mitigation where development proposals are allowed. The Parish Council supports this approach.

- 5.21 The draft East Herts District Plan acknowledges the importance of biodiversity and the need to protect species and plants and the diversity of habitats (policy NE2) and in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007 policies ENV14, 16 & 17 protect local sites, species and habitats from harm. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust have a plan to reintroduce Water Voles to the River Beane. A prerequisite for successful reintroduction includes suitable riverbank habitat. The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2006) identifies those species and habitats that are a priority for conservation, many of which are present in the Parish of Walkern. There are a number of sites where species and habitats need to be protected and development proposals will be permitted, only where harm can be avoided.

## POLICY 5: DESIGNATED LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

In accordance with the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, wildlife species and significant habitats including the River Beane will be protected from any harmful impacts of development. In particular the following designated local wildlife sites, as shown on the Policies Map (Appendix C) and described in an inventory in Appendix G, will be protected and managed:

- Box Wood
- St John's Wood
- Baron's Grove
- Coble's Spring
- The Warren
- Bassus Green Road Verges
- The Bushes
- Walman's Wood



Bassus Green Road Verges

## Green Infrastructure

- 5.22 Both the NPPF and the draft East Herts District Plan introduce the concept of green infrastructure, described as “a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.” East Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan applies these principles to the district and provides an overview of its green infrastructure assets and the opportunities to enhance and develop them. Policy NE3 of the draft East Herts District Plan seeks to protect and enhance the network of green infrastructure. One such asset is the valley of the River Beane, which is protected by the River Beane and Mimram River Catchment Management Plan. The aspiration to reintroduce Water Voles to the River Beane is dependent on an adequate unpolluted water flow.
- 5.23 The WNPG has consulted with the District Council and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, and the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre with a view to establishing green infrastructure networks within the Parish. As a result, a network of green corridors has been devised in and around the village of Walkern - this includes the valley of the River Beane. Green corridors have many benefits including making connections between wildlife sites and providing attractive walking routes, such as the established long distance footpath between Walkern and Hertford. The value of the river valley was emphasised by the local community in consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan.

## POLICY 6: GREEN CORRIDORS

In accordance with the East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan, the network of Green Corridors in the Parish will be protected from the impact of harmful development, managed and where possible enhanced. These include:

- The local link extending to the north and west of the end of Froghall Lane
- The network of small woodlands around Clay End
- The River Beane Valley

The River Beane is an endangered chalk stream and the valley corridor has a strategic recreational value as well as being important for wildlife and a cherished landscape feature. Any development scheme adjacent to the River Beane should be designed with a naturalised buffer zone of at least 10m from the top of the bank in order to protect and enhance the conservation value of the watercourse and ensure access for flood defence maintenance.

## Local Green Space

- 5.24 Some of the green spaces in Walkern village contribute to the character of the conservation area, represent important green infrastructure and are particularly valued by the local community. The NPPF (paragraphs 76 and 77) provides guidance on the criteria for designating Local Green Spaces. They must be local in character; close to the community they serve; and hold a special and particular local significance such as beauty, historical significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness in wildlife. Appendix F shows the assessment of the six sites chosen for designation as Local Green Space along with a table showing all sites considered and how each of the six sites designated meet the prescribed criteria.
- 5.25 Local Green Spaces are protected from development in accordance with national policy for Green Belts.

## POLICY 7: LOCAL GREEN SPACE

Six areas within the Walkern Conservation Area, detailed in Appendix F and shown on the Policies Map (Appendix C) have been designated as Local Green Space. These are:

LGS 1 & 2: Land either side of the River Beane at the Ford, Church End

LGS 3: Meadow adjacent to the River Beane between Church End and Winters Lane

LGS 4: Field adjacent to Allotments, Totts Lane

LGS 5: Allotments, Totts Lane

LGS 6: War Memorial

New development will only be allowed within designated Local Green Spaces where very special circumstances can be demonstrated in accordance with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.



Local Green Spaces 1 & 2

## Soils and Agricultural Land

- 5.26 Despite the development pressures affecting the rural areas of Hertfordshire, farming remains the principal land use in the Parish. The NPPF (paragraph 112) states that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is supported by the draft East Herts District Plan, which seeks to achieve the most effective

use of land as a resource. Soil is identified as an important asset. In Walkern, the bulk of the land is designated under the national agricultural land classification (ALC) as Grades 2 or 3a. Wherever possible, this higher-grade land should be protected from development in the interests of the local farming infrastructure and its future viability.

## Environmental Quality

- 5.27 Many representations were raised during consultation about general environmental pollution, and the possible effects of further development. This issue is covered in the NPPF (paragraphs 123-125) and the draft East Herts District Plan (Chapter 24). The draft East Herts District Plan contains specific policies on contaminated land and land instability (Policy EQ1), noise pollution (Policy EQ2), light pollution (Policy EQ3), and air quality (Policy EQ4). In Walkern, there were particular concerns about the effects of traffic, causing noise and air pollution, and light pollution. Nevertheless, it is considered that these issues can be tackled under the District Plan policies, and in the consideration of individual planning applications. Further detailed advice on dealing with aspects of environmental quality is provided in the on-line National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

## Housing and Development

- 5.28 New housing development should reflect the vision and objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, development should satisfy the need for new homes for residents in the Parish and at least meet current standards of sustainability; reflect the guidance in the Walkern Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016; and be well designed to improve the look and feel of the area.

## Housing Land Supply

- 5.29 There is very little land considered suitable for housing development within the village boundary. In order to allow for expansion of the village population, to support existing facilities and services and to offer affordable accommodation and homes for residents in later life, a single site will be developed for housing on land south of Froghall Lane. The village boundary has been adjusted in the Neighbourhood Plan, to include this site, which will provide a new permanent and defensible limit to the further expansion of the settlement towards Stevenage. This is necessary to preserve the strategic gap between the two settlements. The new boundary is shown on the Policies Map (Appendix C). There are limited infill opportunities within the village that will allow the village to continue to grow gradually.

## Land South of Froghall Lane

- 5.30 The land south of Froghall Lane, west of Aubries and north of Moors Ley has a chequered planning history, culminating in it receiving outline planning permission, on appeal, in February 2016. The site was outside but adjacent to the village

boundary. The western extent of the development site is clearly defined by a field boundary from the end of Froghall Lane to Moors Ley. The line of the amended village boundary is shown on the Policies Map (Appendix C).



Field Hedge (middle ground) Delineating New Village Boundary

- 5.31 In order to integrate this large (4 hectare) extension to the village it must reflect the character of its village location, be sensitive to the amenities of the established housing bordering the site on three sides, be well connected with the rest of the village (encouraging residents to walk into the village) and blend into the open countryside to the west. An innovative approach to the design of new homes on the western edge of the development, including low-rise homes with green roofs would soften the transition between green fields and intensive housing development. The layout and design of the scheme, including significant additional landscaping to create usable and manageable open space and buffers to soften the impact of the new development, will be critical to its successful integration. In order to ensure the open space on the site is retained in perpetuity it will be considered for potential designation as Local Green Space when the Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed.
- 5.32 The Froghall Lane framework policy below has been influenced by the views expressed by residents during consultation on both the outline planning application and the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Recommendations contained in the appeal decision have also helped to shape the framework policy. A detailed design brief will be required as part of the reserved matters planning application for the site which must incorporate the policies and principles in the Neighbourhood Plan in general and the framework policy for the site (Policy 8) in particular. If there is a perceived conflict between general policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and policies for this specific site, the specific site policy takes precedence.
- 5.33 The constraints contained in the framework policy include a footpath and bridleway link from Froghall Lane to Moors Ley and a generous green corridor

parallel to the lane to provide an alternative safe route for walkers accessing the footpaths and open countryside to the west. No new vehicular access should be permitted onto Froghall Lane, which is already too narrow for the existing homes on the northern side of the road. The new development must provide sufficient parking spaces for residents and visitors to ensure that no additional pressure from overflow parking is put on the congested streets of Moors Ley and Aubries or Froghall Lane. Higher car ownership figures for Walkern compared with East Herts as a whole justify slightly higher parking standards than in the East Herts District Plan. The justification for this higher parking standard can be found in Appendix I.

## POLICY 8: FRAMEWORK FOR LAND SOUTH OF FROGHALL LANE

The site has consent for up to 85 dwellings in accordance with the outline permission granted on appeal (APP/J1915/W/153127807). The illustrative Tibbalds Framework (attached in full in Appendix H) is the preferred solution for the development of this site. Within the site, there should be a significant green buffer to the north and west of the built development with additional areas of public open space, which will benefit the whole village.

In addition, all of the following conditions will apply:

- No buildings or hard surfacing will be placed in the south-west corner of the site, which is susceptible to surface water flooding.
- All existing trees and hedges will be retained and protected, where possible, during construction.
- The Sustainable Transport Contribution of £100,000 should be a contribution towards a cycleway link between Walkern and Stevenage as a necessary provision. The details will be agreed in consultation with Walkern Parish Council.
- 40% of homes will be affordable with a mix of affordable rented or affordable home ownership in accordance with the identified local housing need.
- Affordable homes must include smaller units and accessible single storey homes (preferably bungalows) suitable for older and vulnerable residents.
- Affordable homes must be indistinguishable from market homes and be integrated into and distributed throughout the site.
- Construction work should be carried out in accordance with relevant standards and best practice to ensure protection of the groundwater Source Protection Zone.
- Public open space created on the development site should be welcoming and usable and it should be retained and managed in perpetuity by a management company.

## POLICY 8 continued

- The amenities of existing residents should be protected during the construction phase; in particular, temporary measures should be put in place to ensure that no surface water flooding occurs off site.

The development parameters for the site must incorporate all of the following principles:

- The design and massing of development should respect longer views across the site from Froghall Lane.
- Development should vary in height to promote a place of distinctive character and interest, commensurate with its village location, generally of one to two storeys.
- At least 2 parking spaces per dwelling should be provided, unless there is a clear justification for a lower standard.
- The design of all play space should allow it to be overlooked from nearby homes and accompanied by a funded management plan.
- A well-designed sustainable urban drainage scheme will include both storage for natural run-off and run-off from the new development, and a funded management and maintenance plan to secure its long-term operation.
- Lower density and lower rise development should be located on the western edge of the site to reduce the impact on the countryside. Provision of ‘green roofs’ on dwellings in this part of the site will demonstrate sensitivity to the transition between village edge and open countryside.
- A generous green landscaped area and wetland habitat will be provided on the western edge of the site, delineated with a new hedge of local native species along the entire western boundary (in line with guidelines issued by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust).
- A generous green corridor will remain on the north side of the site to preserve landscape views and the character of Froghall Lane, and to discourage vehicle parking along Froghall Lane associated with the development.
- The privacy of residents should be protected by provision of sufficient distance and landscaping between new and existing properties and where appropriate, the gardens of new dwellings should back onto those of existing properties on Moors Ley and Aubries.
- New connections should be made for pedestrians from the site into Aubries and a new public right of way for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists should be created, through the site between 68 - 70 Moors Ley, to the existing public right of way on Froghall Lane (URC2).
- Any additional emergency access should be gated to avoid misuse.

- 5.34 The Froghall Lane Framework Plan February 2017 prepared by Tibbalds, is a joint project, between Walkern Parish Council/WNPG and East Herts Council, to provide a concept for the design and layout of this important green field site on the edge of Walkern. It has been refined since it was initially aired as a response to the outline planning application on the site in 2015. The Development Concept plan showing the flood hazard area across the southwest corner of the site is set out below. The full Tibbalds Framework Plan is included as Appendix H.



## Housing Infill and Rural Homes

- 5.35 Except for the housing allocated on Land South of Froghall Lane, all other housing proposals should be for infill development within or immediately adjacent to the Walkern village boundary. The use of brownfield land will be encouraged. In accordance with the NPPF, gardens are not brownfield land and contribute to the character of the area. The design and character of new development should reflect that of successful infill schemes in Walkern such as Glebe View and Walchra Court. If a prescribed need is identified for rural homes, these should be directed to the smaller rural settlements of Clay End and Bassus Green.



Walchra Court



Glebe View

## POLICY 9: HOUSING INFILL SITES

Within or immediately adjacent to the village boundary, small-scale infill developments on brownfield sites will be supported in preference to green field sites. Important views and open spaces that contribute to the enjoyment of residents of the village and are important to the character of the conservation area must be retained.

Private gardens contribute to the character of the village and inappropriate development of garden land will be resisted. Design of infill developments should reflect the local vernacular style and character in accordance with Policy 12.

## POLICY 10: RURAL HOMES

Outside the village boundary of Walkern, high quality conversions to residential use, of buildings of architectural merit will be welcomed.

Rural Exception Affordable Housing schemes in the two small settlements of Clay End and Bassus Green will be supported, provided that they do not impinge on important views and do not conflict with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Other single rural homes will only be supported where there is a demonstrable need for them to be located in the countryside.

## Housing Needs

- 5.36 The Parish Council has given consideration to the issue of local housing needs and a Housing Needs Survey was conducted by Community Development Action Hertfordshire (CDA) to support this policy. It was evident from the consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan that there were specific requirements for housing for local people, which is affordable and for bungalows or suitable housing for older people, so that they can remain in the village in later life. In the emerging East Herts District Plan, the type, tenure and mix of housing will be identified. However, the CDA report has supported the Parish Council's assertion that priority should be given to local residents. Affordable units constructed on the Froghall Lane site and on Rural Exception Sites should meet the housing need requirements identified in the CDA report and offer them first refusal.

## POLICY 11: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In Walkern, there will be a mix of affordable housing types and tenures, which reflects current and future local housing needs and housing market assessments.

## Design of New Development

- 5.37 The design of new housing development should reflect local style and building materials and the traditional and historic character within Walkern Conservation Area. (Detailed guidance on design is contained in the Walkern Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Area Management Plan 2016). Where practical, homes should be designed to; increase biodiversity, particularly where natural habitat is lost through the development; reduce surface water run-off, so as not to compound issues of flooding in Walkern; and be as energy efficient as possible.
- 5.38 85% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire thought that all homes should have their own garages/parking. Acute parking problems occur in the evenings and at weekends when cars are parked on pavements forcing pedestrians to walk in the road and parking on the High Street blocks through traffic. New homes with small gardens were a popular choice of residents, rather than large gardens or communal garden space.

## POLICY 12: DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

The scale and design of all new development will reflect the character of Walkern and its historic Conservation Area as detailed in the Walkern Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016. In particular, the following guidelines will apply:

- Building materials should be aesthetically pleasing and characteristic of traditional village properties
- New buildings should respect neighbouring roof profiles and pitches, the characteristic spacing between buildings, historic building lines, and the overall density of development in the village
- Detailing should be in line with traditional design features
- Infill development should not obscure views of the surrounding countryside nor should it significantly reduce the garden areas, which are intrinsic to the settings of existing residences
- Sufficient off-road parking should be provided for each new home
- Adequate provision of enclosures to accommodate storage of refuses bins should be provided within the curtilage of each new home
- All homes should have their own modest garden space, characteristic of village living
- Boundaries, particularly to front gardens, should preferably be marked with hedges of appropriate native species
- Redevelopment, extensions, or alterations to historic farmsteads, residential properties or agricultural buildings in Walkern Parish should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form.

## POLICY 12 continued

- Modern, innovative design will be welcomed provided that the above criteria are met
- New developments should be designed so that surface water run-off does not increase the risk of localised surface water flooding with the aim of achieving zero run-off
- New homes will be encouraged to be as energy efficient as practically possible
- Street lighting should be sensitively designed to reflect the rural nature of the parish and minimise impact on bats and other nocturnal wildlife
- Efforts to increase biodiversity, from specially designed roof tiles to creation of new wildlife habitat, will be commended.

## Employment and Business

- 5.39 The NPPF supports sustainable economic growth; local planning authorities are required to plan proactively to meet the development needs of businesses. In paragraph 28, the NPPF states specifically that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity. Thus, local and neighbourhood plans should support the growth and expansion of business in rural areas, and support the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses. Support is also given to rural tourism and leisure developments, as well as the retention and development of local services and community facilities. This approach is mirrored in the East Herts District Plan (Policy ED2) which encourages development, subject to set criteria.
- 5.40 The parish of Walkern consists mainly of agricultural land, with a number of working farms. Yet, according to the 2011 Census only eight people were working in agriculture, just over 1% of the working population of 816. Few residents actually work in the parish - the main centres for employment are Stevenage, Stansted Airport, Hertford, Cambridge, and Greater London.
- 5.41 Within the parish, the main employers are the school and a number of small businesses, some of which operate from units at Walkern Hall Farm and the Piggeries. A growing number of people now work at home (82 in 2011). Feedback from the Open Day (April 2015) showed support for local existing businesses, creative industries and homeworking, and encouragement for new employment opportunities for local residents. This support is reflected in the following policies.

## POLICY 13: NEW BUSINESSES

New businesses and employment will be permitted, provided that new or expanded enterprises are of a scale and type appropriate to the rural setting of Walkern and its Conservation Area and comply with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Further development at Manor Farm would be supported provided that the main vehicular access is directly off the B1037.



Manor Farm

## POLICY 14: DIVERSIFICATION OF FARM BUSINESSES

Proposals for the diversification of farm businesses will be supported provided:

- The development supports the viability of the existing farm holding; or
- The development is ancillary to the agricultural business

## Infrastructure

- 5.42 Walkern is poorly served by access to electronic communications infrastructure, including high-speed broadband and mobile telephone networks. Development of new technology has generated changes in working patterns, enabling businesses and individuals to work in more flexible ways, including working from home. Support for better quality communications infrastructure is set out in the NPPF (paragraphs 42-46) and in the East Herts District Plan. It is also an objective of this Neighbourhood Plan.

### POLICY 15: NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

Support will be given to the installation of new infrastructure including high-speed broadband and mobile networks and renewable energy provision provided that:

- Infrastructure is fully integrated into the design of future development proposals; and
- Where new masts or structures are required, they should be sympathetic to their surroundings.

## FLOOD RISK

- 5.43 Walkern suffers from risk of flooding from both surface water run-off and river flooding associated with the floodplain of the River Beane. No development should take place in Flood Zone 3b, which is a functional floodplain to safely store flood, water. New development in Flood Zones 2 & 3a will be subject to a sequential test to consider whether development is appropriate in this location. A Flood Risk Assessment must be submitted with a planning application to demonstrate that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere or will reduce flood risk. The Environment Agencies Flood Risk Map for Walkern can be found in Appendix J.

### POLICY 16: FLOOD RISK

Walkern lies in the floodplain of the River Beane. New development proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3 will be subject to a sequential test. If a development proposal passes the test and is appropriate in the floodplain, a Flood Risk Assessment must be submitted with the planning application. The Flood Risk Assessment must demonstrate that the development will not increase the risk of flooding and, where possible, should reduce the risk of flooding in Walkern.

## Traffic and Transport

- 5.44 The B1037 is the only classified road running eastwards out of Stevenage. When reaching Walkern village it turns sharply left and becomes Walkern High Street. The level of traffic at peak times caused by commuters into and out of Stevenage through the narrow High Street causes acute traffic congestion. Parking in the High Street and side roads near the school exacerbates this problem. Limited infill housing development throughout the village should not exacerbate this situation and the impact of disruption caused by construction in the tight confines of the village streets must be assessed in any development proposal.

## Roads and Traffic

- 5.45 Responses of residents to public consultation expressed serious concerns about increased traffic through the village including traffic noise, pollution, pedestrian safety, and the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles ignoring the weight limit restriction.



Traffic Congestion

## Vehicle Parking

- 5.46 Car ownership is high in Walkern with 66% of households owning 2 or more cars compared with an average of 46.5% for East Herts as a whole (Source: 2011 Census). Residents parking and cars parked to use the services in the High Street contribute to the congestion problem. Any additional houses in the High Street must provide off-street parking to ensure that this problem does not worsen. Opportunities to provide parking for residents and visitors to the village off the High Street will be sought.

## Sustainable Transport

- 5.47 Public transport facilities are particularly poor considering that there is a main-line railway station with fast trains to London only 8 km away in Stevenage; the bus service does not run frequently enough to be suitable for commuting.
- 5.48 Footpaths are narrow and in some instances non-existent. New developments should be integrated into the village through adequate footpath and cycle links to village facilities. A comprehensive survey of footpaths in Walkern was carried out by the WNPG, a summary of which is contained in the Consultation Statement. Issues arising from the survey are noted in the Project List appended to the Consultation Statement
- 5.49 Safe outdoor exercise improves health and wellbeing. The roads in Walkern are narrow with long stretches of cars parked on the roadside and rural roads are winding and dangerous for cyclists. The local community supports the long-held aspiration for a new cycle and footpath link to Stevenage. Funding for this path will be made available through the development of the site to the south of Froghall Lane (see Policy 8 Framework for Land South of Froghall Lane)

## POLICY 17: TRAFFIC IMPACT AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PROVISION

All proposals for development in the village must provide a traffic impact assessment, proportional to the scale of the development proposed, which assesses the potential impact of increased traffic on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking and congestion.

Measures to mitigate these impacts should be agreed with the Highway Authority. In particular, further expansion of the school would need to include mitigation for any impact of additional traffic congestion and school-related parking at peak times.

Proposals to increase off-street car-parking provision and relieve traffic congestion in Walkern will be supported in principle as long as they comply with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Development proposals should help to maintain or improve public transport provision to Stevenage and throughout the parish of Walkern. Other proposals to increase the use of sustainable transport such as off-street charging points for electric cars will be supported.

## Facilities and Services

- 5.50 Walkern has a range of public facilities and services. From the responses to public consultation, it is evident that these are highly valued by the local community. Support for the safeguarding of key community assets is embodied in a number of Neighbourhood Plan objectives.

## Community and Recreational Facilities

- 5.51 The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire highlighted that the village shop, pubs and churches were the most used community facilities (see chart below). The parish council applied to East Herts Council for the designation of the United Reformed Church (ACV1), the two public houses in the High Street (ACV2 & ACV3) and the village shop/post office (ACV4) as Assets of Community Value. The key community and recreational facilities are shown on the Policies Map (Appendix C).

### Section 4 Parish Facilities - Question 2 - Part 1

Q2 - Which of the following amenities do you use

224	71	63	67	74	222	142
Village shop	Hairdressers	Hearts & Craft Shop	Jolie Wool Shop	Walkern Gallery	Post Office (in village shop)	Churches- St Mary's/United Reformed Church
224	71	63	67	74	222	142

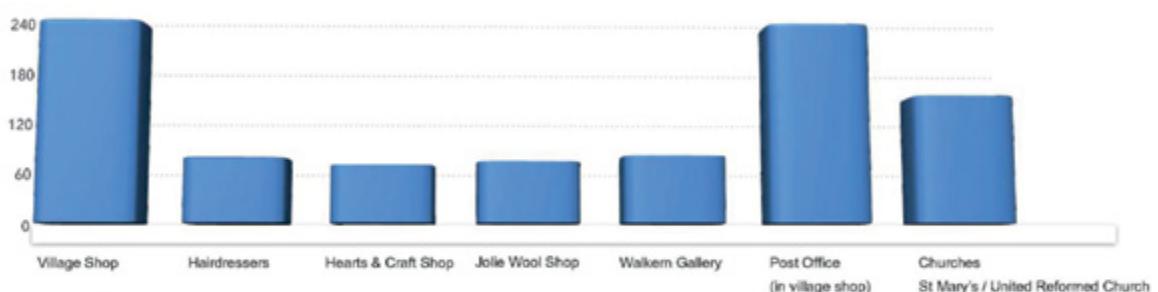


Chart 1



## POLICY 18: ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

All Assets of Community Value, designated by East Herts District Council, will be retained unless they are:

- No longer needed
- Acquired by the community to ensure the retention of the facilities in perpetuity, or
- Replaced by better facilities as part of a development proposal.

- 5.52 Outdoor sports and leisure facilities are important features in Walkern. These include the recreation ground in the centre of the village, a small children's play area at the Aubries, and a sports field (with two football pitches and a cricket pitch). Community consultations revealed that play facilities for young children were inadequate and required improvement. The central recreational ground was under-used probably due to the poor condition of the play equipment. It was felt that the village lacked a clearly defined focal point.
- 5.53 There was strong support for the regeneration of the recreation ground, which would include a new and improved play area and a central meeting place for the village to enjoy. Many residents expressed an interest in extending the range of sports and leisure facilities, especially at the Sports Field. In the future, there may be scope for using the contributions from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which would be generated by new developments in the Parish.

## POLICY 19: COMMUNITY AND RECREATION FACILITIES

**Existing community and recreation facilities must be retained, protected and enhanced. Loss of facilities will only be acceptable where alternative provision is of a scale and standard equivalent to, or superior to, the existing facilities. Alternative provision must be provided within the Parish.**



Walkern Sports & Community Centre (WSSC)

## Health and Wellbeing

- 5.54 Main hospital facilities and health clinics are located in Stevenage. A GP surgery is provided in Walkern four times a week at 80 High Street. This is a much-valued asset, especially for elderly patients, families with young children, and those without personal transport. There is also an informal prescription delivery service offered by the village shop.
- 5.55 The surgery is held in privately owned premises, which is leased to the Health Trust. Should this property be sold, the surgery facility could be lost to the local community. The Parish Council supports the continued provision of the surgery in Walkern. Any development proposals, which would have a negative impact on health provision in the parish, should show how that impact could be addressed. If the premises at 80 High Street were to be lost, alternative accommodation for the surgery should be provided locally in an equally accessible location.

## POLICY 20: MAINTAINING EXISTING HEALTH SERVICES

The existing GP surgery should be retained or enhanced, or its loss mitigated by the provision of new facilities to be secured before the closure of the existing surgery. Proposals for new health facilities or to extend and conserve the existing GP surgery in Walkern will be supported provided they are located in an accessible location; provide adequate car parking and where they are consistent with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Development proposals that would result in the loss of the existing GP surgery will not be supported.

## Education

- 5.56 Secondary and further education facilities are located in Stevenage, and Edwinstree School and Ward Freeman College in Buntingford, although some students travel further afield. Hertfordshire County Council provides primary education locally at the Walkern Primary School, located on the High Street. The school has recently been extended to cope with anticipated increase in demand, but any significant increase in housing numbers would require further expansion. The site is tightly constrained by residential development and the River Beane. Traffic associated with the school is heavy, and causes considerable congestion on the High Street and nearby side roads at peak times.
- 5.57 Walkern Pre-School is a popular community asset, and has some capacity to take more children. The parish council fully supports the current and future provision for primary and pre-school education in Walkern. It will liaise with the County Council to ensure that facilities continue to serve the needs of the local community in the future.

# 6. Implementation

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered and implemented over a 16-year period providing, a direction for change through its vision and objectives. The policies will guide the development of Walkern Parish and protect those assets most appreciated by the community. The policies may be amended at intervals in order to remain in line with the District Plan.
- 6.2 In addition to the policies, the Project List appended to the Consultation Statement will channel resources and volunteer activity into improving leisure facilities for parish residents, reducing the impact of traffic on the village and making the village more accessible.

# Appendix A - Abbreviations & Glossary

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing	Housing made available, based on the evidence of need, to people who are unable to afford housing at market prices, including Social Housing available to rent.
Ancient Woodland	Woodland known to have existed continuously since 1600 or before
Brownfield Site	Land that has been previously developed
Assets of Community Value	A right for Communities to nominate certain local and public or privately owned buildings or land as an Asset of Community Value.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	Is a planning charge used as a tool by local authorities to help deliver infrastructure to support development in their area.
Conservation Area	An area designated under Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as being of ‘special architectural or historical interest’, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance
Construction Management Plan	A plan detailing how construction will be managed in order to ensure the effects of construction on residents and businesses are kept to a minimum.
DEFRA	Department of Environment Food & Rural Affairs
Developer Contributions (or S106 Contributions)	Contributions required under a Section 106 agreement from developers to be set aside for future works and services directly related to the development and focused on site-specific mitigation of the impact of development.
Development Plan	Statutory Plans, including Local or District Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans which are used to determine planning applications.
Flood Plain	An area of land liable to flood from a watercourse, defined by the Environment Agency.
Green Infrastructure	A network of green spaces and other features, such as parks, open spaces, woodlands, playing fields, allotments and gardens providing a range of quality-of-life benefits for the local community.
Green Corridor	A wildlife corridor, habitat corridor, or green corridor is an area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities or structures (such as roads, development or logging).
Housing Associations	Independent, not-for-profit organisations that work with councils to offer flats and houses to local people on the Housing Register.
Infrastructure	Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.
LGS	Local Green Space

<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Any building or structure which is included in the list of ‘buildings of special architectural or historic interest’ as defined in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
<b>Local Referendum</b>	A vote for electors in the Neighbourhood Area to accept or reject the Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>Mitigation</b>	Measures taken to lessen the force or intensity of the effects of a development.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b>	Sets out national policy and how this is expected to be applied.
<b>NPPG</b>	National Planning Practice Guidance
<b>Neighbourhood Area</b>	Area to which the Neighbourhood Plan relates
<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b>	A neighbourhood plan is a community-led plan for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area.
<b>Objective</b>	An aim or a goal to assist in achieving the overall vision for the area.
<b>Open Space</b>	All open space of public value including land, river, canals, and lakes.
<b>Sequential and Exception Test Locations</b>	The methodology recommended by the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that new developments are sited in the most appropriate locations
<b>Shared Equity Housing</b>	Shared equity is where more than one party has an interest in the value of the home, with the aim of reducing the cost of occupancy.
<b>Shared Space</b>	Is a design approach that aims to reduce the dominance of motor traffic by reducing or removing traffic signs, road markings and in some cases kerbs, resulting in ‘level surfaces’.
<b>Sheltered Housing</b>	Purpose built or converted housing exclusively for sale to elderly people; self-contained accommodation with communal facilities and warden.
<b>Significant Development</b>	A development of a scale sufficient to trigger the requirement for a Transport Assessment in accordance with <i>Roads in Hertfordshire: Highways Design Guide 3 Edition</i> e.g. residential development in excess of 80 units
<b>Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</b>	Documents which add further detail to the policies in a Development Plan.
<b>Supported Housing</b>	As for ‘Sheltered Housing’, but designed for those with a physical or learning disability rather than just the elderly.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
<b>URC</b>	United Reformed Church
<b>Vernacular</b>	A local style of architecture for homes and domestic buildings
<b>View &amp; Vista</b>	A pleasing sight seen from a particular place & a long narrow view
<b>Vision</b>	Description of how the community would like their area to be in the future.
<b>Walkern</b>	Refers to the village of Walkern rather than Walkern Parish
<b>WNPG</b>	Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Group

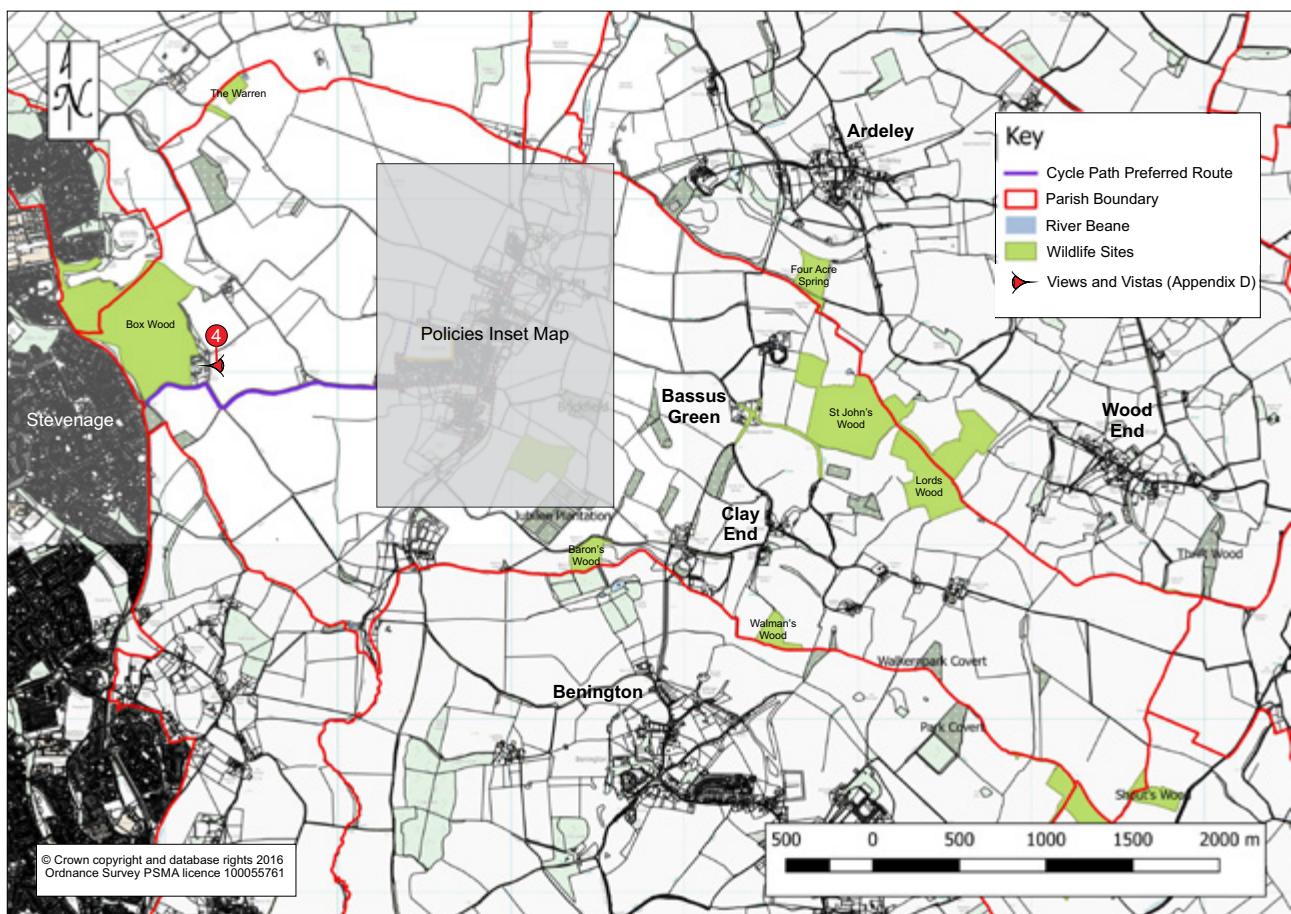
# Appendix B - Policy Process Map

This table shows how the key objectives of the plan have been translated into planning policies. POLICY 1 Sustainable Development relates to all the objectives and is the thread that links the policies together.

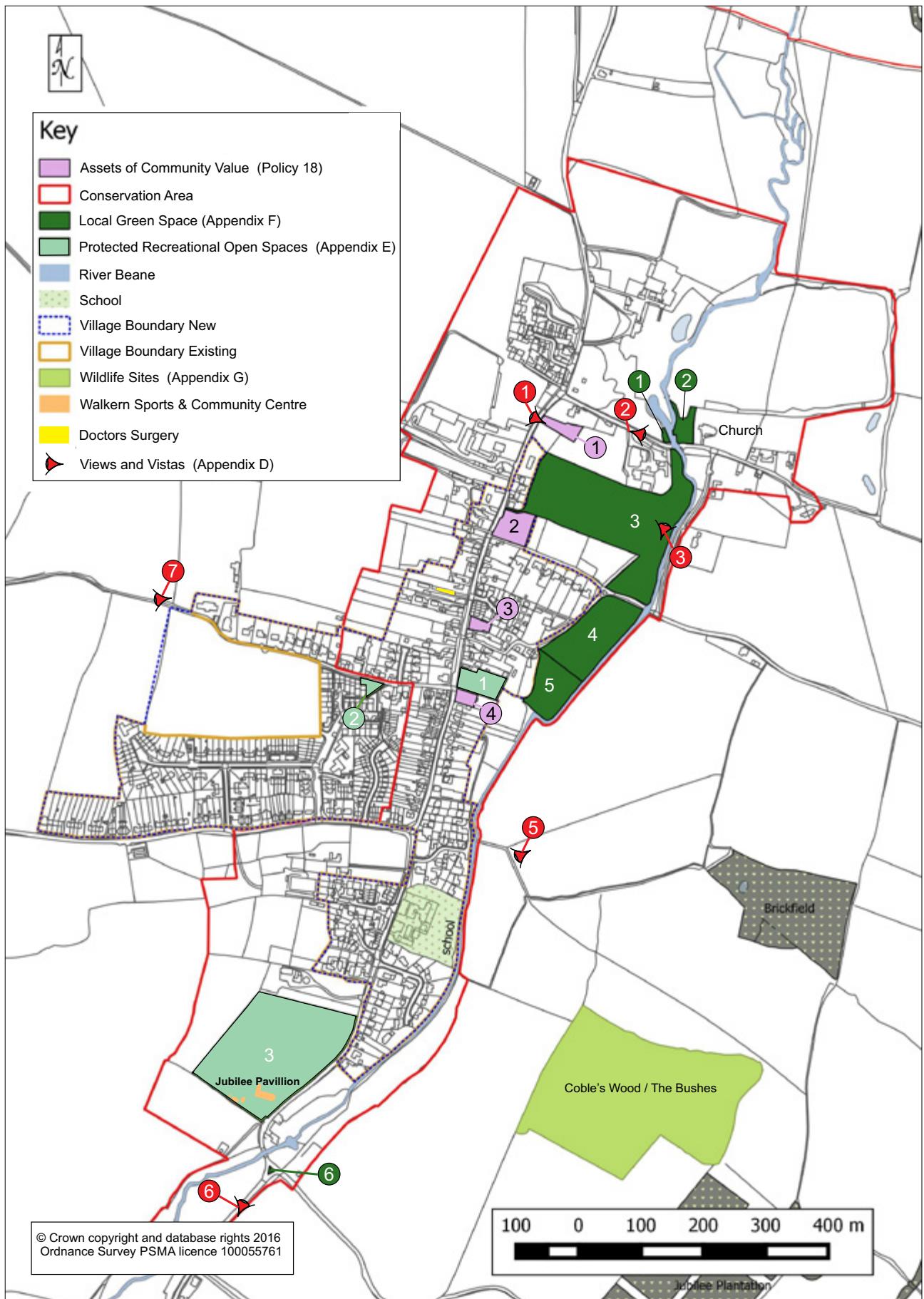
	<b>Key Objective</b>	<b>Policies that achieve the Key Objectives</b>
<b>a</b>	Ensure new development protects and enhances local landscape character, valued nature conservation sites and the rich biodiversity of the Parish.	POLICY 2 Views, Vistas and Landscape Features POLICY 5 Designated Wildlife Sites POLICY 6 Green Corridors POLICY 12 Design of New Development
<b>b</b>	Protect and enhance the village conservation area and its setting, and listed and locally listed buildings.	POLICY 3 Walkern Conservation Area and Heritage Assets POLICY 4 Protected Recreational Open Space POLICY 7 Local Green Space POLICY 9 Housing Infill Sites POLICY 12 Design of New Development
<b>c</b>	Protect and enhance the Parish's open spaces and views for public access and informal recreational use.	POLICY 2 Views, Vistas and Landscape Features POLICY 4 Protected Open Space POLICY 6 Green Corridors POLICY 7 Local Green Space
<b>d</b>	Ensure the River Beane, a rare chalk stream that runs through Walkern, is preserved and protected from over-abstraction	POLICY 2 Views, Vistas and Landscape Features POLICY 5 Designated Local Wildlife Sites POLICY 6 Green Corridors POLICY 7 Local Green Space
<b>e</b>	Enhance and improve the environmental quality of the Parish, minimizing noise and air pollution.	POLICY 12 Design of New Development POLICY 17 Traffic Impact & Sustainable Transport Provision
<b>f</b>	Ensure the mix, size and type of new housing meets local needs, including a sufficient supply of affordable housing and preferential access to some new homes for people with a strong local connection	POLICY 8 Framework for Land South of Froghall Lane POLICY 9 Housing Infill Sites POLICY 10 Rural Homes POLICY 11 Affordable Housing
<b>g</b>	Require new development to be of high quality design, built to a high sustainability standard and to be sympathetic to, and improve, the look and feel of the parish.	POLICY 8 Framework for Land South of Froghall Lane POLICY 10 Rural Homes POLICY 12 Design of New Development in Walkern

<b>h</b>	Ensure the design and location of new developments are resilient to the effects of climate change and flooding.	POLICY 8 Framework for Land South of Froghall Lane POLICY 12 Design of New Development in Walkern POLICY 16 Flood Risk
<b>i</b>	Support existing businesses, creative industries and home working, and encourage new local employment opportunities for residents.	POLICY 13 New Businesses POLICY 14 Diversification of Farm Businesses POLICY 15 New Infrastructure
<b>j</b>	Preserve and enhance public transport services to and from the village for residents who do not have use of a car, and encourage walking and cycling.	POLICY 8 Framework for Land South of Froghall Lane POLICY 17 Traffic Impact & Sustainable Transport Provision
<b>k</b>	Ensure that community facilities (e.g. school, GP surgery) enhance the health and wellbeing of local residents.	POLICY 18 Assets of Community Value POLICY 20 Maintaining Existing Health Services
<b>l</b>	Ensure the village has indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that meet the needs of young children, teenagers and adults, and strengthen the sense of community.	POLICY 4 Protected Recreational Open Space POLICY 7 Local Green Space POLICY 8 Framework for Land South of Froghall Lane POLICY 19 Community and Recreation Facilities
<b>m</b>	Give the Parish the opportunity to access Community Infrastructure Levy funding to improve Parish facilities.	Project List (appended to the Consultation Statement)

# Appendix C - Policies Map



Policies Map



Policies Inset Map

# Appendix D - Views, Vistas and Landscape Features

These views, vistas and landscape features should be protected from the harmful impact of development in accordance with POLICY 2 of this plan. The location of the view points are shown on the Policies Map



## View 1: West from the United Reformed Church (URC), High Street through Manor Farm paddock

This view westward from the High Street opposite the URC, looks through Manor Farm paddock and across a gentle green rise towards Churchend Common. It is an important gap in built form at the northern end of the High Street and a rare remaining transverse view giving a sense of space and a glimpse of the rural setting of the village. It is identified as an important open space to be protected in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016). The paddock and land behind it is outside the village boundary and the view should not be interrupted by buildings within the space or impacting on the openness of the space.



### View 2: East along Church End over the ford

The view along Church End over the ford around a gentle bend revealing little by little the picturesque Grade 1 listed Church of St Mary the Virgin is probably the most characterful in the Parish. The road is narrow and bounded by mature trees and hedges, overlooked by an established rookery. The view is part of an identified ‘Focal Point’ in Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016). It is important to retain the features of the lane, its boundaries and the ford itself and to ensure that no development interrupts the view of the church.



### View 3: North from the meadows to St Mary the Virgin Church

As you look northward along the River Beane, towards the ford on Church End, the Church of St Mary the Virgin is clearly visible above the trees. This view is much appreciated by the many local walkers that use the area on a regular basis. The meadow has been designated Local Green Space (where only development appropriate in the Green Belt will be permitted), however the view should remain uninterrupted to maintain its openness. The view from the meadow to the ford and Church of St Mary the Virgin should be preserved.



#### View 4: East from Box Wood towards Walkern

This view, on the road from Stevenage to Walkern, from the corner by Box Wood, looking east over the village and into the valley unfolds unspoilt countryside dotted with farm buildings. Walkern lies on the west bank of the River Beane in the Middle Beane Valley. From this viewpoint, the village nestles into the landscape without breaking the skyline although the iconic Wrights tower is visible to the right of the view. In order to maintain this view of the village, from every vantage point, new development should not be more prominent in the landscape than the existing built form of the village and should blend into the river valley.



#### View 5: East of the River Beane to Wrights Tower House above the Finches

Views from the east of the River Beane looking west over the village all feature Wrights Tower House. The iconic Victorian tower, previously part of Wrights Brewery is an important non-listed building now converted to a home. It is the only building which can be seen above the village and should remain the only reference point on the skyline. New development should respect the very low impact of the built form of the village on the surrounding valley and blend into the existing views.



### View 6: North from the entrance to Walkern along Bennington Road

Entering Walkern where Bennington Road gently bends over the River Beane into the High Street a stunning view is unveiled. The historical context of the War Memorial, Pearman's Mill and Mill Cottage, contrasts with the River Beane flowing under the brick bridge, and the fields beyond. These features make up an identified 'Focal Point' in Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016). This view at the entrance to the village is an important focal point in the conservation area that should be preserved or enhanced.



### View 7: Southwest from Froghall Lane towards Stevenage

This view is looking from Froghall Lane, southwest towards Stevenage. It shows the Middle Beane Valley. Box Wood is to the right of the picture and the landscape buffer tree line is in front of Gresley Way to the left of the picture. The view is interrupted only in the small gap where Stevenage Road joins the roundabout on Gresley Way. All of the land in this picture is in the Parish of Walkern. This unspoilt view of traditional farmland and ancient woodland is precious Green Belt land which should be retained, both for its purpose of separating the village of Walkern from the town of Stevenage and for its intrinsic beauty.

# Appendix E - Protected Recreational Open Space (PROS)

These open spaces should be retained in accordance with POLICY 4 of this plan. The areas are shown on the Policies Map.



## PROS 1: Recreation Ground, High Street

The recreation ground is a safe fenced space in the centre of the village with a range of play equipment. There is a funded project to update the whole site including a greater range of equipment for all ages. More seating will be introduced with further planting of native trees and hedges to attract wildlife. There are views out of the site over large gardens to the River Beane. The site is identified as an important open space that should be protected in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016).



## PROS 2: Play Area Aubries

This is a small safe site within the Aubries development with play equipment for smaller children. It is the only play area available without having to cross the High Street to the Recreation Ground. The site is identified as an important open space that should be protected in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016).



## PROS 3: Sports Field, High Street

This is the main sports and social club field, which is used for football in the winter and cricket in the summer. The annual village fete is held here. The field is well used by residents for picnics, dog walking and exercising. It is a valuable asset for the village.

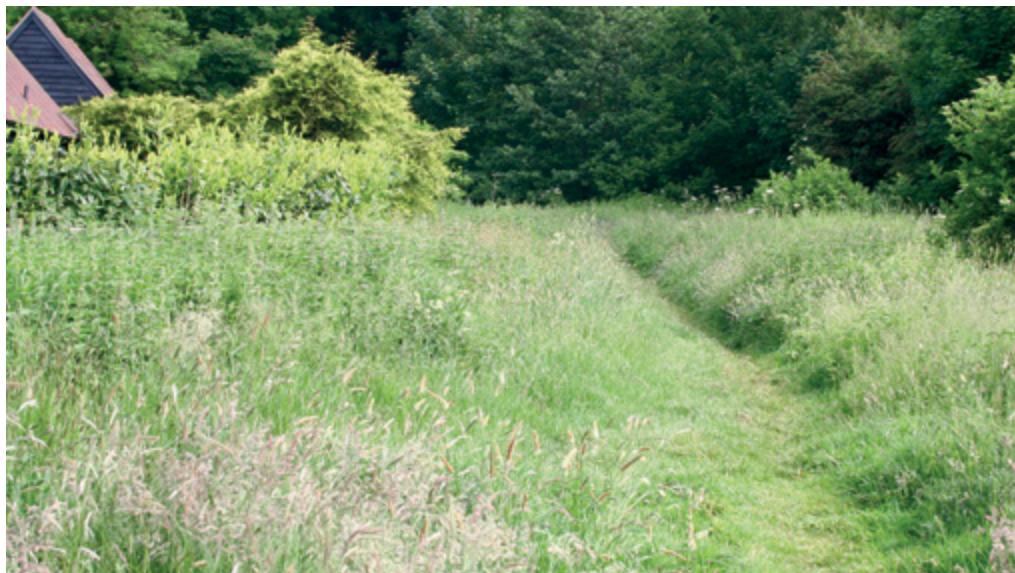
# Appendix F - Local Green Spaces (LGS)

Development on these Local Green Spaces would only be allowed in accordance with POLICY 7 of this plan. The areas are shown on the Policies Map.



## LGS 1 & 2: Land either side of the river Beane at the Ford, Church End

There are views into both areas from the ford over the River Beane. These combine with other features to make this area a favourite meeting place. It is part of an identified 'Focal Point' in Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) and lies adjacent to the grade I listed St Mary the Virgin Church. Both sites support bird life; site LGS 1 contains an established Rookery.



### LGS 3: Meadow adjacent to the river Beane between Church End & Winters Lane

This attractive meadow affords extensive views into, across and out of the site to the ford and church, over the River Beane to the countryside beyond. The riverside hedgerow is highlighted in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. Two well-used public footpaths (35 & 18) crisscross the site. The thistle rich meadow adjacent to the river supports birds, butterflies & moths.



### LGS 4: Field adjacent to Allotments, Totts Lane

The continuation of LGS 3 contains a riverside hedgerow, which is highlighted in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. The site also contributes to the rural setting of the village. The site is let for grazing but has the potential to be managed to increase biodiversity adjacent to the River Beane.



## LGS 5: Allotments, Totts Lane

The site of the village allotments adjoins LGS 4 and is adjacent to the River Beane, with views out across surrounding farmland. It includes well-tended allotment plots and a riverside hedgerow, which is highlighted in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. It was previously a recreation site but is now for growing food. A former occupier of adjacent house recorded 600 species of butterflies & moths (List is held at Hertfordshire Environmental Records Office), indicating that the allotments themselves are also wildlife rich.



## LGS 6: War Memorial

The War Memorial and small grass triangle is part of an important ‘Focal Point’ in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016). It marks entrance to village from the south. A memorial service with the laying of wreaths is held here on Remembrance Day. This is a well preserved and important architectural feature and the green and its setting should be preserved.

## Local Green Space Assessment

Site description	Site No	Site Information					Critical Criteria			Evidence of Specialness					
		Potential dev'ment site	National design-nation	Common land or village green	Private garden	Owner known	Extant planning per-mission	Local in character	Extensive very special tract	Close by	Attractiveness of Site	Historical Significance	Recreational Tran-quill	Wildlife	
DESIGNATED	Land either side of the river Beane at the Ford, Church End	1 & 2	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Views into these green spaces from the ford over River Beane are important and combine with other features to make this area a favourite meeting place	Part of identified 'Focal Point' in Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) adjacent to grade I listed church	No public access	yes	Supports bird life (LGS 1 contains established Rookery) adjacent to River Beane
Meadow adjacent to the river Beane between Church End and Winters Lane	3	N	N	N	Y	N	y	N	Y	Y	Attractive meadow with important hedgerow along River Beane, affording extensive views into /across and out of the site to the ford and church	no	Crossed by two footpaths (35 & 18), well used by walkers	yes	Thistle rich meadow adjacent to River Beane supports birds, butterflies & moths
Field adjacent to Allotments, Totts Lane	4	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	The continuation of LGS 3 with an important hedgerow along the River Beane contributing to the setting of the village and conservation area	no	No public access	yes	no
Allotments, Totts Lane	5	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Site adjoins LG54 and the River Beane with views out across surrounding farmland, includes well-tended allotment plots with important hedgerow	no	Previous recreation site now well-used allotments	yes	Former occupier of adjacent house recorded 600 species of butterflies & moths*
War Memorial	6	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Part of an important 'Focal Point' in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) and marks entrance to village from south	Site of Remembrance Day memorial service and laying of wreaths - well preserved important architectural feature	no	no	no
NOT DESIGNATED															
Land between Frogshall Lane and Moors Ley	7	Y	N	N	Y	Y									
Recreation Ground High Street	8	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Although there are plans to improve the recreation ground it would not currently meet this criteria. This may be reviewed	No	Yes	No	Planned boundary improvements may increase biodiversity
Small play area in Aubries	9	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Simply a play area	No	Yes	No	No
Field adjacent to west side of Sports Field	10	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Part of the rural edge of the village but not particularly attractive	No	No	No	No special wildlife interest

\* List is held at Hertfordshire Environmental Records Office

# Appendix G - Designated Wildlife Sites

## Extract from Wildlife Site Inventory East Herts

### 22/006 Pryor's Wood/Box Wood TL270263

Ancient Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards woodland plus some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). The wood has been extensively cleared and replanted with Larch (*Larix decidua*), Corsican Pine (*Pinus nigra*), Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Pryor's Wood is the nature reserve consisting of mostly old secondary woodland grown up on the site over the past 150 years. It is dominated by Pedunculate Oak with Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and some Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). There is an area of ancient Hornbeam coppice. A diverse assemblage of flowering plant species have been recorded including the local species Green Hellebore (*Helleborus viridus*) and Violet Helleborine (*Epipactis purpurata*). Pryor's Wood contains many woodland indicator species including Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Dog-violets (*Viola spp.*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), and the very local species Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) has been recorded here. Other records include the nationally notable beetle *Platycis minutus* and the local White-Letter Hairstreak (*Satyrium w-album*). The bird fauna is particularly rich with numerous breeding species including past records for Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) and Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*). 17 species of mammal have been recorded including the Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). At the eastern edge of Box Wood, within Rough Ground, is a disused chalk pit. Other earthworks within the site add further habitat diversity. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site; woodland indicators.

### 22/047 The Warren (N.E. of Stevenage) TL273277

Ancient semi-natural Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice woodland with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) standards. The understorey supports Hawthorn (*Crategus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and the ground flora contains woodland indicators, mainly Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), with Bramble (*rubus fruticosus agg.*) and Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland with a semi-natural canopy and field evidence suggesting an ancient origin; shown on Bryant 1822): > 1 ha

### 22/049 Coble's Spring and The Bushes TL292255

Woodland divided into three compartments by rides, which partly support species-rich neutral grass. Coble's Spring in the east is an ancient woodland site and is mainly composed of planted Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with some Scots

Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and European Larch (*Larix decidua*). The ground flora supports ancient woodland indicators including Dog's Mercury in the west is divided into a northern section of secondary broadleaf woodland and a southern section of mainly dense scrub with a large clearing. The broadleaved woodland is predominantly secondary Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) with a dense sub-canopy of Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and a ground flora dominated by Dog's Mercury. The grassy ride is the best area and supports herb-rich flora. The wood is used by protected species. Wildlife Site criteria: Part Ancient Woodland (Coble's Spring) with restorable elements of its previous semi-natural character including some semi-natural canopy, shown on Bryant (1822) part old secondary woodland with a semi-natural canopy and varied structure.

### 23/002 Bassus Green Road Verges TL304257

Broad grassy road verges comprising species-rich neutral grassland with damp areas, ditches, old hedges and scrub. The sward supports grassland indicator species including Lady's Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*). The nationally rare Scarlet Malachite beetle (*Malachius aeneus*) has been recorded. Wildlife Site criteria: Grassland indicators: species.

### 23/003 St.Johns Wood and Lords Wood TL10256

Ancient semi-natural Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betula*) woodland with mature Hornbeam coppice and frequent Pedunculate Oak standards. There are also Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) standards and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice along with some Birch (*Betula spp.*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*). The wood also comprises some secondary scrub woodland and areas which have been replanted. The ground flora is diverse, with records for numerous woodland indicators, including several ferns (*Dryopteris spp.*) Violets (*Viola spp.*) and Sedges (*Carex spp.*) Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and Violet Helleborine (*Epipactis purpurata*), an uncommon plant in Hertfordshire. There are numerous records for birds, including Nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), for the Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) and Harvest Mouse (*Micromys minutus*), Historically the site was well known for its diversity of butterfly species. External and internal woodbanks, numerous small ditches and marshy/damp rides and habitat diversity. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site: Woodland indicators: species

### 23/004 Squitmore Spring and Plantation TL307265

Ancient semi-natural Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) woodland with Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice plus some old secondary plantation of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). A green lane cuts through the southern section of the wood. The wood supports a moderately diverse ground flora with woodland indicators such as Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Millet (*Millium effusum*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*). Site with a protected mammal species record. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site: Woodland indicators.

## 30/015 Baron's Grove TL294249

Part ancient semi-natural Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*)/Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) woodland with some Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Mixed plantation to the south. Two small ponds recorded in the north of the wood near the boundary. The northern margin is bordered by a Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) hedge. A ditch and grassy ride mark the southern edge of the ancient woodland area, following a parish boundary. The ground flora in the northern part of the wood is dominated by Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*). Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site; woodland indicators.

## 30/027 Walkern Road Verge TL284227

Road verges on chalk overlain by varying depths of Boulder Clay, which supports a rich mixture of shrubs, herbs and invertebrates reflecting the calcareous nature of the soil. The high calcareous bank below High Wood, along the eastern verge, is part of an ancient line of scrub along an old lynchet. The shrubs on the Boulder Clay here include Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*, Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and Wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*). On the western verge there is a line of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. The flora on the verges near the wood include Wild Marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*), Wild basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), Basil Thyme (*Cinopodium acinos*, Rock rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Small Scabious (*Scabiosa columbaria*) and Large Thyme (*Thymus pulegioides*). To the south the eastern verge become a narrow grass bank with a varied chalk flora including Large Thyme, Wild Marjoram, Greater Knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*), Knapweed Broomrape (*Orobanche elatior*) and other chalk downland species. The adjacent field margins support several species of poppy and cornfield weeds such as Sharp-fruited Corn-Salad (*Valerianella dentata*). The road banks support many calcareous-loving species of snails including the Round-mouthed Snail (*Pomatias elegans*) which here is at the northern edge of the range in the British Isles. Wildlife Site criteria: Grassland Indicators: species-rich hedge and scrub.

## 31/009 Walman's Wood TL306245 see GIS 1997 Layer

Ancient semi-natural Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) woodland with old and more recent Horbeam coppice and a few Pedunculate Oak standards, Larch (*Larix sp.*) and Oak (*Quercus sp.*) plantation in southern part of the wood. The ground flora supports woodland indicators, mainly Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) with some Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood Millet (*Millet effusum*), wood sedges and much Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) Ancient Woodland Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site: woodland indicators.

Data supplied by Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust

# Appendix H - Tibbalds Framework

## 1. DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

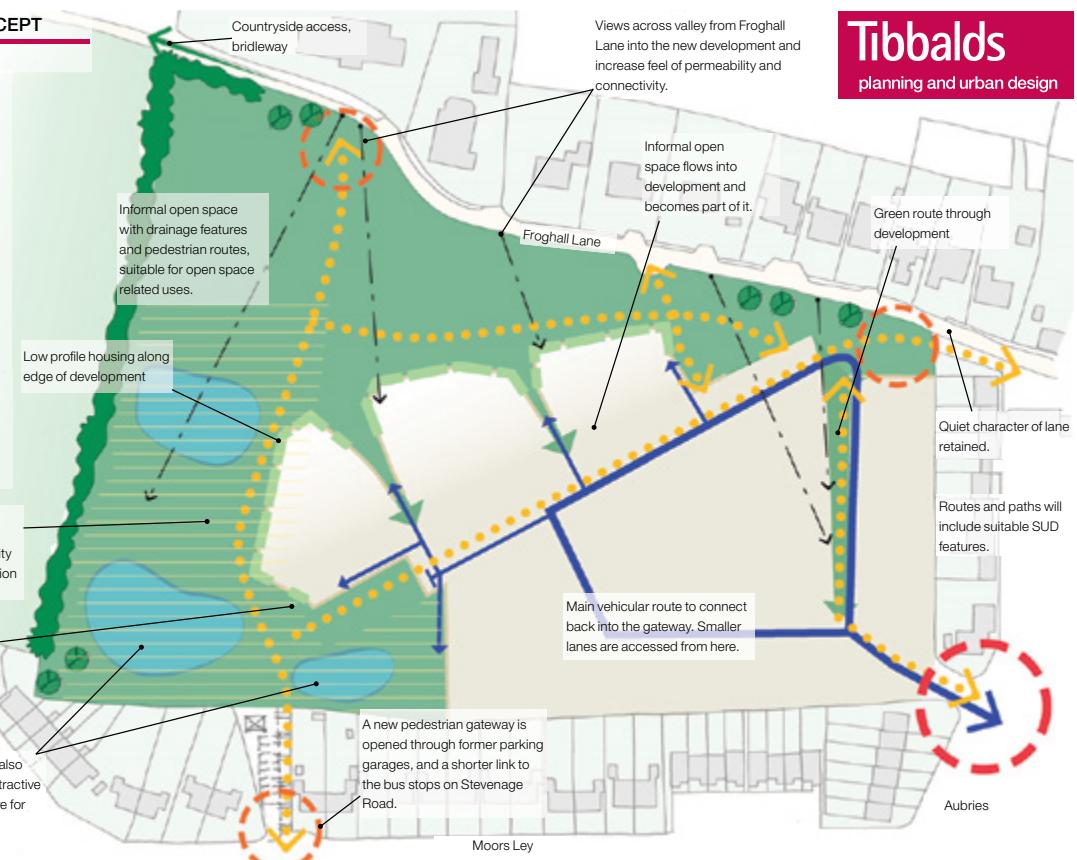
### KEY

- Proposed housing development area
- Pedestrian gateway
- Only vehicular gateway
- Main vehicular route
- Additional lanes
- Views
- Pedestrian routes

Area re-landscaped for positive surface water management, amenity and enhanced biodiversity including new wetlands, attenuation and drainage ponds.

Green pedestrian footways connect the most important gateways of the area and strengthen the connectivity for all residents.

Drainage ponds also functioning as attractive landscape feature for residents.



Froghall Lane, Walkern February 2017

**Tibbalds**

planning and urban design

## 1. DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT (showing flood hazard area)

**Tibbalds**

planning and urban design



## 2. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

**Tibbalds**

planning and urban design



### 3. ILLUSTRATIVE HOUSING DETAIL

**Tibbalds**

planning and urban design

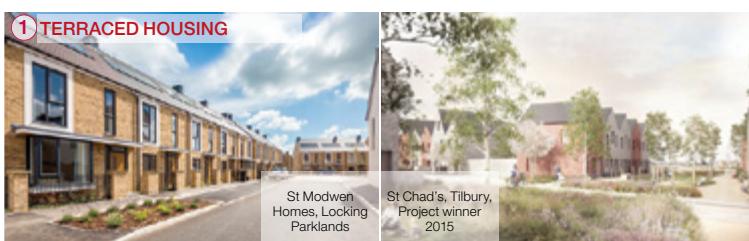


Froghall Lane, Walkern February 2017

### 4. BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

**Tibbalds**

planning and urban design



Both examples show a continuous frontage of terraced housing, which can support the streetscape as well as an open space. The use of different materials in the right picture shows that distinct identities can be created.



Very interesting in this view is the street interface which allows all participants a wide space to use together. Green interventions create identity and limit the movement of traffic. The typologies range from a terraced frontage to semi-detached homes, which creates an environment that is lively and rich in variety.



The detached houses in Officers Field, line the open space efficiently, but also offer glimpses through to the further countryside and adjacent development. Even though they are lined by walls the space is overlooked through the wide windows in their gable design.



Low rise homes with green roofs will sit along the northern and western edge of the development. The detached and semi-detached houses form an informal edge allowing varied building lines and irregular spacing. The adjacent informal green and pedestrian links will be overlooked.

Froghall Lane, Walkern February 2017

# Appendix I - Car Parking Standards

On-street parking in Walkern High Street and in the residential roads of Aubries and Moors Ley causes traffic congestion and issues with access for the emergency services. In Aubries and Moors Ley in particular, where insufficient private parking spaces were provided when the development was built, cars are parked on pavements to avoid blocking the narrow roads. This also creates a safety issue for pedestrians. There are fears that the new housing development on the Land South of Froghall Lane could worsen this already acute problem, if parking standards are insufficient to ensure that residential parking is solely contained with the development site.



High Street



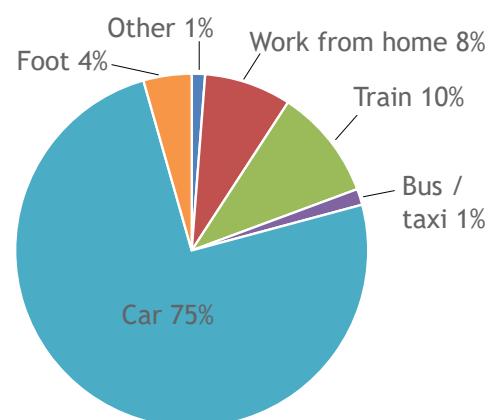
Aubries

The lack of adequate public transport forces villagers to use their own vehicles to travel to work.

## Travel to Work %

This pie chart shows the overwhelmingly large percentage of workers who use their car to get to work. It is likely that those travelling by train also use their car to travel to the train station.

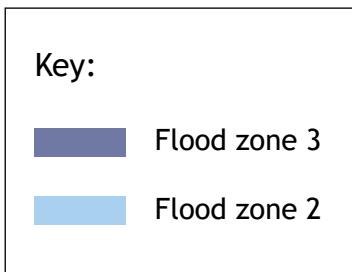
Source: ONS (2011 Census, Quick Statistics, Method of Travel to Work, Walkern Parish)



In the Building and Development section of the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire residents were asked what facilities should be included in new housing developments. 80% of respondents said that all new builds must have parking spaces or garages.

East Herts minimum residential parking standards proposed in the District Plan are 1.5 off-street spaces for a one-bed home. However, car ownership is significantly higher in Walkern (an average of 1.7 cars per household) than in East Herts as a whole (an average of 1.5 cars per household). In addition, recent applications for residential development in East Herts have seen developers arguing that on-street parking spaces should be allowable to satisfy parking standards. This would not be acceptable in Walkern where problems caused by on-street parking are already acute. Therefore, Policy 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan includes a mandatory minimum standard of 2 off-street parking spaces per household.

# Appendix J - Walkern Flood Plain Map



Contains Environment Agency information  
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# Appendix K - List of Background Documents

The following documents, amongst others, have been used in the production of this plan:

Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 The Report by the Independent Examiner Richard High BA MA MRTPI. 8 November 2016
Buntingford (Schools) Position Statement, 20 August 2014
East Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan. Land Use Consultants, March 2011
East Herts District Plan 2011-2033. East Herts District Council 2016
East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007
Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014 - 2031. Great Horwood Parish Council, March 2015
Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. The Hertfordshire Environmental Forum, <a href="http://www.hef.org.uk">www.hef.org.uk</a>
Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping. HERC, 2015
Landscape Character Assessment SPD. East Herts Council, 2007 <a href="http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/spd">www.eastherts.gov.uk/spd</a>
Local Green Space Designation. Open Spaces Society, 2015
Local Green Space Methodology. Bedford Borough Council, 2015
Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note. East Herts Council, December 2014
Neighbourhood Statistics, ONS 2001 and 2011 Census
Planning Practice Guidance. <a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a> , various
Plus... Extensive use of resources produced by Locality <a href="http://mycommunity.org.uk/take-action/neighbourhood-planning/">http://mycommunity.org.uk/take-action/neighbourhood-planning/</a>
Report on Walkern Housing Needs Survey. Community Development Action Hertfordshire, February 2017
River Beane Catchment Management Plan. River Lea Catchment Partnership, <a href="http://www.riverleacatchment.org.uk/index.php/river-beane-home">www.riverleacatchment.org.uk/index.php/river-beane-home</a>
Stevenage to Walkern Multi-use Path Feasibility Reference. Groundwork Hertfordshire, 2009
Thame Neighbourhood Plan. Thame Town Council, Examination Version November 2012
The Localism Act 2011
The National Planning Policy Framework 2012
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Amendment Regulations 2015
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
Updated Parking Standards SPD. East Herts Council, <a href="http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/spd">www.eastherts.gov.uk/spd</a>
Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposal. East Herts Council, December 2016

# Appendix L - Acknowledgements

The Neighbourhood Plan Group would like to thank the following people and organisations for their invaluable help in producing the Neighbourhood Plan:

**Chris Birt** - analysis of village survey data

**Heidi Broady** - Parish Clerk

**Ray Carter** - landowner

**Paul and Anne Collis** - ornithological knowledge in and around Walkern Parish

**David de Boinville** - landowner

**Graphix** - printers

**Hertfordshire Mercury** - printing articles & photographs

**Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust** - wildlife data & mapping data

**John Hill** - historical evidence in and around Walkern Parish

**Gerri Hudson** - photographic evidence of slow worms and newts in and around Froghall site

**Derek Jackson** - historical knowledge of Walkern

**Steve Jenner** - former chair of Walkern Parish Council

**Peter Lincoln** - landowner

**Stephen Lowe** - art materials and loan of display boards

**Ordnance Survey** - mapping data

**Paradigm Housing** - Housing Association

**John Pearson** - detailed collection of moth species within Parish

**Andy Phillips** - geological advice

**Mae Standing** - pledge tree

**John Stinchcombe** - details of trees in Froghall area and around Walkern

**Dan Taylor** - photos

**United Reformed Church** - meeting hall

**Jacqueline Veater (Govresources)** - consultant to Walkern Parish Council and WNPG

**The late Brian Wakeley** - landowner

**James Wakeley** - landowner

**Walkern Action** - enabling communication with the village

**Walkern History Society** - historic information and use of Walkern History Boards

**Walkern Journal** - printing information and communication with the village

**Walkern Parish Council** - notice board availability for communication

**Walkern Stores** - posters and collecting box for questionnaires

**Mrs Robin Warner-Smith** - landowner

**Mr And Mrs Wilson** - landowner

**Chris Windebank** - Logo, Banner and Badges

**Michele Rist** - Photographs

**Dave Standing** - Maps

**Philip Hewitt** - Photographs



[www.walkernneighbourhoodplan.com](http://www.walkernneighbourhoodplan.com)