

Old River Lane

Prime Development Opportunity



Cllr Linda Haysey
Leader of the council



“ We are delighted to bring forward this exciting project to bring new investment into the heart of Bishop’s Stortford. This project and its strategy has the full support of the Council. We look forward to a transformational change to Old River Lane with a development partner who can offer the very best in placemaking, design and innovation. ”



Executive Summary

- Old River Lane is a prime residential and cultural led development opportunity, with the 2.1 hectare site offering potential for transformational change.
- A prominent, highly central town centre site offering an excellent location both within the context of the town centre and wider area, within easy striking distance of the M11, Stansted Airport, London and Cambridge.
- Opportunity to create a new town centre quarter, building on the attractive historical nature of Bishop's Stortford.
- An established and vibrant town centre, providing a strong platform for successful development.
- Principally surface car parking with substantial scope for intensification of uses.
- Very positive population characteristics: a retail catchment extending to 81,000 that is one of the most affluent in the UK and 8.9% vacancy rate for leisure and retail uses in the town centre.
- Substantial population growth forecast for the town and surrounding area.

Our clients are inviting submissions from prospective development partners to assist the Council (East Herts District Council – EHDC) in realising the full potential of this exciting opportunity.





Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) support

Hertfordshire LEP has awarded a £6m grant and £3.6m interest-free loan to East Herts Council for the Old River Lane site.

This funding from the Government's Single Local Growth Fund will be used to support the enabling development at Northgate End as well as to facilitate land assembly for the whole scheme. Hertfordshire LEP is actively supporting the implementation of the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework through their participation at Shaping Stortford. The Old River Lane development fulfils two of the LEPs key priorities, 'Reinvigorating our places for the 21st Century' and 'Creating the foundations for growth' for Bishop's Stortford.



HM Government

Hertfordshire
Local Enterprise Partnership

Introduction

Old River Lane offers a prime development opportunity. East Herts District Council (EHDC) wants to create a new mixed use residential, arts and entertainment quarter generating further investment and activity in the town centre. EHDC is seeking a development partner to realise this vision.

This brochure describes the development opportunity, and provides guidance to prospective development partners in preparing proposals to deliver the Council's objectives.

The Council is already a strong supporter and investor in the town:

- Acquired the Old River Lane site in 2015
 - The Grange Paddocks – £20m council investment in a new leisure centre close to Old River Lane
 - Castle Park - £2m Heritage Lottery improvement programme for the town's largest public park, opposite Old River Lane
 - Convened and leads the 'Shaping Stortford' partnership group, assessing wider improvement opportunities in the town
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The Site

The site benefits from access to the town's inner Link Road and off Bridge Street. To the south lies the town's main shopping centre – Jackson Square, to the west many listed buildings and others of local historic importance, including the United Reformed Church and Coopers historic malt house building, and to the east lies Castle Park – the town centre's main open space.

The 2.1 ha (5.2 acre) Old River Lane development site is largely characterised by Council owned and managed surface parking, together with a number of other buildings present including Charringtons House, United Reformed Church hall and a small number of residential properties. The Council is already progressing plans to develop a new MSCP of 581 spaces, at Northgate End, immediately to the north of Old River Lane, together with 15 residential units and ground floor commercial space. Planning permission has been granted for the Northgate End development effectively unlocking the core development opportunity of Old River Lane.



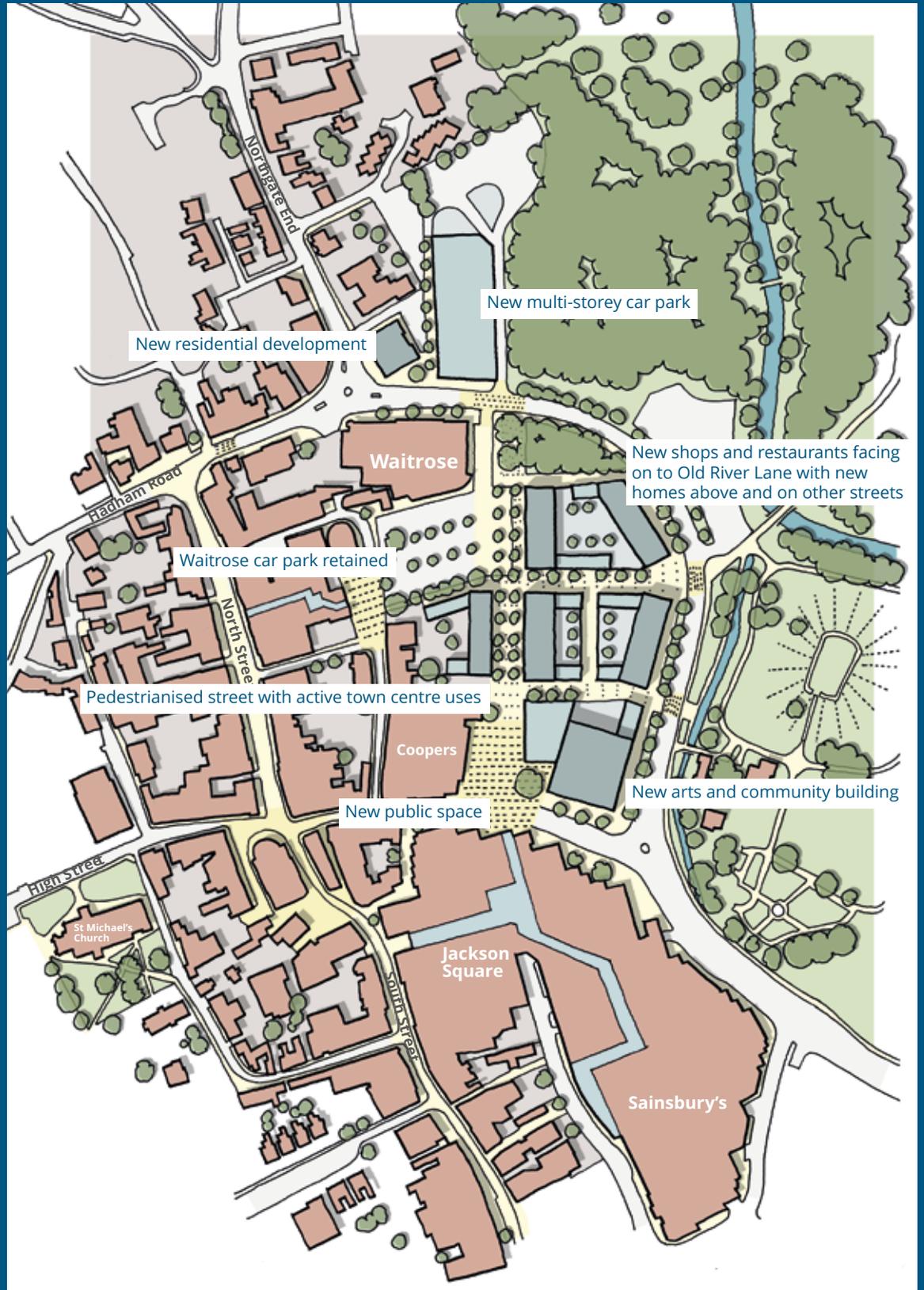


Illustration supplied by Allies and Morrison

Location

Bishop's Stortford lies around 8km west of Stansted Airport and adjacent to the M11, around 50km north of Central London and around 50km south of Cambridge. The town is well connected via both bus and rail services, benefitting from a centrally located train station (15m walk from the site). The M11 provides access to London and links with junction 6 of the M25 and other centres around this orbital motorway.

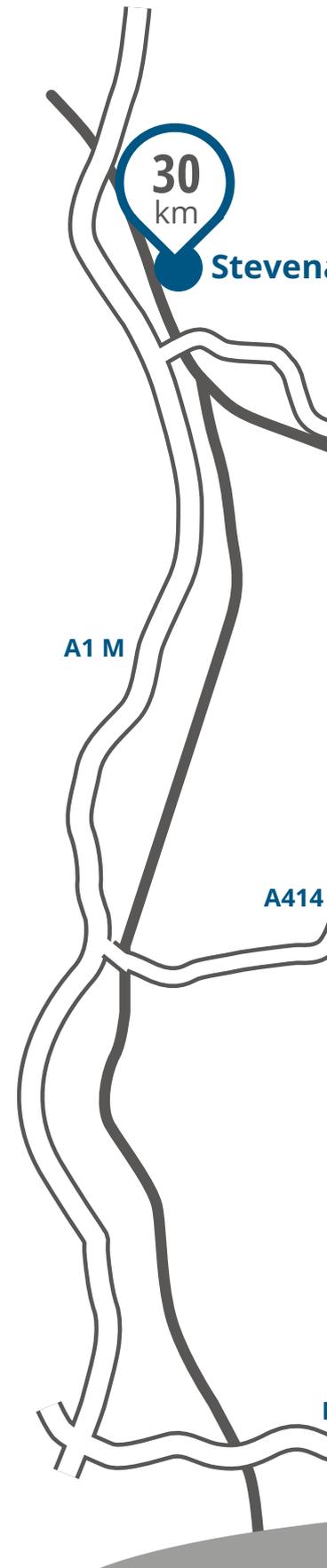
Bishop's Stortford train station provides a direct service to London Stansted Airport, (10 minutes) and London Liverpool Street (40 minutes, 4 trains per hour). It lies within the M11 Cambridge growth corridor, recently named 'the UK's Innovation Corridor'. This makes Bishop's Stortford and Old River Lane a strategic and highly attractive location.

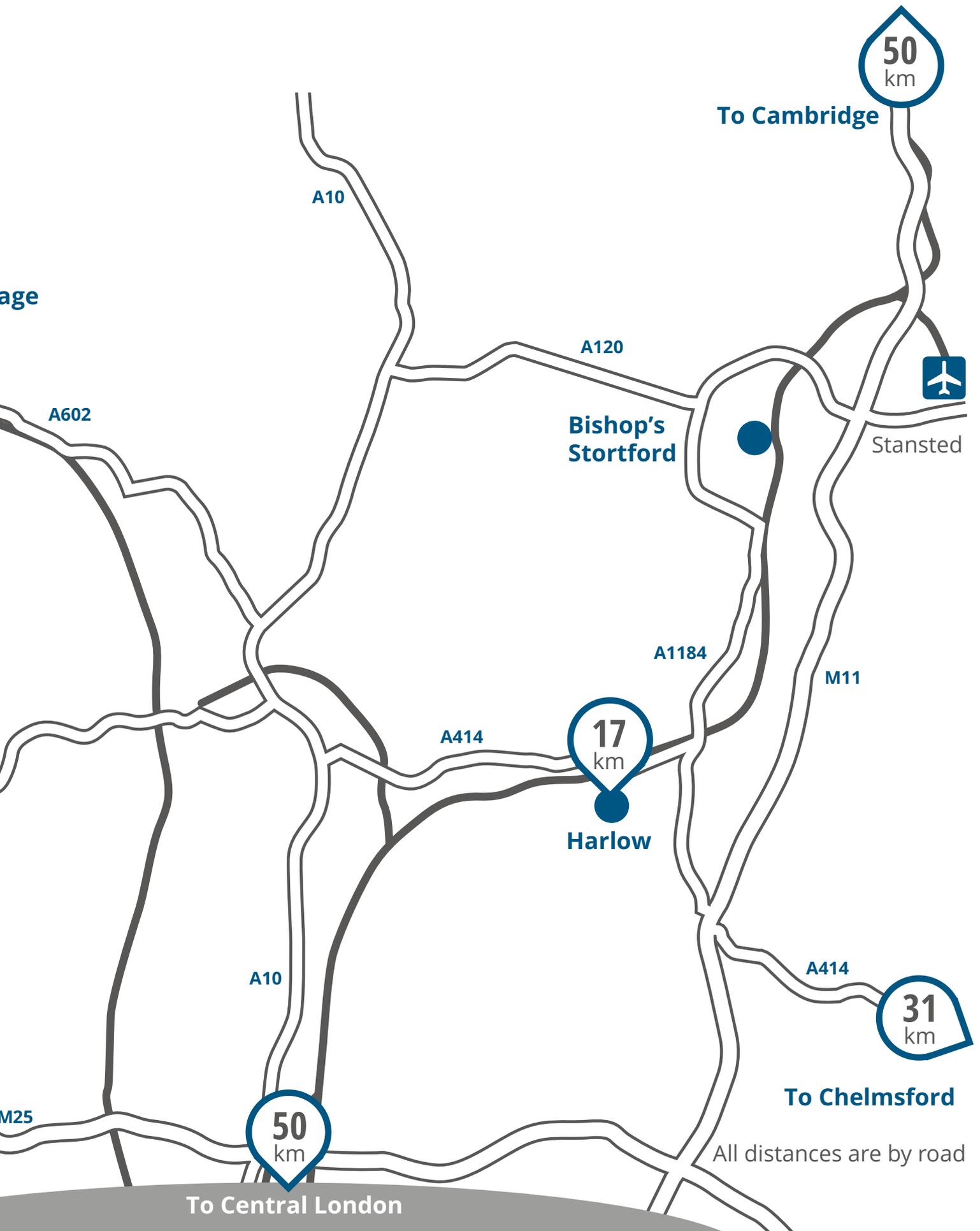
The site lies within a Conservation Area, and a number of listed buildings sit at the edge of the site creating the opportunity for excellent place making features. The town centre is home to many well-known high street retailers such as Boots, Next, Fat Face and H&M, as well as a strong representation of independents.

Businesses in the town centre voted in July 2018 to set up a Business Improvement District (BID), focusing on marketing the town brand and improving access to the centre. The businesses that might end up being located on the Old River Lane site will therefore be within the BID boundary.

Bishop's Stortford however offers more than just retail. Over twenty life/bio science and other companies have chosen to set up their headquarters, laboratories or offices in and around Bishop's Stortford. These include companies such as FisherBioServices UK (part of Thermo Fisher Scientific), Medisafe International, CPL Aromas Ltd, Diageo and Gü Puds.

Bishop's Stortford also has a wide range of small/medium-sized light manufacturing and distribution companies located on industrial estates near the M11. Some of these benefit from being part of the airport supply chain but many are also independent of the airport and support the wider regional and sub-regional economy.







Water Lane
Bar & Restaurant

11

PESTEI

Demographics

Bishop's Stortford has a population of 38,000 people and it is the largest town in East Hertfordshire¹. An attractive historic market town, surrounded by Green Belt, Bishop's Stortford is popular with families and commuters seeking a high quality of life. The town has experienced rapid population growth in the last thirty years and is expected to reach 50,000 by 2031. This has been due to its proximity to both Stansted Airport and London². As a result, Stortford is strategically important to East Hertfordshire: according to Halcrow Consultants (2013), Bishop's Stortford is the only town in the District with a regional – not just a local – purpose³. Therefore, its potential for economic and housing growth is significant⁴.

Over half of the population (51.8%) were either under 15 or over 50 in 2011⁵. The town (and East Hertfordshire generally) struggles to retain 25-35 year-olds, who tend to leave the area to live and work in a more lively place (such as London), before returning in their late 30s⁶. Some 22.7% of Bishop's Stortford's population was aged 16-34 in 2011, compared with 30.9% aged 35-49⁷. The distribution of residents by age is similar in Bishop's Stortford to East Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire, and neighbouring Uttlesford.

1 2011 Census, usual resident population

2 Bishop's Stortford Town Council, Bishop's Stortford Town Council Neighbourhood Plan for Silverleys and Meads Wards 2014-2031, p4

3 East Herts Employment Land Review Update 2013 Part 1, p.2

4 Ibid, p.6

5 2011 Census, household composition by age by sex

6 East Herts Council (2015 draft) Economic Development Strategy: Evidence Pack, p.3

7 2011 Census, household composition by age by sex



Landownership

The vast majority of the site is owned by EHDC. Details of land ownership can be found on the Council's dedicated web page: www.eastherts.gov.uk/ORLprocurement.

ORL

Freehold East Herts District Council

Leasehold Waitrose & Assured Short Tenancies and Tenancies within Charringtons.
Green triangle owned by Bishop's Stortford Town Council

Waitrose Car park

Freehold East Herts District Council

Leasehold Waitrose Ltd

URC

Freehold United Reformed Church Trust

Leasehold MW East Anglia Limited

The Lemon Tree

Freehold Paul Fishpool

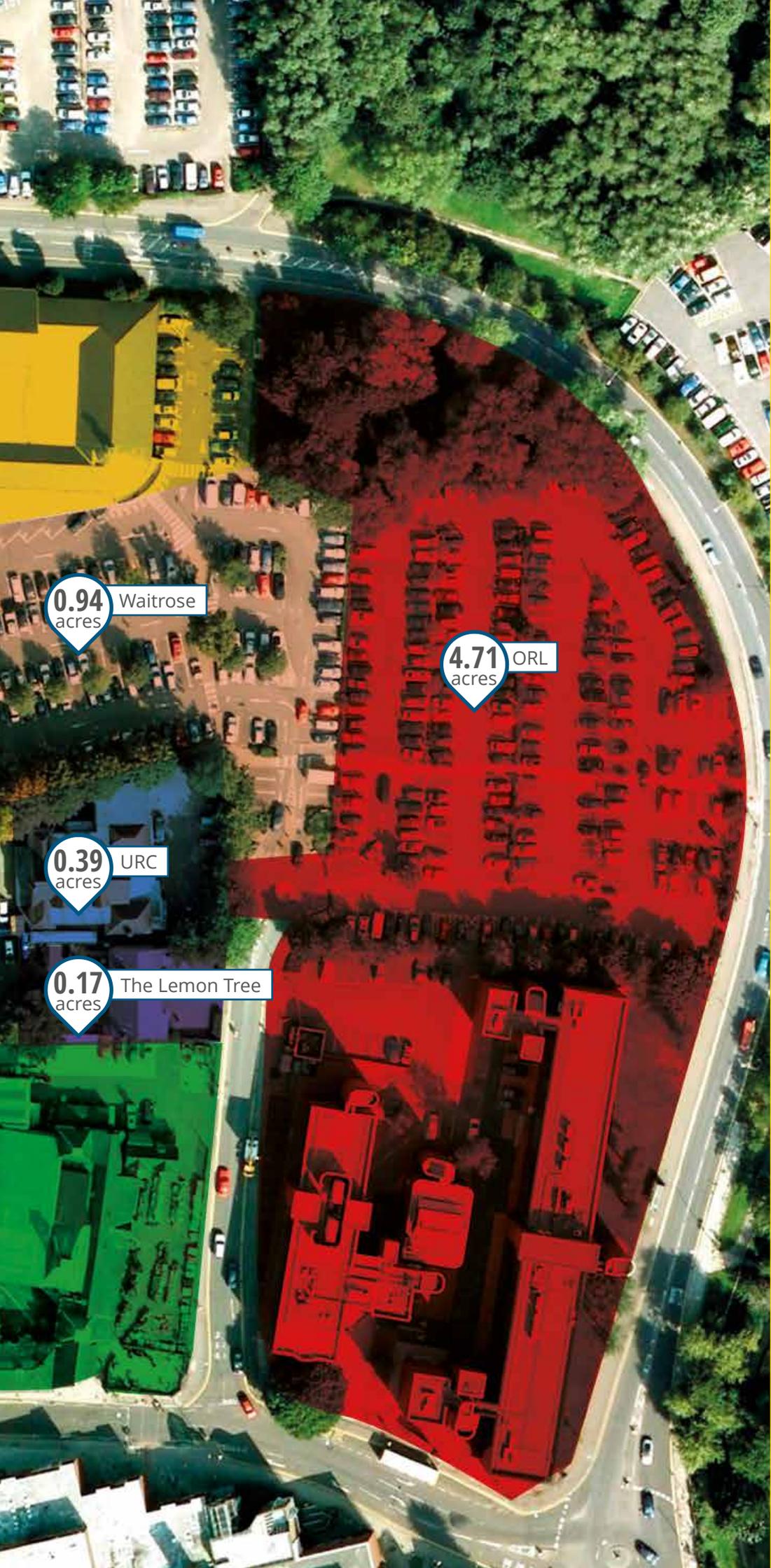
Leasehold The Lemon Tree

Connected sites

Waitrose and Coopers of Stortford

The Council is in negotiations to acquire Hertfordshire County Council land at Northgate End, together with several small plots in the ownership of Bishop's Stortford Town Council and the United Reformed Church Hall.





0.94 acres Waitrose

4.71 acres ORL

0.39 acres URC

0.17 acres The Lemon Tree



Vision for Old River Lane

The vision for Old River Lane is for a high quality mixed use scheme of exceptional design that contributes to the vibrancy of Bishop's Stortford, creates a new town centre destination and complements the uniqueness of this historic market town. The vision is consistent with the priorities of the Corporate Strategic Plan 2016-2020:

Priority 1

Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

Priority 2

Enhance the quality of people's lives

Priority 3

Enable a flourishing local economy



Objectives

1. Support and develop the town centre economy by delivering a new destination with a mix of uses at Old River Lane including an arts and entertainment centre, residential, retail and leisure uses that drives transformational change in Bishop's Stortford and brings added vitality to the town.
2. Achieve a high quality, innovative and future proofed residential and cultural led mixed-use scheme that achieves excellence in urban design and public art and creating a long term positive legacy for Bishop's Stortford.
3. Deliver an arts and entertainment centre of iconic design which promotes town centre cultural activities, including a cinema, library, café and workspace, creating activity throughout the day and evening, which acts as an anchor to the scheme.
4. Deliver high quality public realm, including a new town square.
5. Deliver a scheme which prioritises people rather than cars by confining vehicles to the peripheral areas of the scheme and by delivering a new Multi Storey Car Park at Northgate End.
6. Improve the connectivity to Castle Park, opening up attractive routes to this high quality green space on the edge of the town centre.
7. Create a scheme which successfully integrates with its surrounds and is in keeping with the town's existing scale and massing, reflecting the varied roofscape, fabric and features of the town, to respect the conservation area status and nearby historic buildings.
8. Deliver transformational change as quickly as reasonably possible and enable the Council to control and steer the nature of the development through the appropriate governance structure.
9. Deliver a financially sustainable scheme that provides value for money for the Council.

Planning and Placemaking

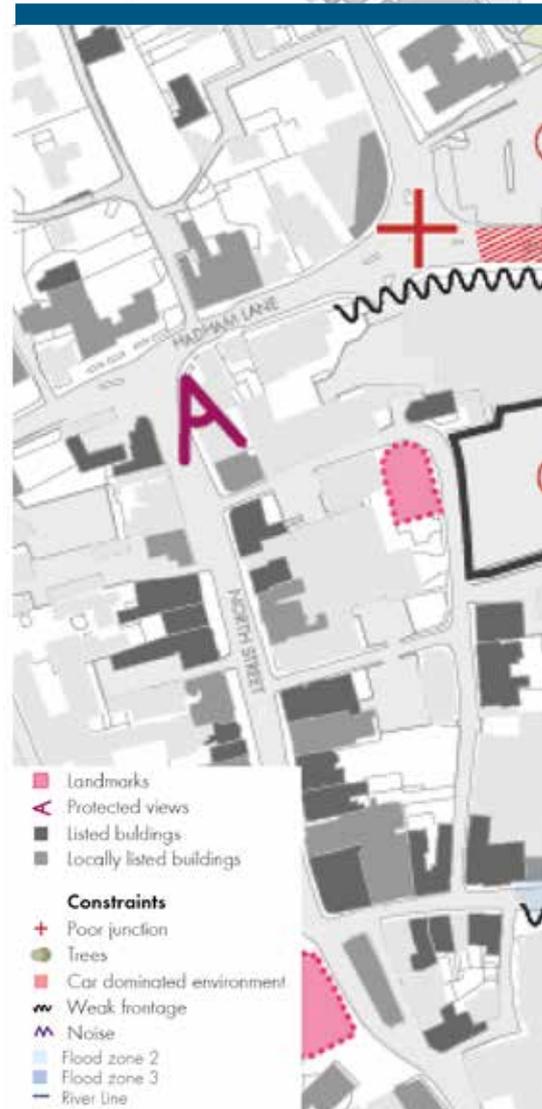
The Council prepared a Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework in January 2017 (available at <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/evidencebase>) which will guide future development in the town centre and provide a comprehensive approach to managing the impact and potential of growth in the town centre. The Framework sets out a number of strategies to increase the floorspace of the retail core of the town, and to address issues associated with parking, pedestrian accessibility, traffic calming, and traffic flows.

Local Plan Policy BISH 2 and BISH 8 will apply in the case of the ORL development to ensure that the aims of the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework can be met.

Development proposals in Bishop's Stortford Town Centre will be expected to take account of, and positively contribute to, proposals contained within the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework, as appropriate.

Following the completion of the town centre planning framework Allies & Morrison were commissioned to undertake an options appraisal on the broader Old River Lane site, including the Northgate End area, to support a decision on preferred land uses for the site. EHDC endorsed the land use proposals for Old River Lane in December 2017 and the proposed delivery model for the scheme in July 2018.

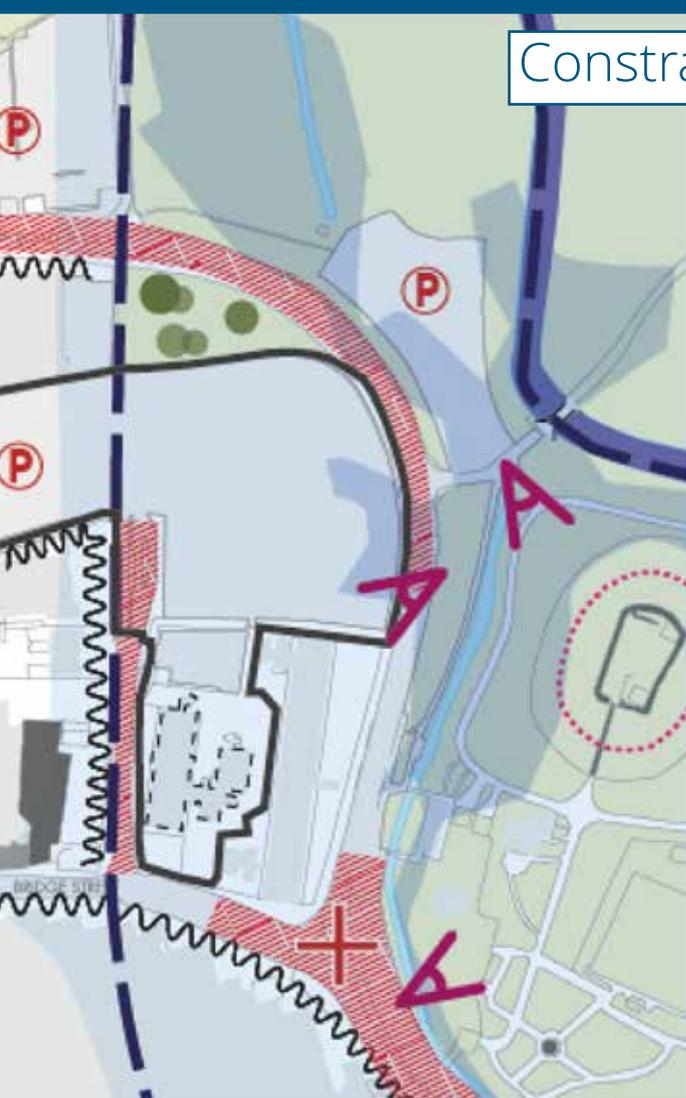
Any proposals for Old River Lane will need also to be treated sensitively having regard to neighbouring listed buildings, connections to the centre, views of key town centre landmarks as well as the historic monument to the east, at Castle Park. These attributes offer further opportunities to strengthen the placemaking characteristics of the site, supported by excellent design quality.



Opportunities



Constraints



The Developer's Role

The Council is seeking to enter into a regeneration partnership. It is envisaged that the scheme will be delivered in phases so as to manage the need for available car parking throughout the development process. The Council is anticipating granting a long leasehold across the majority of the core Old River Lane site on completion of the scheme. It is expected that the Development Partner's role will include, but not be limited to:

- Creating an ambitious, comprehensive masterplan for the overall development and subsequently the detailed designs to deliver the various components.
- Creating a comprehensive project team to meet the objectives of the development opportunity and to work closely with the Council's project team.
- Securing the necessary funding to deliver the development opportunity in a timely development programme.
- Achieving planning permission and any other necessary consents.
- Designing and delivering schemes that are viable, fundable and commercially deliverable.
- Undertaking all necessary and appropriate communication and consultation, with relevant stakeholders.
- Undertaking the branding, promotion and marketing of the opportunity and finding and securing occupiers.

The above is not an exhaustive list and is likely to evolve over the dialogue stage.



The background of the page is a photograph of a construction site at sunset. The sky is a warm, orange glow. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of construction workers are visible against the bright sky. One worker in the center is pointing upwards. To the left, another worker stands near some vertical rebar. The bottom of the image shows the skeletal structure of a building under construction, with scaffolding and concrete forms. The overall mood is one of active development and progress.

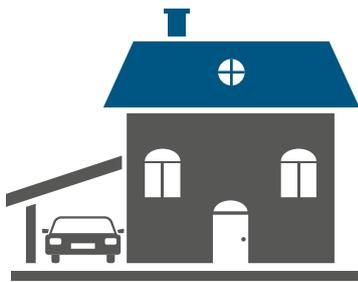
Governance

The Council has established a Delivery Board, including the Leader, Deputy Leader, the Chief Executive and Project Manager. This board will provide oversight and guidance on the delivery of the overall scheme for Old River Lane. In addition to the Council's Delivery Board, the developer will be expected to work with other partners and stakeholders in shaping the future of Old River Lane.

Potential Development Uses

The Arts and Entertainment Centre will be an iconic building and provide an anchor to the development. It will be home to a number of uses, including a new auditorium and 3-4 small cinema screens as well as potentially a library, café / restaurant, meeting space. The Council is working on the specification for this venue in partnership with the existing small arts centre (Rhodes Arts Centre) whose business will transfer to the new arts and entertainment centre. Significant public engagement has been carried out on this part of the scheme.

Old River Lane offers scope for a range of other supporting, new development uses.



Residential

A key development component of any proposal. While there is an expectation that the site will be suited to private residential sales, the Council recognises that there may be other forms of housing that could contribute to the scheme mix, such as Private Rental, Senior Living and Extra Care – as well of course policy compliant levels of affordable housing.



Leisure

A cinema will form part of the development within the new arts and entertainment centre. Other innovative leisure uses might also form part of the development mix, so as to appeal to a broad audience and generate increased day and evening activity.

Financial Considerations

The Council currently enjoys a significant income from the car parks, Charringtons House and other assets in its ownership within ORL. While its primary intention is to secure a capital receipt, it may also be willing to invest in the new scheme, were this appropriate, in order to secure an income

stream for EHDC. The Council will fund the development of the entertainment and arts centre. While there is a clear goal to deliver a high quality scheme, it is recognised that there will need to be a balance between this goal and the financial return the Council will accept for its land.



Restaurants / Cafes / Bars

Anticipated to form an integral part of a modern arts and entertainment development mix for Old River Lane.



Retail (A1 uses)

Expected to support the vision for Old River Lane. Anticipated that retail tenants will be secured which add a clear distinctiveness to the destination, potentially including a range of independent traders.

Other uses may too contribute to the rejuvenation of Old River Lane in order to create a truly vibrant, active and exciting new destination.

The scale of development should reflect the size of the opportunity available: crucially the Council's ambition is to secure an arts and entertainment offer set within a very high quality public realm – all of which will firmly place Bishop's Stortford on the map.

Marketing and Developer Selection Process

To support the marketing process, the Council has set up a dedicated web page at www.eastherts.gov.uk/ORLprocurement. This contains supporting information about the site and instructions for the bidding process. The Council will use the Competitive Dialogue process following the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) – comprising an initial Selection Questionnaire followed by shortlisted parties entering a period of dialogue before submission of final proposals. Developers interested to view the procurement documents and/or bid must register with the tendering system used by the Council <http://www.supplyhertfordshire.uk/>

EHDC is committed to working to an effective procurement programme, details of which can be found below:



Selection stage

26 July 2018 - Mid September 2018

26 July 2018	10 August	21 August	12 noon 28 August	Mid September
Issue OJEU Contract Notice	Deadline for bidders to ask clarifications on SQ	Clarifications issued to bidders	Selection Stage Submission Date	Shortlisting Recommendation



Dialogue

September 2018





Dialogue stage

to December 2018

stage
3

Final Tender & Evaluation Stage

January to February 2019

January 2019

Tender
Submission Date

February 2019

Interviews /
Presentations

March 2019

Evaluation &
Recommendation
of Preferred
Bidder

stage
4

Finalisation of Contract Documents

April to June 2019

Further Information

If you have any questions about this opportunity, please contact the Council's advisors, Montagu Evans LLP:

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