

Executive Summary	7
Chapter 1 Background and Approach	10
1.1 Introduction	10
1.2 District Plan	11
1.3 Progress So Far	12
1.4 Scope	14
1.5 Planning Policy and the Planning System	16
1.6 Localism and Neighbourhood Planning	17
1.7 A Stepped Approach	18
1.8 Consultation	20
1.9 Refining the Approach	26
1.10 Delivery	32
1.11 Infrastructure Planning	33
1.12 Sustainability Appraisal	34
Chapter 2 Issues	42
2.1 Introduction	42
2.2 Housing	43
2.3 Economy	53
2.4 Education	60
2.5 Transport	64
2.6 Water	73
2.7 Telecoms, Gas and Electricity	80
2.8 Natural and Historic Environment	82
2.9 Green Belt	89
2.10 Community and Leisure	92
2.11 Natural Resources	99
2.12 Environmental Quality	102
2.13 Conclusion and Next Steps	107

Chapter 3 Assessment Criteria	110
3.1 Introduction	110
3.2 Land Availability	111
3.3 Employment Potential	113
3.4 Primary Schools	116
3.5 Secondary Schools (including Middle and Upper Schools)	118
3.6 Highways Infrastructure	120
3.7 Vehicular Access	122
3.8 Access to Bus Services	124
3.9 Access to Rail Services	126
3.10 Waste Water Impact	130
3.11 Flood Risk	131
3.12 Designated Wildlife Sites	133
3.13 Historic Assets	136
3.14 Landscape Character	138
3.15 Green Belt	141
3.16 Strategic Gaps	142
3.17 Boundary Limits	144
3.18 Community Facilities	146
3.19 Minerals and Waste	148
3.20 Agricultural Land Classification	149
3.21 Environmental Stewardship	151
3.22 Noise Impacts	152

Chapter 4 Places	156
4.1 Introduction	156
4.2 Areas of Search	157
4.3 Sieves 1 and 2	167
4.4 Bishop's Stortford	170
4.4.1 Areas of Search	170
4.4.2 Bishop's Stortford Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 1)	172
4.4.3 Bishop's Stortford North (Sieve 1: Area 2)	176
4.4.4 Bishop's Stortford East (Sieve 1: Area 3)	181
4.4.5 Bishop's Stortford South (Sieve 1: Area 4)	186
4.4.6 Bishop's Stortford: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	190
4.5 Buntingford	198
4.5.1 Areas of Search	198
4.5.2 Buntingford Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 5)	200
4.5.3 Buntingford South and West (Sieve 1: Area 6)	203
4.5.4 Buntingford North (Sieve 1: Area 7)	209
4.5.5 Buntingford North-East (Sieve 1: Area 8)	212
4.5.6 Buntingford East (Sieve 1: Area 9)	216
4.5.7 Buntingford: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	219
4.6 Hertford	227
4.6.1 Areas of Search	227
4.6.2 Hertford Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 10)	229
4.6.3 Hertford West (Sieve 1: Area 11)	232
4.6.4 Hertford North (Sieve 1: Area 12)	237
4.6.5 Hertford South (Sieve 1: Area 13)	243
4.6.6 Hertford: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	252
4.7 Sawbridgeworth	261
4.7.1 Areas of Search	261
4.7.2 Sawbridgeworth Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 14)	263
4.7.3 Sawbridgeworth South-West (Sieve 1: Area 15)	266
4.7.4 Sawbridgeworth West (Sieve 1: Area 16)	270
4.7.5 Sawbridgeworth North (Sieve 1: Area 17)	277
4.7.6 Sawbridgeworth: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	284
4.8 Ware	291
4.8.1 Areas of Search	291
4.8.2 Ware Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 18)	292

Contents

4.8.3 Ware North (Sieve 1: Area 19)	295
4.8.4 Ware East (Sieve 1: Area 20)	301
4.8.5 Ware South-East (Sieve 1: Area 21)	305
4.8.6 Ware South-West (Sieve 1: Area 22)	309
4.8.7 Ware: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	312
4.9 Villages	323
4.9.1 Areas of Search	323
4.9.2 Aston (Sieve 1: Area 23)	324
4.9.3 Bayford (Sieve 1: Area 24)	326
4.9.4 Benington (Sieve 1: Area 25)	328
4.9.5 Birch Green (Sieve 1: Area 26)	330
4.9.6 Braughing (Sieve 1: Area 27)	332
4.9.7 Brickendon (Sieve 1: Area 28)	334
4.9.8 Buckland (Sieve 1: Area 29)	336
4.9.9 Cole Green (Sieve 1: Area 30)	338
4.9.10 Colliers End (Sieve 1: Area 31)	340
4.9.11 Cottered (Sieve 1: Area 32)	342
4.9.12 Dane End (Sieve 1: Area 33)	344
4.9.13 Datchworth (Sieve 1: Area 34)	346
4.9.14 Furneux Pelham (Sieve 1: Area 35)	348
4.9.15 Great Amwell (Sieve 1: Area 36)	350
4.9.16 Hadham Ford (Sieve 1: Area 37)	352
4.9.17 Hertford Heath (Sieve 1: Area 38)	355
4.9.18 Hertingfordbury (Sieve 1: Area 39)	357
4.9.19 High Cross (Sieve 1: Area 40)	359
4.9.20 High Wych (Sieve 1: Area 41)	361
4.9.21 Hunsdon (Sieve 1: Area 42)	364
4.9.22 Letty Green (Sieve 1: Area 43)	366
4.9.23 Little Hadham (Sieve 1: Area 44)	369
4.9.24 Much Hadham (Sieve 1: Area 45)	371
4.9.25 Puckeridge (Sieve 1: Area 46)	373
4.9.26 Spellbrook (Sieve 1: Area 47)	375
4.9.27 Standon (Sieve 1: Area 48)	378
4.9.28 Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets (Sieve 1: Area 49)	380
4.9.29 Stapleford (Sieve 1: Area 50)	382
4.9.30 Tewin (Sieve 1: Area 51)	385
4.9.31 Thundridge (Sieve 1: Area 52)	386
4.9.32 Tonwell (Sieve 1: Area 53)	388

4.9.33 Wadesmill (Sieve 1: Area 54)	390
4.9.34 Walkern (Sieve 1: Area 55)	392
4.9.35 Waterford (Sieve 1: Area 56)	394
4.9.36 Watton-at-Stone (Sieve 1: Area 57)	396
4.9.37 Westmill (Sieve 1: Area 58)	398
4.9.38 Widford (Sieve 1: Area 59)	400
4.9.39 Villages: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	403
4.10 Stevenage	414
4.10.1 Areas of Search	414
4.10.2 East of Stevenage (Sieve 1: Area 60)	415
4.10.3 Stevenage: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	417
4.11 Welwyn Garden City	426
4.11.1 Areas of Search	426
4.11.2 East of Welwyn Garden City (Sieve 1: Area 61)	427
4.11.3 Welwyn Garden City: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	429
4.12 Harlow	435
4.12.1 Areas of Search	435
4.12.2 North of Harlow (Sieve 1: Area 62)	436
4.12.3 Harlow: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	443
4.13 Hoddesdon	454
4.13.1 Areas of Search	454
4.13.2 North of Hoddesdon (Sieve 1: Area 63)	455
4.13.3 Hoddesdon: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	456
4.14 New Settlements	458
4.14.1 Areas of Search	458
4.14.2 A10 Corridor - North (Sieve 1: Area 64)	459
4.14.3 A10 Corridor - Central (Sieve 1: Area 65)	461
4.14.4 A120 Corridor (Sieve 1: Area 66)	464
4.14.5 A507 Corridor (Sieve 1: Area 67)	466
4.14.6 A602 Corridor (Sieve 1: Area 68)	467
4.14.7 Hunsdon Area (Sieve 1: Area 69)	469
4.14.8 New Settlements: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)	472
Chapter 5 Scenarios	480
Chapter 6 Strategy	482

Chapter 7 Policy	484
Appendix A: Topic Assessments	485
Appendix B: Key Documents and Feedback	487
Bishop's Stortford	487
Buntingford	517
Hertford	518
Sawbridgeworth	519
Ware	520
Villages	520
Stevenage	520
Welwyn Garden City	520
Harlow	521
Hoddesdon	521
New Settlements	521

Chapter 4

Places

Chapter 4 Places

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1** This chapter aims to identify the strategic planning considerations arising from assessment and evaluation of a wide range of alternative options for development across East Herts district. Given the large number of settlements in East Herts District, this requires a substantial volume of assessment. The volume of work is proportionate to the ambitious scope of the District Plan requirement to deliver objectively assessed development needs on this scale. It also forms an important part of the audit trail necessary to demonstrate that the strategy has been prepared through a rigorous process of assessment rather than any other agenda.
- 4.1.2** Readers will recall that *Chapter 4: Places* is part of a process of plan-making, and should not be read out of context as an end-result or a statement of Council policy. At this stage there remains a lot of assessment work still to complete before an emerging strategy can be articulated. When the process is finally complete, it is anticipated that the Council's preferred strategy document itself will be a succinct statement of the main policy requirements.
- 4.1.3** Planning is about place-making, not just about delivering development sites. A place is a physical environment, but also the location of human, social and economic activity. Human activity involves movement for different purposes and using different modes of transport, and therefore place-making must assess the wider effects of development options.
- 4.1.4** One of the key measures of successful planning is how well a new development is integrated into the existing context. Therefore this chapter aims to relate specific assessment areas to existing settlements. This concern is reflected in the way the chapter is structured around particular settlements, each section divided into a first part looking at possible development areas, and a second part relating this to the wider area. Through the strategy selection process a vision of change for particular places should emerge as a key outcome.
- 4.1.5** A clear strategic planning vision will set development sites within their wider context, and will facilitate shared understanding of what change is to happen, and how it will happen. Change will occur not just at a given development site in isolation but also at other locations, for example in the provision of new transport infrastructure, schools, and enhanced provision of facilities and employment in an existing town centre or elsewhere. A strategic vision will set the broad parameters but will not be prescriptive about detail. Above all, it will seek to deliver a high quality of life for future populations, which is a central objective of the planning system. *Chapter*

4: *Places* does not in itself indicate which settlements may require a strategic planning vision. Assessment of the emerging vision for growth areas will be undertaken later in the strategy selection process.

4.2 Areas of Search

- 4.2.1** It is important to have an initial sense of the possible extent of development in order to understand what the impacts are likely to be, for example in relation to whether a wildlife site or a flood risk area is likely to fall inside or outside the potential development area.
- 4.2.2** Areas of search are shown as an ellipse in order to avoid the impression of false precision in respect of their extent. It will only become clear whether a particular area of search is considered suitable for any development at all once a considerable amount of further work has been undertaken.
- 4.2.3** The location and extent of areas of search are based on a number of factors as follows:
- They cover all the options set out in the Issues and Options consultation document, with some modifications as explained in Section 1.10;
 - They are based on reasonable initial assumptions about scale which can be refined as work progresses;
 - Where possible they are defined with reference to clear physical features such as roads.
- 4.2.4** Before assessment can begin, it is necessary to establish the broad locations which should be identified as areas of search and which should be excluded from further consideration. The rest of this section explains how the areas of search for assessment have been decided, and then explains how initial scale assumptions have been derived.

Identifying New Settlement Areas of Search

- 4.2.5** As explained in Section 1.9: Refining the Approach, one of the issues raised by the Issues and Options consultation was the need to consider options for a new settlement in the district. East Herts District is characterised by extensive areas of open farmland and therefore, from a glance at a map of Hertfordshire, it appears plausible that a new settlement could be accommodated.

- 4.2.6** 5,000 dwellings has been suggested as the minimum necessary scale of new settlement in order to provide a good range of supporting infrastructure and to reduce the need to travel. This conclusion is supported by the initial findings of the Strategic Overviews, which emphasize that cost-effective infrastructure provision relies on economies of scale.
- 4.2.7** In order to test the options for a new settlement, the district has been divided into 14 areas of search, each of which would have sufficient land to accommodate a new settlement of 5,000 dwellings. These are shown below:

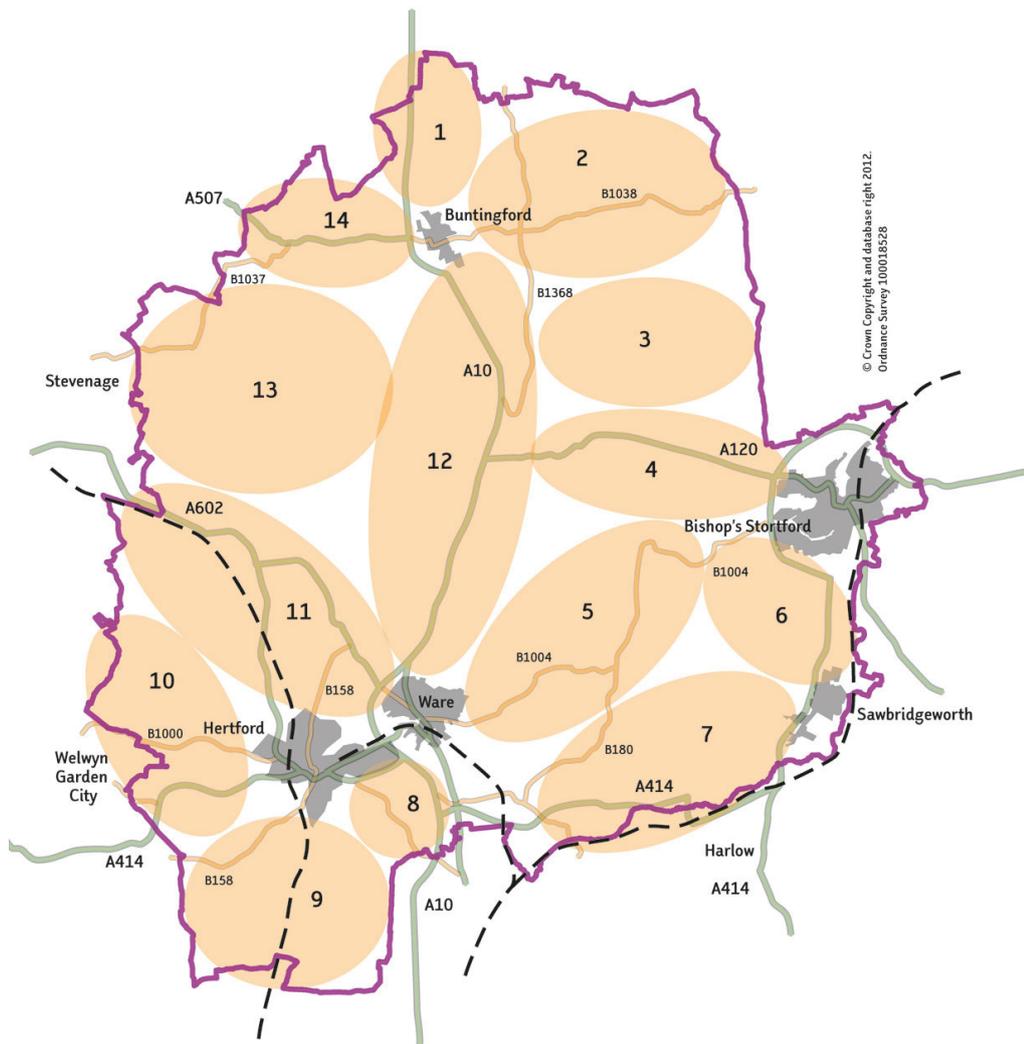


Figure 4.1 Indicative New Settlement Areas of Search

- 4.2.8** However, it is not considered necessary to assess all fourteen areas in detail because several of them are clearly unsuitable. It is possible to reduce the list of areas for further assessment using a criteria-based approach.

4.2.9 The aim of the exercise is to identify areas which might be suitable for further consideration through the next steps in the policy process. Therefore any criteria must be very high-level, to avoid dismissing options which could merit further investigation. Criteria should sit at a higher level than those used in *Step 3: Assessment Criteria*. New settlement options which pass this initial screening will be taken forward to be further examined. The following high-level assessment criteria have been developed for this exercise:

Criterion A: Transport Infrastructure

4.2.10 New roads and railways are very expensive to provide, and unless there is good existing infrastructure which could be upgraded it is unlikely that even a new settlement of 5,000 dwellings would be able to fund the provision of such infrastructure. Traffic light ratings will be applied as follows:

Red	Areas with neither rail nor primary route ('A' road) potential.
Amber	Areas with rail links but poor road infrastructure, or no rail links but potential connection to a primary route.
Green	Areas with primary routes ('A' roads) and rail links.

Criterion B: Settlement Networks

4.2.11 If a new settlement is to function effectively as part of the sub-regional economy it must have potential to form good links with a network of other towns. Traffic light ratings will be applied as follows:

Red	Areas with poor potential connections to settlement networks.
Amber	Areas which could be a 'satellite settlement' to one town.
Green	Areas with good potential connections to settlement networks.

Criterion C: Coalescence risks

4.2.12 This relates to coalescence risks between urban areas i.e. towns. The possibility of coalescence with villages has not been assessed at this stage. Given the dense network of villages across England, Garden Cities, New Towns and other new settlements have usually encompassed existing villages, for example Old Stevenage and Old Harlow. It is therefore not considered reasonable to screen out a new settlement option on these grounds at this stage. Traffic light ratings will be applied as follows:

Red	Areas likely to result in coalescence.
Amber	Areas where a strategic gap could be rather narrow.
Green	Areas unlikely to result in coalescence.

4.2.13 Any option with one or more 'red' ratings will not be taken forward for further consideration.

No.	New Settlement Screening - Comments	Rating
1.	A. Located on A10 primary route. No railway.	Amber
	B. Between London/Cambridge (Buntingford/Royston).	Green
	C. Narrow gap with Buntingford.	Amber
2.	A. 'B' roads only. No railway.	Red
	B. Poorly related to existing settlement network.	Red
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green
3.	A. No primary routes. No railway.	Red
	B. Poorly related to existing settlement network.	Red
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green
4.	A. Located on A120 primary route.	Green
	B. Satellite to Bishop's Stortford.	Amber
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green
5.	A. B1004 too small to serve a new settlement. No railway.	Red
	B. Between Ware and Bishop's Stortford.	Green
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green
6.	A. A1184 primary route. No railway.	Amber
	B. Between Harlow and Bishop's Stortford.	Green
	C. Between Sawbridgeworth and Bishop's Stortford.	Red
7.	A. A414. Harlow Mill and Harlow Town stations.	Green
	B. Satellite to Harlow.	Amber

No.	New Settlement Screening - Comments	Rating
	C. Need a big gap with Sawbridgeworth.	Amber
8.	A. A10. No railway.	Amber
	B. A10 corridor settlements.	Green
	C. Coalescence with Hoddesdon.	Red
9.	A. Minor roads – country lanes. Bayford station.	Amber
	B. Poorly related to existing settlement network.	Red
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green
10.	A. A414 primary route runs through southern part of area. No railway.	Amber
	B. Related to Welwyn G.C.	Amber
	C. Coalescence between Welwyn G.C and Hertford.	Red
11.	A. A602 primary route. Watton-at-Stone station.	Green
	B. Between Hertford/Ware and Stevenage.	Green
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green
12.	A. Located on A10 primary route. No railway.	Amber
	B. Between London and Cambridge.	Green
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green
13.	A. No primary routes. No railway.	Red
	B. Satellite to Stevenage.	Amber
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green
14.	A. A507 primary route. No railway.	Amber
	B. Between Buntingford and Baldock.	Green
	C. No coalescence concerns.	Green

Table 4.1 Initial Screening for New Settlements

4.2.14 The conclusions of the screening assessment are shown in Table 4.2 'New Settlement Screening - Conclusions' to illustrate how these will be taken forward.

No.	A. Transport Infrastructure	B. Settlement Networks	C. Coalescence Risks	Carried forward?	Name assigned for ease of reference at next steps
1	Amber	Green	Amber	Yes	A10 Corridor - North
2	Red	Red	Green	No	n/a
3	Red	Red	Green	No	n/a
4	Green	Amber	Green	Yes	A120 Corridor
5	Red	Green	Green	No	n/a
6	Amber	Green	Red	No	n/a
7	Green	Amber	Amber	Yes	Hunsdon Area
8	Amber	Green	Red	No	n/a
9	Amber	Red	Green	No	n/a
10	Amber	Amber	Red	No	n/a
11	Green	Green	Green	Yes	A602 Corridor
12	Amber	Green	Green	Yes	A10 Corridor - Central
13	Red	Amber	Green	No	n/a
14	Amber	Green	Green	Yes	A507 Corridor

Table 4.2 New Settlement Screening - Conclusions

4.2.15 The areas indicated will be carried forward into the assessment process as new settlement areas of search.

Finalising the Areas of Search

4.2.16 All of the areas of search are shown in Figure 4.2 'Areas of Search (not to scale)' below. There are 69 in total. The areas of search correspond to the options set out for consultation in the Issues and Options document in autumn 2010. The practical use of the Areas of Search will become clear

as work progresses. More detailed maps of the areas of search are included at the start of each section within Chapter 4, together with a text description of the edges of each area, and further explanation in cases where sub-division of the larger areas is necessary.

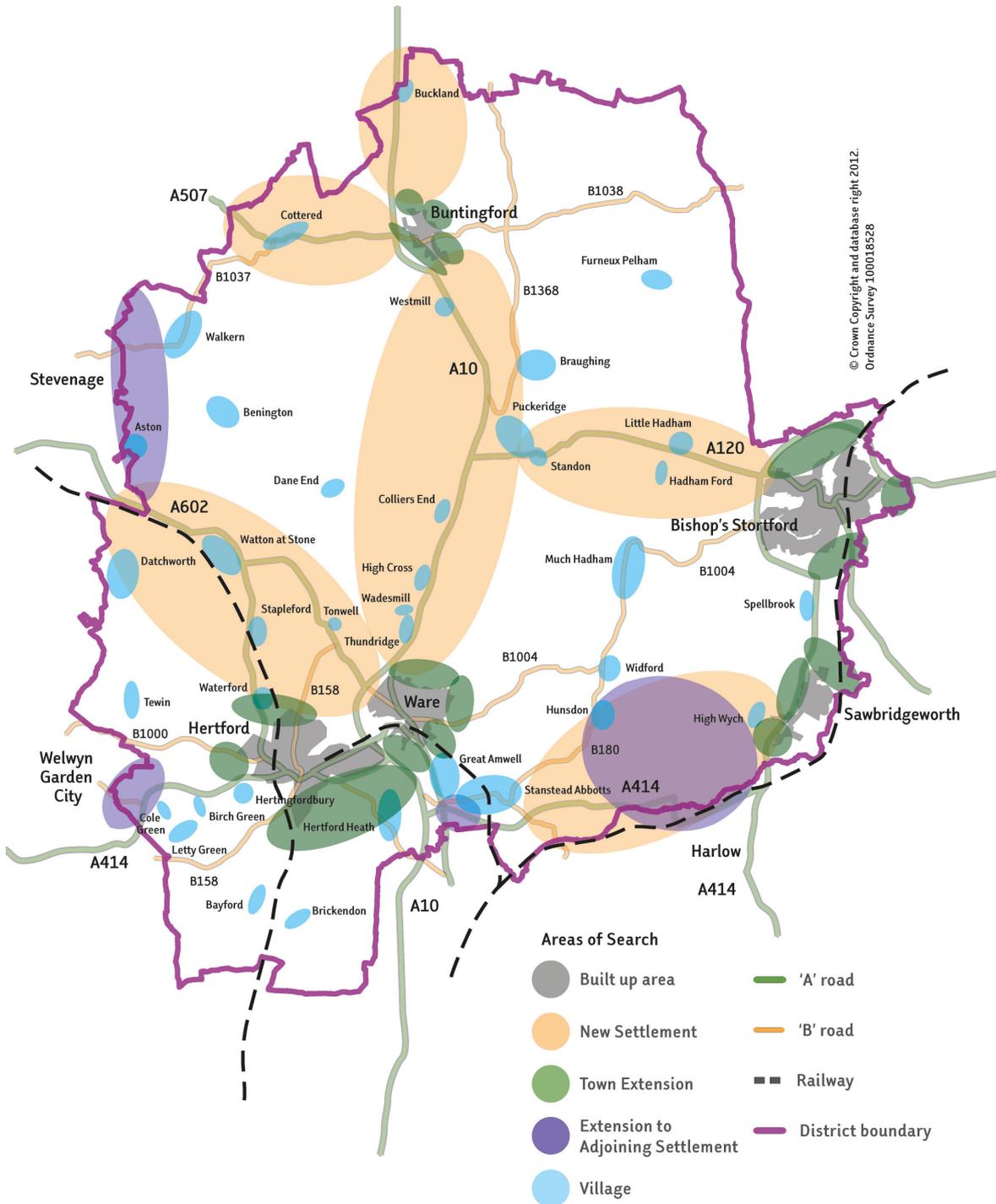


Figure 4.2 Areas of Search (not to scale)

- 4.2.17** A small number of areas adjacent to the towns have not been included within areas of search and will therefore not be considered further. These are locations which are not capable of accommodating strategic-scale development (at least 500 dwellings) because for example they are protected public-open space and play a well-recognised part in the identity of a town or are characterised by areas of flood plain. For example, the green wedges in Bishop's Stortford (including Southern Country Park), the Hertford green fingers including the Meads between Hertford and Ware, and the eastern side of Sawbridgeworth which includes Pishiobury Park and extensive areas of flood plain.
- 4.2.18** Some small villages have not been included as areas of search. Such villages have very limited services and facilities, and lie outside transport corridors provided by a main road or railway line. As such they are not considered to be sustainable locations even for a relatively small amount of growth. Therefore they will not be considered further in the preparation of the District Plan. However, if there is a desire on the part of village residents or Parishes to allow some small-scale growth in such locations then there is still the possibility of pursuing this option through the Community Right to Build.
- 4.2.19** In a few locations major physical boundaries have been used to define the edge of the areas of search. Examples include the bypass at Bishop's Stortford and the A10 at Ware. The A10 at Buntingford serves a similar function, although the Buntingford Business Park is located on the opposite side of the A10 and therefore Area 6(A) crosses the A10. These are firm physical boundaries and provide a robust limit to the growth of a settlement.
- 4.2.20** Where there are no clear physical boundaries the area of search is indicative, based on the initial scale assumptions. These areas will be reviewed in Steps 4 and 5 as more information becomes available.
- 4.2.21** As explained in Section 1.9: Refining the Approach, Bishop's Stortford North has been added as an option. The white areas shown on Figure 4.2 will not be considered further as part of the strategy selection process. The villages are all shown by an indicative area encircling the village.
- 4.2.22** Some of the areas of search shown are too large or too diverse in terms of the range of planning considerations to assess meaningfully. Therefore these have been subdivided along either clear physical boundaries such as roads or using landscape character areas where roads are not available. At this stage the built-up areas shown in grey have not been sub-divided because this information will come with a better understanding of available sites. A separate technical exercise ⁽¹¹⁴⁾ has been undertaken to look at this issue.

114 The Strategy Land Availability Assessment (SLAA). See www.eastherts.gov.uk/sl原因 for further information.

Initial Scale Assumptions

- 4.2.23** It is essential to have an initial sense of whether a development is likely to be of 10, 100, 1,000 or 10,000 dwellings in order to understand the potential impacts on a range of infrastructure and other planning issues. For example, for school planners, highway engineers, or utility companies the difference between the various growth levels is a major concern when offering opinions on development locations. Initial scale assumptions are also important because they help to define the possible extent of development through areas of search, as explained further below.
- 4.2.24** Initial scale assumptions need to be standardised in order to avoid the 'false precision' trap; it is too early in the process to be able to suggest a specific scale of growth at any particular location, because as yet there is no information about constraints. This may lead to figures which common sense suggests are unreasonable in some cases, but they are sufficient to enable early strategic thinking about the nature of development issues and can be refined at the next step. However, it is possible to increase the realism where a reasonable basis exists, as shown in Table 4.3 'Initial Scale Assumptions' below:
- 4.2.25** In order to be able to derive initial scale assumptions it is necessary to multiply the assumed area by the assumed density of development (i.e. the number of dwellings per hectare). Two basic density assumptions have been applied, balancing the need to avoid false precision, with a recognition that the density will be lower on larger developments in order to provide a greater mix of uses. The density assumptions ⁽¹¹⁵⁾ are as follows:
- Options of **fewer than 2,000 dwellings** have been calculated at a density of **25 dwellings per hectare**, reflecting provision of infrastructure such as roads, open space, community facilities, and primary schools;
 - Options of **more than 2,000 dwellings** have been calculated at a density of **20 dwellings per hectare**, reflecting provision of infrastructure such as roads, open space, community facilities, primary schools, secondary schools, and shops.
- 4.2.26** Based on these density assumptions, the following figures have been obtained by measuring around the area where possible, or by using the best possible basis for test purposes, for example from research studies:

115 The assumptions are slightly different to those used in the Land Availability Assessment, which is based on site areas rather than potentially developable area. For the sake of simplicity discussions of net and gross density have been avoided.

Locations	Initial assumption (dwellings)	Basis of Initial Scale Assumption
Built-Up Areas and Town extensions	500	Big enough to be considered strategic in the context of past delivery. Small enough to be relevant to the options where space is constrained by physical barriers. <i>Note:</i> a more realistic urban capacity for each town will be calculated in Chapter 5.
Bishop's Stortford North	3,000	Approximation of the 2,811 dwellings suggested by the Bishop's Stortford Masterplanning Study (2005). ⁽¹⁾
North of Harlow	10,000	The Harlow Options Appraisal technical study (2010). ⁽²⁾
North of Hoddesdon	1,500	60 hectares (area defined by the A10/A414) multiplied by 25 dwellings per hectare.
East of Welwyn Garden City	2,000	80 hectares (area defined by the A414/Panshanger Lane/woodland boundary) at 25 dwellings per hectare
East of Stevenage	5,000	250 hectares (approximate area in a broad strip between the town and the River Beane at 20 dwellings per hectare)
New Settlements	5,000	Evidence base supporting the former Eco-Towns Planning Policy Statement, which suggests that 5,000 dwellings is the minimum number necessary to provide a good range of supporting infrastructure and reduce the need to travel.
Villages	Existing dwellings + 10%	The Government's Community Right to Build Q&A (2011) suggests a maximum of 10% village expansion over 10 years. ⁽³⁾ . Given that this is a maximum, a more conservative assumption of 10% spread over 20 years plan period is considered a reasonable baseline.

Table 4.3 Initial Scale Assumptions

1. The study was prepared by Roger Evans Associates. The 2,811 figure is explained on page 62 on the land budget. See <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=24805>
2. These findings were reported in the Issues and Options consultation document (Chapter 10). The original study is available online at www.eastherts.gov.uk/harlowoptions
3. This is available on the Communities and Local Government website at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/newsroom/pdf/1647749.Pdf>

4.2.27 Additional detail gathered through the assessment process in Chapter 4 will facilitate greater refinement of these figures, for example providing the basis for a more realistic assessment of the likely mix of uses in a particular location, supplemented by additional knowledge obtained from technical studies, masterplans and planning applications. It is likely the figures will be subject to further refinement in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.3 Sieves 1 and 2

4.3.1 As explained in Chapter 1, strategy emerges gradually through the application of various strategic planning tools to different sources and types of evidence. There are 5 rounds of assessment (sieves), and Chapter 4 presents the first two rounds. However, until the remaining rounds have been completed it is not possible to have sufficient confidence to differentiate between the options in terms of their suitability as part of a future development strategy. Rather than consult on incomplete evidence which is likely to be misunderstood without an overall context, it is proposed to make all the work available together for consultation following the completion of Sieve 5. In the interim, the stepped approach enables transparency through the representative democracy of the Local Government committee system and enables progress with the necessary technical work in order to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The methodology for the first two assessment sieves is explained below.

Sieve 1: Areas of Search Assessments

4.3.2 The Areas of Search Assessments are based on the topic assessments already agreed by the Council. The approach to each of the 69 areas of search is the same. Firstly, a summary list of the traffic light ratings based on the criteria is provided. Secondly, an evaluation of the key issues based on the topic assessments is provided. The evaluations are informed by the assessments, but are not based on rigid application of a scoring system. Where a topic assessment is not considered to yield any significant findings in respect of the decision-making process, it is not mentioned within the evaluation. If one topic assessment is considered to yield sufficient confidence that a particular area is not suitable for further consideration, exhaustive consideration of all the topics is unnecessary. In such cases, a very short evaluation is sufficient. Ratings are based on the balance of considerations arising from the 21 topic assessments as follows:

- **Pass:** clearly favourable balance, will be carried forward for further assessment in Chapter 5;
- **Marginal Pass:** marginally favourable balance, will be carried forward for further assessment in Chapter 5;

- **Marginal Fail:** marginally unfavourable balance, will be carried forward for further consideration in Chapter 5;
- **Fail:** clearly unfavourable balance, will not be carried forward to Chapter 5.

4.3.3 Although ‘Pass’, ‘Marginal Pass’, and ‘Marginal Fail’ ratings will all be carried through to further assessment in Chapter 5, the differences between the ratings will form a material consideration in subsequent stages of assessment, particularly in the event that following all the assessment sieves, the options remain finely balanced.

4.3.4 Finally, consideration is given to whether each area should be assigned a different rating at a different scale of development. In some cases the balance of considerations remains the same at different scales of development, and therefore a single rating is sufficient. In other cases consideration of different levels of development will yield a different rating, and a supplementary rating is provided. For example, an area which fails when assessed against 500 dwellings could pass at a lower level of development. Alternatively, an area assessed as a pass against 500 dwellings could be capable of accommodating higher levels of development.

Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations

4.3.5 The Settlement Evaluations draw together in a continuous narrative various issues which together are likely to influence the choice of development strategy for the district. Considerations include:

- Economic geography of the settlement and the wider area;
- Current and potential future function and role;
- Settlement hierarchy and functional relationships between settlements;
- Travel-to-work patterns;
- Current development proposals which could impact the emerging strategy;
- Local development pressures and those of the wider area;
- Local constraints, for example relating to traffic congestion, particular items of infrastructure, or environmental and historic constraints;
- Local opportunities, for example large brownfield sites for extensions to the town centre or other development;
- The aspirations of adjoining Local Planning Authorities where relevant;
- Town centre capacity to potentially provide an anchor for future development;
- Long-term prospects beyond 2031;
- Summary of the findings from Sieve 1: Areas of Search Assessments.

4.3.6 For the villages and new settlements a slightly different methodology is used. For the villages additional assessment of development in more than one village is included. Sieve 2a assesses the effect on primary schools,

Sieve 2b the effect on bus services, and Sieve 2c the effect on community facilities. For new settlements, the approach is to assess the implications of the identified areas of search against available research and guidance, as well as the experience of development at new settlements elsewhere in the country.

- 4.3.7** For ease of reference, Chapter 4 is divided into separate sections for each of the towns, plus a section for the villages and possible new settlements. Each of these sections starts with a short introduction followed by the Sieve 1: Areas of Search Assessments, and concludes with Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations.
- 4.3.8** Each settlement evaluation concludes by considering the ‘Next Steps’ which will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6. The next step is therefore to consider whether there are other areas of the District which are potentially better locations for development than the settlement considered within each section. It will also be necessary to judge what the overall level of development should be, in terms of the balance of development impacts tested against the agreed upper and lower limits derived from demographic work. Finally, the impact of development across administrative boundaries will need to be considered.
- 4.3.9** Therefore it is vital to emphasise the importance of the Stepped Approach to strategy selection. Although taken in isolation each of the sections in Chapter 4 may appear self-contained, they cannot be used to draw conclusions as to an emerging strategy at this stage.

4.4 Bishop's Stortford

4.4.1 This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to Bishop's Stortford. Please refer to Section 4.3 for interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.4.1 Areas of Search

4.4.1.1 The Areas of Search are shown below.

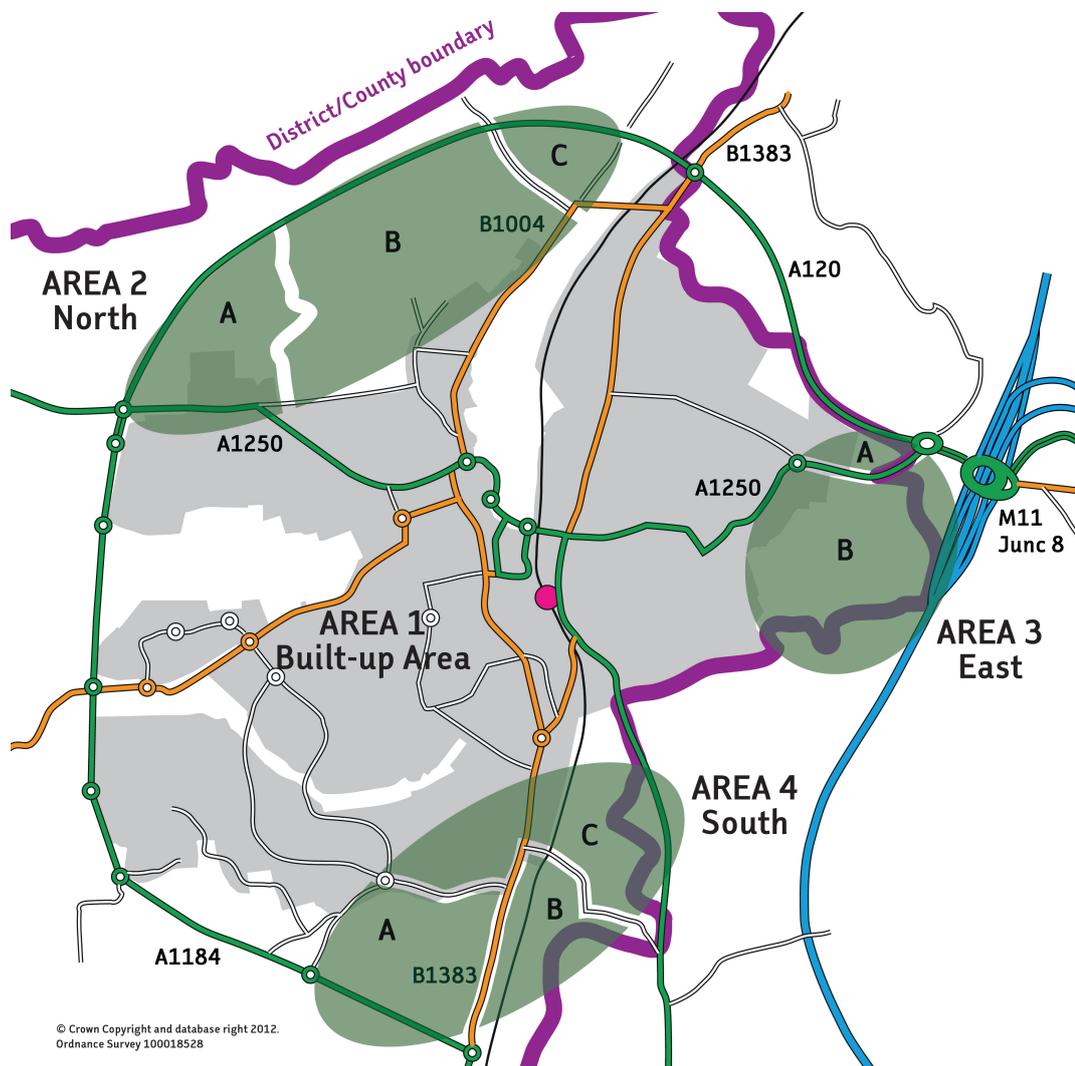


Figure 4.3 Bishop's Stortford Areas of Search

4.4.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of each of the Areas of Search for Bishop's Stortford are as follows:

- **Area 1 - Bishop's Stortford Built-Up Area:**
Current settlement boundary as defined in the Local Plan 2007. No sub-division of specific locations within the Built-Up Area. Principle of development has already been established through the Local Plan at the Mill Site, the Goods Yard Site, and the Hadham Road Reserve Secondary Schools site and therefore these have not been considered separately.
- **Area 2 - Bishop's Stortford North (Sub-Area A):**
A120, Hadham Plateau Landscape Character Area (i.e. along footpath west of Hoggate's Wood), Dane O'Coys Road, Hadham Road
- **Area 2 - Bishop's Stortford North (Sub-Area B):**
A120, Farnham Road, Dane O' Coys Road and the eastern edge of Hoggate's Wood
- **Area 2 - Bishop's Stortford North (Sub-Area C):**
A120, Farnham Road, and Hazelend Road
- **Area 3 - Bishop's Stortford East (Sub-Area A):**
Dunmow Road and the A120
- **Area 3 - Bishop's Stortford East (Sub-Area B):**
Built-Up Area, Dunmow Road, East Herts/Uttlesford District Boundary
- **Area 4 - Bishop's Stortford South (Sub-Area A):**
Obrey Way/Whittington Way, A1184 and the B1383
- **Area 4 - Bishop's Stortford South (Sub-Area B):**
B1383, Pig Lane, East Herts/Uttlesford District Boundary
- **Area 4 - Bishop's Stortford South (Sub-Area C):**
Built-Up Area and the A1060 (Hallingbury Road)

4.4.2 Bishop's Stortford Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 1)

4.4.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 1 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: None.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

4.4.2.2 There are existing Local Plan 2007 allocations at the Goods Yard, the Mill Site, and the Hadham Road (Reserve) Site.

4.4.2.3 The Goods Yard site is strategically significant because of its important location between the station and the town centre. Development in this location would enable expansion of the capacity of the town centre. Although the site has long been considered a prime development location, development has not proceeded as swiftly as originally anticipated. However, there is understood to be a joint venture between Network Rail (the landowner) and a developer which could increase the likelihood of development coming forward early in the plan period.

4.4.2.4 The Local Plan 2007 allocated the Goods Yard for a significant number of one and two bedroom dwellings. However, the 2011 Development Brief suggests a new direction in terms of increased employment and family accommodation. The Brief does not mention a dwellings figure, however, taking the proposal in the brief for housing *“especially for the southern part of the site, especially facing the River Stort would be an ideal location provided it is integrated into a scheme design which takes account of the existing woodland”* a total figure of 60 family dwellings seems reasonable.

4.4.2.5 In relation to the Local Plan 2007 proposal for a new link road through the site, the 2011 Goods Yard Brief states that *“the likely impact of such a proposal should be subject to transport modelling and testing. Additionally, the impact on the overall Master Plan and other design and sustainability considerations should be assessed and discussed with the District Council*

and County Council as Highways Authority". The requirement for a road could have major implications for the type and mix of development at the site, as well as the site layout and design.

- 4.4.2.6** The Mill Site Development Brief (2010) includes seven development objectives for the site. These include: provision of a canal basin; retail and commercial provision to complement the existing town centre; commercial frontages and greater leisure use; improve access to the waterway from the town centre and create a focus of activity for residents and visitors; retain significant historic buildings; and avoid a 'canyon effect' from dominant new buildings. A new pedestrian bridge is suggested to link the site with the town centre. The Brief states that there is limited scope for some residential apartments on the upper floors of commercial developments.
- 4.4.2.7** However, the Brief also indicates a significant obstacle to delivery of development at the Mill Site: *"The site is in multiple ownership and the river frontage has 3 distinct elements from an ownership perspective. There are no indications that the larger occupant (flour mill) is intending to move from the site and the level of capital invested in the site by that operation would make the cost of moving significant. It would therefore seem unlikely that all elements of the site would be developed simultaneously. Whilst the Council is not actively seeking to encourage the closure or relocation of any of the existing businesses on the site, it has been recognised that the site is considered to have the potential to contribute to the achievement of the Vision and delivery of the desired outcomes."*
- 4.4.2.8** The next most significant possibility in the town centre is in relation to the Causeway car park, also known as Old River Lane. This area was identified in the Retail and Town Centre Study (2008) as a possible town centre extension including location for an anchor department store. The Council has resolved to grant outline planning permission for a mixed-use scheme including up to 100 apartments, subject to the signing of a S106 agreement.
- 4.4.2.9** Other large proposals away from the town centre depend on the relocation of the Boys' and Girls' High Schools to a shared site in the Green Belt to the south of the town. According to the planning applications originally submitted to the Council in 2008, in total the amount of residential development which could be entailed with the school relocation could amount to 690 dwellings, or 775 should the playing pitches at the Hadham Road site be relocated. The Hadham Road site is known as the 'Reserve Secondary School Site' in the Local Plan 2007, which states that development cannot come forward unless sufficient additional secondary school capacity is provided elsewhere in the town. The other proposals are for development at the land vacated as a result of the relocation, assuming that the Green Belt site is permitted. The outcome of the proposals is therefore highly significant for the town as a whole, as it will mean not only that a significant amount of new residential development

could come forward during the early part of the district plan period, but also that additional secondary schools capacity could provide for further growth.

4.4.2.10 In addition to these options, planning permission for 30 dwellings has been granted at a number of small sites throughout the town, and these are likely to come forward early in the plan period. Deducting these and the other large sites listed below, there is a residual figure of 268 dwellings, mostly on small sites, which could have some potential and are being considered in more detail through the SLAA process ⁽¹¹⁶⁾. It should be noted that the 268 figure is interim and subject to change.

Conclusions and Next Steps

4.4.2.11 In summary, the interim figures of possible options within the Built-Up area for Bishop's Stortford are as follows:

- Hadham Road site: up to 165 dwellings (on the assumption that the playing pitches will remain at their existing location. However, if the playing pitches are relocated then there could be space for an additional 85 dwellings, i.e. total site capacity of 250 dwellings)
- Beldams Lane Sports Pitches: up to 180 dwellings
- Warwick Road (demolition of existing school): up to 125 dwellings
- London Road (demolition of existing school): up to 220 dwellings
- The Causeway: 100 (resolution to grant outline planning permission subject to S106 agreement)
- Goods Yard: 60 (allocation/development brief)
- Other permissions: 30
- Interim SLAA Sites: 268

4.4.2.12 These figures add up to a total of **1,233 dwellings for the Bishop's Stortford Built-Up Area**. All these options lie within the existing built-up area, which is in principle preferable to greenfield development beyond the existing built-up area. However, the impact of development is likely to vary with the overall level of development. In this context, the cumulative traffic impacts will need further consideration. At 500 dwellings or below there is a greater level of confidence that the traffic impacts are likely to be manageable through planning conditions. For 1,233 dwellings further consideration will need to be given to the adverse impact on congestion, and therefore the Sieve 1 figure is assigned a Marginal Pass. Without relocation of the schools, the total for the Built Up Area is significantly lower, and would be likely to achieve a Pass rating.

116 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment. See www.eastherts.gov.uk/slaa for further information and the latest updates. It should be noted that the 268 figure is based on an interim SLAA assessment of sites which could come forward. These sites differ in some respects from the land availability draft topic assessments, which were based on the Call for Sites prior to the latest round of SLAA consultation and assessment.

- 4.4.2.13** Consistent with the strategic criteria-based approach, detailed assessment of particular sites has not been undertaken. However, strategic transport modelling will be needed in order to take account of the additional vehicle trips generated by this development in the context of any planned additional development outside of the Built-Up Area. The strategy will need to retain sufficient flexibility to enable adaptation to the possible range of known scenarios for the Built-Up Area.

Area 1: Bishop's Stortford Built-Up Area

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the Bishop's Stortford Built-Up Area. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 1	Sieve 1
500 dwellings	Pass
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Pass
Sieve 1 Figure	1,233
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations: Secondary school capacity; access and highways impacts.

Note: The Sieve 1 figure for the Built-Up Area is subject to finalisation of the SLAA and may therefore go up or down. Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.4.3 Bishop's Stortford North (Sieve 1: Area 2)

4.4.3.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 2 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 2: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Community Facilities; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools

4.4.3.2 There are few local constraints to development at Sub-Area A. The risk of river flooding is low, although the potential for surface water flooding on the Wickham Hall road under the A120 should be noted. The landscape character of Sub-Area A is defined by large, relatively flat geometric fields. There are no known significant historic features, although an archaeological survey would be needed as part of any planning application. There are no European designated wildlife sites nearby, and the nearest SSSI is 5km away. A Green Infrastructure Strategy would be required to preserve and enhance the County Wildlife Sites at Hoggate's Wood and Ash Grove as part of the Green Wedge. However, good quality agricultural land would be lost in bringing forward development of Sub-Area A.

4.4.3.3 In terms of transport infrastructure and access, proximity to the A120 bypass is a benefit, although this road may need to be upgraded in the longer-term. Development in this area would need a new junction on Hadham Road, which could provide access for a new bus route. Partly because of its visibility from the bypass, and proximity to transport links, technical studies suggest that the ASRs, and Sub-Area A in particular could be considered for employment uses. In terms of other infrastructure, secondary school provision is a major consideration, and is dependent on the Secretary of State's decision on whether to allow a new Secondary School site in the Green Belt to the south of the town. Sub-Area A could

include a local centre supporting a range of community facilities serving the development. There are no waste water infrastructure problems arising from development of this area.

Area 2: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Community Facilities; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Waste Water Impact; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools

- 4.4.3.4** Considerations of employment, secondary school places, waste water, agricultural land, archaeology, and wildlife are largely the same as those presented under Sub-Area A. Sub-Area B would be likely to include a local centre supporting a range of community facilities serving the development.
- 4.4.3.5** In terms of local constraints, there are a number of considerations at Sub-Area B. There are areas of river flood risk along the Bourne Brook and its tributary. Any road through the site would need to cross this, but would be classed as essential infrastructure for flood risk assessment purposes. Foxdells Farm is a Grade II listed building, and it would need to be retained and consideration given to its setting as part of any development layout. Area B is a valley landscape with urban fringe characteristics, and is cut off from stronger landscape features to the north by the A120.
- 4.4.3.6** In contrast to Sub-Areas A and C there are no obvious access points to Sub-Area B. The roads into the town are of a residential nature and would be unlikely to be able to accommodate the number and frequency of vehicular movements associated with strategic development. The A120 is a primary route and the County Highways Authority have an in-principle objection to new access points onto such routes, unless there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they are essential.
- 4.4.3.7** Substantial good quality agricultural land would be lost through development of this area of search, although its importance as commercial arable land is questioned given severance caused by the A120. If there is a sufficient quantity of preferable development land at other areas of search then this

would be a material consideration. Emerging work suggests that this is not the case, although further work through the scenario screening and testing will be needed to establish the supply of suitable land. This consideration applies in particular to Sub-Areas A and B.

Area 2: Sub-Area C

Red	Topics: None.
Amber	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools

4.4.3.8 Considerations of employment, waste water, agricultural land, landscape, archaeology, and wildlife are largely the same as those presented under Sub-Areas A and B. Existing Secondary School capacity would be unlikely to be able to accommodate the demand generated by a development of several hundred dwellings at Sub-Area C alone, and therefore the Secretary of State’s decision on the schools is critical in this respect. Highways and access concerns relate to the impact on Rye Street and the surrounding residential roads, and further investigation of this will be required. It seems probable that a transport strategy could address the concerns of Farnham Parish Council in respect of access to the village along Farnham Road.

4.4.3.9 If this area were to be considered for residential development, it is anticipated that most of the community infrastructure needs could be met at Sub-Area B adjacent, particularly at the local centre, although play and recreation areas would probably be needed. The River Stort Green Wedge lies immediately adjacent across Hazelend Road and this would form part of a Green Infrastructure Strategy. The importance of this relationship would need to be emphasised in the layout and design of development in Sub-Area C. A drainage strategy would need to seek to mitigate any impacts on the nearby Stortford Marsh County Wildlife Site, and to take account of the ditch in the east of the Sub-Area which is at risk of surface water flooding.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.4.3.10** In terms of its contribution to the setting of Bishop's Stortford, the construction of the A120 bypass to the north and west in the 1970s entailed a change in the landscape function of the North of Bishop's Stortford area of search. The A120 could provide a firm long-term Green Belt boundary and limit to development, and this is recognised in the current Local Plan policy designation of the area as safeguarded land, comprising Areas of Special Restraint (ASRs) and Special Countryside Area (SCA). The same consideration applies to all three Sub-Areas. Current national and local policy requires that safeguarded land can only be released for development as part of a local (i.e. District) plan review.
- 4.4.3.11** For reasons of sustainability and infrastructure delivery the Bishop's Stortford Masterplanning Study (Roger Evans Associates, 2005) recommended a comprehensive approach to development of the whole area, rather than delivery in separate parcels. In this context a concern relates to the separate ownership of Sub-Areas A and B which is controlled by one consortium of developers, and Sub-Area C, which is controlled by a separate landowner/developer partnership. Without clear co-ordination between the separate proposals, the sustainability of development across the entire area could be undermined. One aspect of this relates to the identified highways and access concerns around Sub-Area B, which could rely in part on Sub-Area C for a resolution. If North of Bishop's Stortford is considered suitable for development, measures will need to be put in place to enable a comprehensive approach in relation to this and other matters.
- 4.4.3.12** Notwithstanding this caveat, there appear to be good prospects for substantial delivery of development at this location. Both sets of developers are understood to have undertaken detailed preliminary investigative work with a view to progressing planning applications, subject to the District Plan review process. The scale of development opportunity is such that the development should enable funding of a good range of supporting infrastructure and facilities. Subject to resolution of transport and access concerns, the topic assessments indicate that there are few serious planning concerns about the principle of future development at this area of search, subject to further work.
- 4.4.3.13** Further work includes the need for transport modelling to assess the impacts on the road network within the town. There are a number of issues which will need to be considered further as part of a 'whole town' approach before a decision on the suitability of North of Bishop's Stortford can be made. These relate to the capacity of the town centre, transport, employment, and secondary education in particular. Without a balanced approach to the delivery of net gains across the whole town, there is a risk that growth could become unsustainable. There are many detailed matters which will need further consideration if the principle of development is

established, such as the setting and preservation of some of the key assets in the area, such as Hoggate's Wood, Dane O' Coys Road, and Foxdells Farm.

- 4.4.3.14** The evaluations here are made provisionally, prior to the Secretary of State's decision in respect of proposals for a secondary school in the Green Belt, which could affect the deliverability of development throughout the Bishop's Stortford school planning area.
- 4.4.3.15** If this area were to come forward then a comprehensive approach to development of the sub-areas should be pursued, given the natural boundary limit provided by the A120. Therefore options for a lower level of development will not be considered.
- 4.4.3.16** Based on the work undertaken so far it is clear that there are significant differences between sub-areas A, B, and C. Therefore it is necessary to provide a basis for further assessment of each sub-area. It is necessary to use assumptions which will yield more accurate figures than a standard assumption of 25 dwellings per hectare at town extensions, owing to the scale and evidence base available for this location. On this basis, the following revised scale assumptions are derived:
- **Sub-Area A** is 35 hectares. 10 hectares may be required to provide for community infrastructure, possibly including a local centre or a primary school, as well as open space/Green Infrastructure. 25 hectares at 30 dwellings per hectare suggests that approximately 690 dwellings could be accommodated in this sub-area. It should be noted that the calculations for sub-areas A and B exclude the Green Wedge including Hoggate's Wood and Ash Grove, which are designated Green Belt. In conclusion, a total figure of 700 dwellings will be carried forward for strategic planning purposes.
 - **Sub-Area B** is 68 hectares, not including the Farnham Road allotments, which the Town Council has stated will not be released for development. 20 hectares may be required for a district centre and open space/Green Infrastructure. 48 hectares at 30 dwellings per hectare suggests 1,440 dwellings in total. This is rounded to 1,400 dwellings for strategic planning purposes.
 - **Sub-Area C** is 18 hectares. 4 hectares may be required to provide for open space/Green Infrastructure or other small-scale community infrastructure. At 30 dwellings per hectare this sub-area could potentially accommodate approximately 420 dwellings. This is rounded to 400 for strategic planning purposes.
- 4.4.3.17** The total for the whole area could potentially amount to approximately 2,500 as a revised scale assumption for strategic planning purposes.

Area 2: Bishop's Stortford North

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Bishop's Stortford North. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 2	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B	Sub-Area C
Sieve 1 Figure	700 dwellings	1,400 dwellings	400 dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Pass	Marginal Pass	Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Secondary school capacity

Sub-Area B: Secondary school capacity; access/highways impacts; flood risk along Bourne Brook

Sub-Area C: Secondary school capacity

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.4.4 Bishop's Stortford East (Sieve 1: Area 3)

4.4.4.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 3 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 3: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Employment Potential; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.
No Assessment	Topics: Landscape Character.

- 4.4.4.2** This Sub-Area covers a small area to the east of Bishops’s Stortford, north of the A1250 Dunmow Road. Development in this area would have good vehicular access to the main road network, particularly to the A1250 Dunmow Road and the M11, and only limited road infrastructure would be required to enable the delivery of development in this area of the town. However, there would be town-wide traffic congestion issues that would need to be addressed.
- 4.4.4.3** Given the connections to the M11 via the A1250 Dunmow Road, there would be excellent employment potential for this area. The Sub-Area contains an existing employment area, Woodside Industrial Estate, and there is an extant planning permission to extend the employment area to the east with the construction of 5,324sqm of floorspace for B1 use. The provision of further employment land at this area would enhance the ability of similar businesses to benefit from a clustering effect. However, further eastward expansion of the employment area would require the relocation of Bishop’s Stortford Football Club. Given the size of the club and the capacity of existing open spaces within the town, it is likely that any relocation would need to be to a Green Belt site around the town.
- 4.4.4.4** The area is largely unaffected by flood risk, waste water impact, minerals and waste designations, or matters of environmental stewardship concerns. The majority of the land is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land. However, none of the land is currently in agricultural use. The west of the area is designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance, which would need to be taken into account in any development proposals. The potential effect of development on the designated wildlife sites at Birchanger Wood and Bishop’s Stortford Golf Club, which lie beyond the Sub-Area would also need to be taken into account.
- 4.4.4.5** The existing road network provides a clear boundary for future development; however, this road network also exposes any development to the impact of traffic noise. Given this, and the detachment of this area from the existing built up area of the town, residential development in this Sub-Area is not considered appropriate.
- 4.4.4.6** In terms of land availability, 3.41ha of land at Woodlands Lodge and Bishop’s Stortford Football Club (each in single ownership) has been submitted for development under the Call for Sites.

Area 3: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Community Facilities.
Green	Topics: Employment Potential; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools
No Assessment	Topics: Landscape Character.

4.4.4.7 This Sub-Area covers a large area to the east of Bishop’s Stortford, south of the A1250 Dunmow Road. Development in this area would have good vehicular access to the main road network, particularly to the A1250 Dunmow Road and the M11, and only limited road infrastructure would be required to enable the delivery of development in this area of the town. However, there would be town-wide traffic congestion issues that would need to be addressed and careful consideration of how bus services could be extended to serve any new development would be required.

4.4.4.8 Given the connections to the M11 via the A1250 Dunmow Road, there would be good employment potential for this area. Additionally there would be opportunities to use existing clear boundaries to demark the edges of the area, and the area is largely unaffected by flood risk, waste water impact, minerals and waste designations or matters of environmental stewardship concerns. Whilst the majority of the area is classified as Grade 2 agricultural land, this land is in use as a golf course, so development of the land would not actually result in the loss of agricultural land.

4.4.4.9 Educational provision would be an area for concern as, although there is currently a surplus of primary school places in the Bishop’s Stortford Planning Area, it is anticipated that any further development in the town will result in a shortfall in places in future years. Therefore, further investigation is required to assess the potential for Summercroft Primary, in close proximity to the Area of Search, to expand. At secondary level, Birchwood High is easily accessible for students, but there is currently a forecast deficit of secondary provision in the town which may be resolved pending the outcome of the Schools Inquiry.

- 4.4.4.10** Development at this area would be exposed to traffic noise from the M11 and activity at the Birchanger Green Service Station, so an appropriate buffer and additional mitigation measures would be needed to reduce the noise impact. Furthermore, the area lies close to a Stansted Airport flightpath so the noise impact of this would need to be further investigated. Another matter of particular concern is the potential effect of development on designated wildlife sites both within, and beyond the Sub-Area which could restrict the development potential of the area.
- 4.4.4.11** Whilst it is acknowledged that the Green Belt in this Sub-Area acts as a strategic gap between the built-up part of the town and the urban feature of Birchanger Green Service Station and the M11 junction, the strategic gap issue is primarily concerned with coalescence of settlements. As development in this location would not cause coalescence of settlements and, subject to layout and design, a sufficient gap between the built-up area of the town and the M11 junction and Service Station could still be retained, this issue is not considered to be significant enough to limit development.
- 4.4.4.12** In terms of land availability, 6.27ha of land at Bishop's Stortford Golf Club has been submitted for development under the Call for Sites. Whilst this land is in a single ownership, the amount of land currently known to be available for development is insufficient to make a significant contribution to strategic land delivery.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.4.4.13** Taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that Bishop's Stortford East Sub-Area A has the potential to accommodate some development, subject to the relocation of Bishop's Stortford Football Club to a suitable site.
- 4.4.4.14** However, as Woodside Industrial Estate was considered to be the top rated existing employment site in the district in the Council's Employment Land Review 2008 and given the noise impact on the area of adjacent uses, residential development of this Sub-Area is not considered to be appropriate. Therefore if development were to come forward, it should be for employment uses.
- 4.4.4.15** In respect of Bishop's Stortford East Sub-Area B, it is considered that this Sub-Area has the potential to deliver development, subject to an appropriate buffer zone to the M11 and further investigation of the noise impact of the Stansted Airport flightpath that lies close to the Sub-Area. Special consideration would also need to be given to the impact on designated wildlife sites and access to passenger transport networks.

- 4.4.4.16** In terms of land availability, as the majority of the Sub-Area is currently in use as a golf course, if this general location were to be brought forward for development it is unlikely that there would be sufficient deliverable land to enable the delivery of a 500 dwelling development and therefore aid strategic housing delivery. There is land available for a smaller scale of development of up to 150 dwellings adjacent to the existing built up area of the town, but development of this quantity may not be able to deliver infrastructure or community facility improvements.
- 4.4.4.17** In terms of the cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration would need to be given to educational provision within the Bishop’s Stortford Planning area; traffic congestion issues in the town; and any gaps in the provision of community facilities.

Area 3: Bishop's Stortford East

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Bishop's Stortford East. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 3	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B
500 dwellings	Fail	Marginal Pass
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail	Pass
Sieve 1 Figure	0 dwellings	150 dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail	Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No	Yes

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Failed for residential development due to detachment from existing built-up area of the town and noise impacts associated with adjacent employment uses and traffic from main road network. Sub-Area should be further considered as a potential location for employment uses.

Sub-Area B: Primary and secondary school capacity; access and highway impacts; noise impacts and appropriate mitigation measures.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.4.5 Bishop's Stortford South (Sieve 1: Area 4)

4.4.5.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 4 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 4: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Strategic Gaps; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools.

4.4.5.2 This Sub-Area is designated Green Belt, but it does not play a significant role in terms of strategic gaps because Sawbridgeworth is several kilometres distant. The A1184 bypass could provide a robust long-term Green Belt boundary to the south. The visual prominence of development here due to the sloping nature of the site is acknowledged, but an attractively designed development could present a distinctive southern gateway to Bishop's Stortford. If the secondary schools are relocated to the northern part of this site, the Green Belt function of this area will have been further weakened and this would strengthen the case for releasing the remainder of Sub-Area A for development.

4.4.5.3 Resolution of the uncertainty surrounding the proposed schools relocation to the northern part of Sub-Area A would also clarify any long-term development prospects at this location. Without the new school facilities then the capacity for further growth would be questioned. If the relocation is permitted, then this could provide the necessary capacity for family accommodation in this Sub-Area. There are no other identified infrastructure constraints.

4.4.5.4 In terms of wildlife assets, Thorley Wash County Wildlife Site lies on the opposite side of London Road. Any impact on foraging bats and breeding birds would be assessed through an ecological survey and if necessary managed and appropriate mitigation measures put in place as part of a planning application. The small fragment of Thorley Woods County Wildlife Site could be incorporated as a feature within a development layout as part of a Green Infrastructure Strategy. There are few known historic assets, although an archaeological survey would be needed in support of a planning

application. Flood risk in Sub-Area A is low, reflecting its elevation, and a drainage strategy could address possible flood risk around the ditch across the area.

- 4.4.5.5** Substantial good quality agricultural land would be lost through development of Sub-Area A, although its importance as commercial arable land is questioned given severance caused by the A1184 bypass. If there is a sufficient quantity of preferable development land at other areas of search then this would be a material consideration. Emerging work suggests that this is not the case, although further work through the scenario screening and testing will be needed to establish the supply of suitable land.
- 4.4.5.6** Development in this area would have reasonable access to the main road network, with access to the M11 possible along the A1184 and A120 or through the town centre. However, both of these options would exacerbate existing congestion issues and it may be necessary for the A120 northern bypass to be dualled to accommodate the increase in traffic. Development in this location would be in fairly close proximity to existing bus routes along London Road and Whittington Way but it is likely that additional service provision would be required to serve any new development.
- 4.4.5.7** In terms of employment potential, the area was considered to be the joint second ranked location in the district for new employment land in the Council’s Employment Land Review 2008. Given the reasonable access available to the main road network and the good clustering potential to the existing employment sites to the south of the town, the area is considered to have good employment potential.
- 4.4.5.8** Development at this Area of Search would be exposed to traffic noise from the A1184 so appropriate mitigation measures would be needed to reduce the noise impact. Furthermore, the area lies close to a Stansted Airport flightpath. This matter was considered as part of the Secondary Schools planning application and the Secretary of State’s report will need to be understood in relation to other possible land uses.

Area 4: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Strategic Gaps; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations.

Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools.
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4.4.5.9 Strategic development in this Sub-Area is heavily constrained by access, highways and flood risk constraints. Much of the area is in Flood Zone 3 associated with the River Stort, and there are large areas susceptible to deep surface water flooding. The Highways Authority does not support development in this location. Pig Lane is a minor road and would struggle to accommodate additional traffic. Access off Hallingbury Road is not supported beyond a small amount of additional traffic. The Stort floodplain could also make engineering solutions difficult to achieve and expensive. The level crossing could require significant upgrades. Traffic generated by development in this location would be routed through the town centre. The areas of search assessments indicate several preferable locations elsewhere in Bishop’s Stortford.

Area 4: Sub-Area C

Red	Topics: Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Strategic Gaps; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools.

4.4.5.10 The same comments apply to Sub-Area B and C.

Conclusion and Next Steps

4.4.5.11 The topic assessments indicate that Sub-Area A should be given further consideration for long-term development. Transport modelling will be required to consider the impact of additional traffic on the town, and further consideration will need to be given to an employment strategy for the town. The Secretary of State’s decision in respect of the schools relocation, which will be made in the context of the NPPF and the Local Plan 2007, will be studied in detail for plan-making implications. The decision will not necessarily bind the District Plan process because wider strategic considerations will apply in the context of the strategy review to 2031. However, it will be necessary to assess the details of the report issued with the Secretary of State’s decision and to interpret them within the

present plan-making context. If residential development were to occur within this area, the relocation of the secondary schools to the north-eastern part of the area would be required in order to provide the necessary schools capacity. Taking account of these issues, a Marginal Pass rating is proposed for Sub-Area A.

- 4.4.5.12** If Sub-Area A were to come forward, a comprehensive approach to development of the sub-area should be pursued, given the natural boundary limit provided by the A1184. The approximate area within the boundaries for Sub-Area A is approximately 50 hectares. From this total it would be necessary to deduct land needed to provide for the relocated secondary schools. If the area submitted as part of the secondary schools planning application is taken as a guide, this would amount to approximately 17 hectares including playing fields. This would leave a total of 33 hectares potentially available for development. At 25 dwellings per hectare that makes a total of 825 dwellings, which can be rounded to 800 for strategic planning purposes.
- 4.4.5.13** The 800 dwellings figure is significantly more than the 500 assessment benchmark. However, all 21 assessments have been checked against this revised scale assumption and in terms of site-level considerations this does not change the conclusions of any of the assessments.
- 4.4.5.14** At Sub-Areas B and C the highways and flooding constraints are considered to be significant concerns even at much lower levels of development. At lower levels of development any development in this area would not relate well to the existing settlement and would not provide the sustainable pattern of development required by the NPPF.

Area 4: Bishop's Stortford South

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Bishop's Stortford South. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 4	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B	Sub-Area C
500 dwellings	Marginal Pass	Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Marginal Pass	Fail	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	800 dwellings	0 dwellings	0 dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass	Fail	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes	No	No

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Primary and secondary school capacity; impact on A1184; impact on environmental assets

Sub-Area B: Failed due to access/highways constraints and flood risk

Sub-Area C: Failed due to access/highways constraints and flood risk

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.4.6 Bishop's Stortford: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

4.4.6.1 Bishop's Stortford is a medium sized market town with an extensive central conservation area and a number of attractive open spaces known as 'Green Wedges', including the river corridor. It has a thriving town centre providing a good range of comparison shopping and serves not only town residents but also those from the surrounding villages in Hertfordshire and in Essex. The town's schools provide education for children from the town and surrounding villages. Bishop's Stortford is surrounded on three sides by the A1184/A120 bypass, and Junction 8 of the M11 lies adjacent to the east. Most of the land around the town lies within East Herts District, although pockets of land within the bypass and between the town and M11 are within Uttlesford District.

- 4.4.6.2** Bishop's Stortford has experienced periodic bursts of new development during the twentieth century, expanding outwards from the historic core, providing new residential estates such as Havers and Parsonage Lane. More recently, Thorley, St Michael's Mead and Bishop's Park have provided significant new residential development. As with the arrival of the turnpike, Stort Navigation and the railway in previous centuries, the opening of the M11 and development of Stansted Airport, fundamentally changed the economic geography of the area and have been major influences on patterns of development.
- 4.4.6.3** Growth pressures are felt not just in Bishop's Stortford but also along the M11 corridor. Even in the current economic climate, demand for new development in this area is strong all the way from London through to Cambridge and beyond. There has been substantial growth in western Essex including at Braintree, Stansted Mountfitchet (Rochford Nurseries) and Great Dunmow (Woodland Park). There have been many other proposals promoted by developers and by local planning authorities, for example:
- developer proposals for 3,000 dwellings at Elsenham, and various studies have suggested that the A120 corridor in Essex could host substantial new settlements in the future
 - Uttlesford Council is proposing additional development at Stansted Mountfitchet, and settlements along the A120 corridor
 - Harlow Council and various landowners are proposing a strategy based on 'transformational growth' of the town
 - Cambridge City and South Cambs Councils are proposing considerable development over the next twenty years, including new settlements.
- 4.4.6.4** Whilst regional planning has been dismantled, these growth pressures remain a strong feature of the economy in this area, and the National Planning Policy Framework requires that these wider pressures should be given weight in the preparation of District Plans.
- 4.4.6.5** Like many market towns facing growth pressures, development at Bishop's Stortford would need to overcome a number of tough challenges. Narrow streets radiate out from the market square, and Hockerill junction is a recognised congestion hotspot, resulting in poor air quality from vehicular emissions. Roads around the town are also under pressure, including Junction 8 of the M11, the single-carriageway town bypass, the Little Hadham lights on the A120 to the west providing access to the A10, and south towards Harlow on the A1184. There is very little spare capacity in any of the schools in East Herts, and Bishop's Stortford is no exception. Future development in Essex is likely to add to these challenges, because Bishop's Stortford already attracts substantial numbers of shoppers, school children and workers from outside the town. The logistical challenge of facilitating the movement of large numbers of people on a daily basis is considerable.

- 4.4.6.6** Added to these external pressures, there are also considerable growth pressures within the town. The Goods Yard and the Mill Site have been allocated for development for a number of years. Planning permission has been granted for a town centre extension at the Causeway car park/Old River Lane. The Boys' and Girls' High Schools, with the support of Hertfordshire County Council, as the Local Authority with responsibility for education, are proposing to relocate to a single large site south of Whittington Way. This would free up a number of sites within the town for further residential development. South Street Surgery is seeking planning permission for a new purpose-built GP surgery.
- 4.4.6.7** There are also growth pressures at green field locations on the edge of the town. In the late 1980s, the area north of Bishop's Stortford was designated as safeguarded land for future mixed-use development including at least 2,500 residential dwellings. To the south the land between the A1184 and Whittington Way, and the Hallingbury Road/Pig Lane area south of the allotments are being promoted by landowners. To the east, the landowners are promoting residential development between the edge of the Golf course and the current edge of the town.
- 4.4.6.8** In terms of the amount of residential development that the town could provide and the direction/s of growth that could successfully accommodate this, the Areas of Search Assessments point to the following conclusions:
- In the *Built-Up Area* the majority of the residential development opportunities are dependent on the relocation of the Secondary Schools, which would open up development options at various sites across the town. The Goods Yard and the Causeway offer prospects for limited additional residential development, although it is expected that these locations will primarily provide for other land uses including retail and employment.
 - To the *north of Bishop's Stortford* the assessments broadly indicate that these are suitable locations for development, subject to further considerations (see Next Steps below). This area is potentially one of the best locations for additional employment in the district outside the town centre. *Sub-Area B* is the most problematic of the three sub-areas because a new roundabout to provide access to the area could have negative impacts on the primary route network. Given the scale of the proposals, very careful consideration will need to be given to layout and provision of bus services and walking/cycling facilities to ensure that existing roads are not unduly impacted by traffic generated by the development.
 - To the *south of Bishop's Stortford* the assessments suggest that *Sub-Areas B and C* are not appropriate for strategic development, principally because of flood risk and highways constraints.

Development at Sub-Area A could include land to be set aside for the relocated secondary schools, which would also be necessary in order to provide additional school places to provide for development at the adjacent development and at other areas within the town.

- To the east of Bishop's Stortford the assessments suggest that Sub-Area A is probably not appropriate for residential development, although its proximity to Junction 8 of the M11 and the existing Woodside Industrial Estate make this area some of the most attractive land in the district for employment uses. Sub-Area B rates highly against most of the assessment criteria. However, most of this sub-area is currently occupied by the Golf Course and the owners have not indicated any intention to relocate. A relatively small area at the margins of the Golf course could potentially be available for development.

4.4.6.9 There are a number of indicators of the potential capacity of Bishop's Stortford to deliver a coherent strategy for balanced development:

- The town centre offer is stronger than that of other towns in the district, and it is the only town centre with potential for significant expansion; notably at the Causeway/Old River Lane but also at the Goods Yard. If the Mill Site becomes available then this also offers long-term significant enhancement potential for the town centre. The Council's retail consultants recommended that Bishop's Stortford town centre should be designated as the Principal Town Centre within the retail hierarchy, even without further town centre expansion;
- The town is the most attractive location in the District for the provision of new jobs. This is attributable to its proximity to the M11, which makes it attractive to both office and industrial markets. However the level of demand for different types of employment uses needs to be realistically assessed;
- The Thorley Centre is the only location in the District which the Council's retail consultants recommended for designation as a District Centre within the retail hierarchy. The Thorley Centre could help to provide additional support for development to the south of the town;
- Enhancements to the railway and bus station area could provide an improved transport hub for the town, which could link new and existing development with the town centre by frequent bus service;
- There is potential for better integration of the station area with the town centre through widening of Station Road Bridge and development of the Goods Yard;

- The northern bypass (A120) and south-western distributor road (A1184) could provide a clear long-term limit to future development, including a robust Green Belt boundary;
 - The Green Wedges could provide a strong framework for a Green Infrastructure Strategy combining an appropriate balance of care for wildlife and recreational potential where appropriate;
 - The proposed expansion of secondary schools could provide capacity to accommodate future growth in pupil numbers;
 - The Sewage Treatment Works has already been upgraded to provide for development of the ASRs;
 - There is land within the bypass around the town which the area assessments have indicated are not significantly constrained by flood risk or other considerations.
- 4.4.6.10** Bearing in mind these considerations, it is possible to see how further work could provide a coherent strategy for management of development pressures. A strategy will need to use the existing advantages of the town in order to build capacity, and to identify and then mitigate any negative impacts of development.
- 4.4.6.11** Even if strategic development were to occur in Bishop's Stortford over the next twenty years, beyond 2031 further growth may be limited by the boundaries set by the major roads to the north, south and west, and by the Green Wedges. By then, the Goods Yard should be developed, and Bishop's Stortford may have reached capacity in terms of its role in the hierarchy of settlements as a medium-sized town serving the surrounding villages. Even if growth options are pursued, Bishop's Stortford's position in the wider settlement hierarchy will continue to be below larger towns like Harlow, Chelmsford and Cambridge, which will continue to provide certain types of employment, such as B8 (warehousing) as well as being higher-order retail centres.

Next Steps

- 4.4.6.12** The District Plan strategy considers the district-wide implications of growth at 69 areas of search. The next step is therefore to consider whether there are other areas of the District which are potentially better locations for development than Bishop's Stortford. It will also be necessary to judge what the overall level of development should be, in terms of the balance of development impacts tested against the agreed upper and lower limits derived from demographic work. This will need to consider the impact of development across administrative boundaries, in the case of Bishop's Stortford, principally in Uttlesford District. A combination of the district-wide

work and the local-area work contained in this chapter should suggest an appropriate level of development for each settlement. This will be the subject of *Chapter 5: Scenarios*.

4.4.6.13 *Chapter 6: Strategies* will then test the sustainability and deliverability of development at Bishop's Stortford and other locations, taking account of growth scenarios within and beyond the town. This process may lead to adjustments to the findings of Chapter 5. Without careful planning there are clear risks to the quality of life and successful functioning of settlements including Bishop's Stortford, arising from the combined effect of development within the town and at other locations, for example in Essex. In the context of strategy development and testing, a number of specific areas for further investigation in Bishop's Stortford stand out:

- there is a need for a realistic appraisal of the *potential of the town centre to expand* and provide the wider capacity for the growth of the town. Understanding of the feasibility of proposals set out in the recent development briefs, including the financial viability of the mix of residential (high value) and employment/retail (lower value), as well as the costs of the proposed Goods Yard link road, will be needed. Discussions with key landowners will also be needed to understand the prospects for the railway/bus station and how this can serve the needs of the town.
- a way forward is needed in terms of a *robust transport strategy*. Various options have been proposed by different parties in the past, including a link road through the Goods Yard to alleviate pressure on the town centre, a circular bus route, a Park & Ride facility and even Ultra Light Rail. The practicality as well as the potential role of these proposals will need to be assessed, and workable solutions proposed. In addition, the impact on the motorway network and Junction 8 will need to be assessed, as will the impact on Little Hadham lights and south along the A1184. The transport strategy will need to take account of growth elsewhere, including possibly at Harlow and in the A120 corridor in Essex, and is likely to need to address car parking at a strategic level.
- Detailed consideration of *walking and cycling issues* will need to be undertaken to maximise opportunities for non-car local movement within the town. This should encompass key routes between new development and the existing town, for example along residential streets and minor roads, the main arterial roads to the town centre, through the Green Wedges, and linking different parts of the town. The level crossing at Cannons Mill Lane is an important consideration, given its current function in providing step-free access for cyclists and pedestrians. Measures to enable access by cyclists and pedestrians of all ability groups, including those with wheelchairs and buggies,

should be applied in the implementation of any changes to this level crossing to balance safety concerns about level crossings with the need for non-car movement through the town.

- a workable *economic development strategy* will need to be developed. In modern economies with complex patterns of employment, complete 'self-containment' of settlements in terms of housing and jobs is not possible, but it is nevertheless a key aspiration of planning to encourage sustainable patterns of development in terms of the mix of uses. An assessment will be needed as to whether the locational advantages of Bishop's Stortford can be harnessed to a deliverable strategy, and how such a strategy could complement economic development aspirations elsewhere, for example at Harlow and at Stansted Airport.
- as there is currently insufficient capacity within the existing schools to provide for growth, the *secondary school capacity issue* will need to be addressed. Depending on the decision of the Secretary of State which is due by the end of July 2012, this issue may be resolved in advance of the strategy process.
- The capacity of the *Sewage Treatment Works* to accommodate development in Bishop's Stortford and in Essex will need to be investigated with Thames Water.

4.4.6.14 There are also a range of other issues which will need to be considered at the preferred growth locations, including the impact on the setting and character of the district's historic settlements. Informed by all the above work, the intention is to draw together local and strategic considerations into a coherent vision for Bishop's Stortford and other locations in the district, to provide a realistic and succinct statement of how the town is anticipated to change over the next twenty years, and how such change can be managed.

Bishop's Stortford: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for Bishop's Stortford. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Bishop's Stortford	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
Scenario Description	Development in the Built-Up Area (1,200); north (2,500); east (150); south (800)	Development in the Built-Up Area (1,200); north (2,500); east (150)	No new secondary school site
Sieve 2 Figure	4,700	3,900	N/A
Sieve 2 Rating	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass	N/A
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes	Yes	Fail

Main Considerations:

Scenario A: Town centre expansion; wider impacts on A120 including Little Hadham lights; Uttlesford District Council's strategy; feasibility of a robust transport strategy; additional secondary school capacity.

Scenario B: Whether or not 800 dwellings to the south of Bishop's Stortford would trigger the need for a Sawbridgeworth/A1184 bypass.

Scenario C: Failed because current secondary schools are at capacity and therefore a new secondary school site will be needed somewhere in Bishop's Stortford in order to accommodate future growth.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.5 Buntingford

This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to Buntingford. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.5.1 Areas of Search

4.5.1.1 The Areas of Search are shown below.

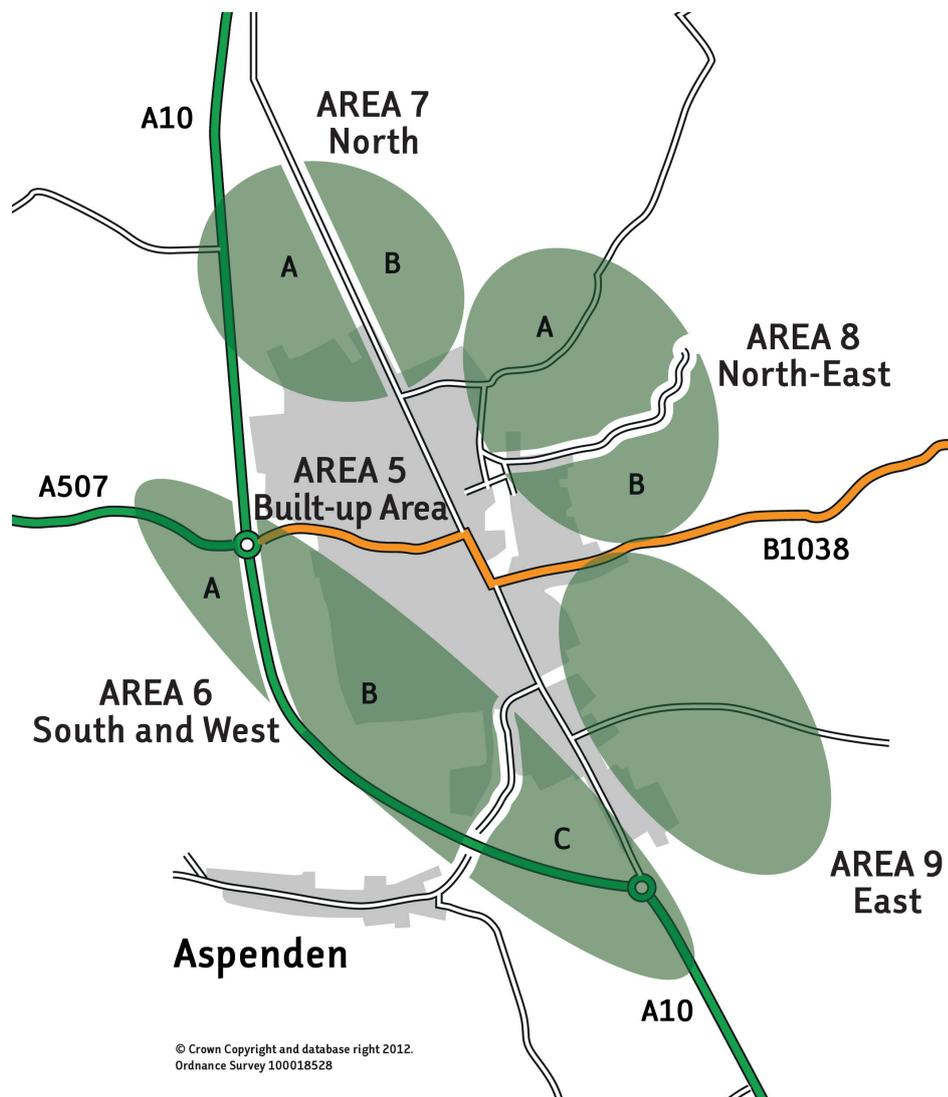


Figure 4.4 Buntingford Areas of Search

4.5.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of each of the Areas of Search for Buntingford are as follows:

- **Area 5 - Buntingford Built-Up Area:**
Current settlement boundary as defined in the Local Plan 2007. No strategically significant locations within the Built-Up Area of Buntingford. This area includes the former Sainsbury's Depot to the south of the town.
- **Area 6 - Buntingford South and West (Sub-Area A):**
West of A10 Bypass (north and south of Baldock Road)
- **Area 6 - Buntingford South and West (Sub-Area B):**
A10 Bypass, Aspenden Road and the Built-Up Area
- **Area 6 - Buntingford South and West (Sub-Area C):**
A10 Bypass, Aspenden Road, London Road and the Built-Up Area
- **Area 7 - Buntingford North (Sub-Area A):**
A10 Bypass, Built-Up Area and Ermine Street
- **Area 7 - Buntingford North (Sub-Area B):**
Ermine Street, Built-Up Area and the River Rib
- **Area 8 - Buntingford North-East (Sub-Area A):**
North of The Causeway to area north of Vicarage Road
- **Area 8 - Buntingford North-East (Sub-Area B):**
South of The Causeway as far as Hare Street Road
- **Area 9 - Buntingford East**
From South of Hare Street Road to area level with A10 roundabout

4.5.2 Buntingford Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 5)

4.5.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 5 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Vehicular Access; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.

4.5.2.2 The Built-Up Area of Buntingford scores positively against a number of assessment criteria, largely because this particular Area of Search is already built-up and the principle of development is already established. As such, there is limited concern in relation to effects on the natural environment.

4.5.2.3 In terms of historic assets, these would need to be taken into account on a site specific basis, depending on the location and nature of development proposed. Along with vehicular access and noise, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

4.5.2.4 Located in the rural north of the district, Buntingford is unique, both in terms of being some distance from the other towns and the only town in East Herts without a railway station. As such, it has poor accessibility to rail services, with the closest station being Royston (12.1km). Accessibility to the station by bus is also beyond 15 minutes travel time (considered to be the reasonable maximum period that people would travel for onward travel connections). This strategic issue applies equally to all of the Buntingford Areas of Search. In terms of the Built-Up Area itself, access to bus services is considered to be good.

4.5.2.5 Buntingford Built-Up Area scores ‘amber’ in terms of employment potential and secondary/middle schools. In terms of the former, the High Street has good resilience even through the economic downturn, although the relative remoteness of the town from major road networks and the lack of railway links does limit the potential growth. In terms of education, there are capacity issues and potential expansion issues and as such, further technical work is required.

- 4.5.2.6** Buntingford does however, score poorly in terms of waste water impact where further technical work is needed to upgrade the existing treatment works. Similarly, flood risk is a prominent issue running through the centre of the Area of Search.
- 4.5.2.7** In terms of land availability, an initial land availability assessment would indicate that Buntingford Built-Up Area would be unlikely to meet the 500 dwelling planning assumption. It should be noted this area of search includes the former Sainsbury's Depot to the south of the town which has been vacant for a number of years. In June 2012, East Herts Council received an outline planning application for replacement of the existing buildings with a single distribution facility. Although the application still needs to be formally determined by the Council's Development Control committee, it indicates the intention of the landowner to continue employment use on the site. As such, the site is no longer considered as being available for residential redevelopment.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.5.2.8** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, it is concluded that Buntingford Built-Up Area would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver a strategic scale of development, including, due to potential issues with waste water, education and insufficient amount of available land. Given the small size of the town, there are considered to be few other opportunities for large-scale redevelopment elsewhere. Buntingford Built-Up Area, therefore, may only be able to accommodate fewer than 500 dwellings.
- 4.5.2.9** A total of 95 dwellings are under construction on two sites: 50 at land west of Greenways and 45 remaining at Olvega Drive on the allocated Local Plan 2007 site to the west of London Road. There is also planning permission for a further 37 dwellings on smaller sites across the town. A further 30 dwellings could be delivered and these are being considered in more detail through the SLAA process, although most have been identified as being available towards the end of the plan period. ⁽¹¹⁷⁾
- 4.5.2.10** The interim figures of possible locations for growth within the Built-Up Area of Buntingford are as follows:
- Interim SLAA Sites: up to 30 dwellings
 - Other permissions: up to 37 dwellings

117 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA). See www.eastherts.gov.uk/slaa for further information and the latest updates. It should be noted that the 30 dwelling figure is based on an interim SLAA assessment of sites which could come forward. These sites differ in some respects from the land availability draft topic assessments, which were based on the Call for Sites prior to the latest round of SLAA consultation and assessment. It should be noted that these figures are interim and subject to change.

- 4.5.2.11** These figures add up to a total of **67 dwellings for the Buntingford Built-Up Area**. It should be noted that there is one remaining housing site at Park Farm Industrial Area Extension which is allocated for 7 Live/Work units in the Local Plan 2007. This site on the edge of the town and adjacent to an existing employment area provides a valuable employment opportunity for Buntingford and whilst the concept of Live/Work units is laudable, if they do not come forward for development, then employment/commercial uses should be considered on this site, subject to issues in respect of neighbouring amenity.
- 4.5.2.12** Consistent with the strategic criteria-based approach, detailed assessment of particular sites has not been undertaken. However, strategic transport modelling will be needed in order to take account of the additional vehicle trips generated by this development in the context of any planned additional development outside of the Built-Up Area.

Area 5: Buntingford Built-Up Area

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the Buntingford Built-Up Area. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 5	Sieve 1
500 dwellings	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Marginal Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	67
Sieve 1 Rating	Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations: Education and waste water infrastructure are strategic issues that relate to the town as a whole whilst flood risk affects the Built-Up area in particular.

Note: The Sieve 1 figure for the Built-Up Area is subject to finalisation of the SLAA and may therefore go up or down. Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.5.3 Buntingford South and West (Sieve 1: Area 6)

4.5.3.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 6 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 6: Sub Area A

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Environmental Stewardship.

4.5.3.2 Buntingford South and West Sub-Area A scores positively against a number of topics including Designated Wildlife Sites, Historic Assets and Landscape Character although against agricultural land classification the sub-area scores poorly, being Grade 2 agricultural land.

4.5.3.3 One of the main considerations for this particular sub-area is the fact that it is located to the west of the A10 bypass with only minor field boundaries acting as a limit to development. Whilst vehicular access is considered to be good, with access to the A507, pedestrian connectivity would be an issue and depending on scale of provision, upgrades to pedestrian and cycle access arrangements towards the town centre may be required. In respect of accessibility to bus services, dependent upon the scale of development many properties could become remote from existing service provision and additional stopping facilities could be necessary. In respect of access to rail services, this issue is not unique to this particular Area of Search; Buntingford as a whole scores poorly in this regard with Royston being the closest station 11.9km away.

4.5.3.4 Similarly, an issue affecting Buntingford as a whole is in respect of secondary/middle education; there are capacity issues and potential expansion issues and as such, further technical work is required. In respect of waste water, treatment works upgrades would be required, and any development could be served by a gravity sewer along the bypass. The area is outside the zone of flood risk. Noise is also an issue from the A10.

4.5.3.5 In terms of employment potential, sites to the south and west of the town are the most visible and accessible due to their location on the A10. There is good clustering potential in this location to the existing employment land in the town.

4.5.3.6 In terms of minerals and waste, there is an allocated waste site and it is an area which the County Council considers may be compatible with waste management uses but currently have little immediate potential for redevelopment.

4.5.3.7 The only land suggested through the Call for Sites is 4ha to the north of Buntingford Business Park and this has been suggested for non-residential land uses. Notwithstanding this, if the site was to be proposed for residential development, it would only yield some 100 dwellings (assuming a density of 25dph).

Area 6: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Landscape Character; Community Facilities; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.5.3.8 Buntingford South and West Sub-Area B scores positively against a number of topics including, Designated Wildlife Sites, Historic Assets, Minerals and Waste Designations and Environmental Stewardship, although against agricultural land classification the sub-area scores poorly, being Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land.

4.5.3.9 The sub-area is delineated by the A10 bypass and so against strategic gaps and boundary limits to growth, the sub-area is considered to score positively in favour of development, although careful design may be needed to maintain visual separation from Aspenden. In terms of landscape, this Sub-Area is effectively cut off by the A10 bypass, with the A10 corridor being a strong feature of the area. The traffic is locally intrusive as are some of the built features within Buntingford. Noise is an issue from the A10.

4.5.3.10 In respect of access to rail services, this issue is not unique to this particular Area of Search; Buntingford as a whole scores poorly in this regard with Royston being the closest station 12.5km away. Similarly, an issue affecting Buntingford as a whole is in respect of secondary/middle education; there are capacity issues and potential expansion issues and as such, further technical work is required.

- 4.5.3.11** Vehicular access could potentially be achieved via a combination of Longmead, Baldock Road and Luynes Rise. Use of more than one access point would enable development in excess of the maximum 300 dwellings usually served by a single point of access. Furthermore, if access could be achieved without the use of the A10 as an entry point, then the categorisation rating could change to green. Notwithstanding this, outline planning permission has been granted for residential development on two sites off Longmead and Baldock Road. Dependent on how these schemes are implemented, access to Sub-Area B could be impeded which could call into question the suitability of Sub-Area B in highway terms. In terms of access to buses, this will be dependent upon the extent of development and is becoming remote from existing service provision. Careful layout will be necessary.
- 4.5.3.12** In terms of employment potential, sites to the south and west of the town are the most visible and accessible due to their location on the A10, although accessibility to the town centre is hindered by the large impermeable housing estate in this area. There is good clustering potential in this location to the existing employment land in the town.
- 4.5.3.13** In respect of waste water, treatment works upgrades would be required. Nearer the treatment works, odour could also be an issue although a buffer could help to alleviate this. In respect of flooding, there are no areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3, except around the sewage treatment works and along Aspenden Road.
- 4.5.3.14** The undeveloped land contained by the A10, Baldock Road and Aspenden Road comprises some 20 hectares, the vast majority of which has been proposed through the Call for Sites. Assuming a density of 25dph, this would yield some 500 dwellings which would be sufficient to deliver the planning assumption of 500 dwellings.

Area 6: Sub-Area C

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

- 4.5.3.15** Buntingford South and West Sub-Area C scores positively against a number of topics including, Designated Wildlife Sites, Historic Assets, Minerals and Waste Designations and Environmental Stewardship. In terms of

landscape, this Sub-Area is effectively cut off by the A10 bypass, with the A10 corridor being a strong feature of the area. The traffic is locally intrusive as are some of the built features within Buntingford. Traffic noise is also an issue. Of the three Sub-Areas, Sub-Area C contains the least valuable agricultural land.

- 4.5.3.16** The A10 bypass cuts this particular area of search approximately in half and development within the bypass would be more preferable than development to the south of the bypass where there are few existing defined boundaries that could limit development. Noise is an issue from the A10. Vehicular access could potentially be achieved via London Road and in addition, improvements could be made to Aspenden Road. Access to bus services will be dependent upon the extent of development and is becoming remote from existing service provision. Careful layout will be necessary.
- 4.5.3.17** In respect of access to rail services, this issue is not unique to this particular Area of Search: Buntingford as a whole scores poorly in this regard with Royston being the closest station 13km away. Similarly, an issue affecting Buntingford as a whole is in respect of secondary/middle education; there are capacity issues and potential expansion issues and as such, further technical work is required.
- 4.5.3.18** In terms of employment potential, sites to the south and west of the town are the most visible and accessible due to their location on the A10. There is good clustering potential in this location to the existing employment land in the town.
- 4.5.3.19** In respect of flooding, there are no areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3, except along Aspenden Road.
- 4.5.3.20** There is some 4.8ha of undeveloped land within the bypass which corresponds with land that has been promoted through the Call for Sites. Assuming a density of 25dph, this would equate to some 120 dwellings and would be insufficient to accommodate the strategic planning assumption of 500 dwellings.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.5.3.21** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, whilst considered suitable in many respects, owing to the poor relationship to the existing built-up area, it is considered that Buntingford South and West Sub-Area A would not be suitable for residential development and could not accommodate either the planning assumption increase of 500 dwellings or an assumption of fewer than 500 dwellings. Notwithstanding this, Sub-Area A is considered suitable for employment development associated with the existing Buntingford Business Park.

- 4.5.3.22** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that Buntingford South and West Sub-Area B could accommodate the planning assumption increase of 500 dwellings, although expansion of the town needs to be carefully considered in terms of landscape; whilst viewed as peripheral to the built-up area, this Sub-Area could play a useful role in creating a buffer between the town and the countryside. Vehicular access to the Sub-Area may be an issue.
- 4.5.3.23** In respect of Buntingford South and West Sub-Area C, the land adjacent to the Built-Up Area within the bypass is considered more suitable than land to the south of the bypass since it acts as a southern gateway to the town. However, whilst the land within the bypass is available for development there would be insufficient capacity to accommodate 500 dwellings. Similarly to Sub-Area B, expansion of the town needs to be carefully considered in terms of landscape; whilst viewed as peripheral to the built-up area, this Sub-Area could play a useful role in creating a buffer between the town and the countryside.

Area 6: Buntingford South and West

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Buntingford South and West. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 6	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B	Sub-Area C
500 dwellings	Fail	Marginal Pass	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail	Marginal Pass	Marginal Pass (within the A10 bypass only)
Sieve 1 Figure	0	500	120
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail	Marginal Pass	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No	Yes	Yes

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Failed due to poor relationship with existing built-up area and suitability for alternative employment uses

Sub-Area B: Education and waste water infrastructure are strategic issues that relate to the town as a whole, although in this location, waste water relates to potential odour issues. Traffic noise from the A10 and vehicular access to the Sub-Area may also be issues.

Sub-Area C: Education and waste water infrastructure are strategic issues that relate to the town as a whole. Traffic noise from the A10 may also be an issue.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.5.4 Buntingford North (Sieve 1: Area 7)

4.5.4.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 7 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 7: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Environmental Stewardship.

4.5.4.2 Buntingford North Sub-Area A scores positively against topics such as Designated Wildlife Sites, Historic Assets, Strategic Gaps and Environmental Stewardship.

4.5.4.3 In terms of landscape character, Buntingford North represents the last section of the River Rib that retains a distinctive valley form and associated land uses. Whilst the A10 could be used as a boundary limit to growth to the west, to the north there are only some minor field boundaries. In terms of agricultural land classification, a mix of Grade 2 and 3 land can be found.

4.5.4.4 Development in this location would require highway improvements from the A10. Additional vehicular access points could be achieved although the cumulative effects of additional traffic on the town centre would need addressing and further consideration given to junction improvements with the A10. In respect of bus services, this Area of Search is likely to fall outside accessibility criteria and will require diversions and service enhancements. In respect of rail services this issue is not unique to this particular Area of Search; Buntingford as a whole scores poorly in this regard with Royston being the closest station 11km away.

4.5.4.5 In terms of employment potential, access is considered reasonable via Ermine Street and there would be potential to expand an existing employment site at Park Farm providing for good clustering potential in this location. The County Council also considers that this area may be compatible with waste management, although there is little immediate potential for redevelopment.

- 4.5.4.6** This Area of Search includes land used by Freman College, where there are capacity issues and potential expansion issues in respect of secondary/middle education in Buntingford and as such, further technical work is required. Development in this location could facilitate new school playing fields enabling expansion of the existing school buildings which would alleviate the secondary school capacity issues in the town.
- 4.5.4.7** One of the biggest issues in respect of this area of search is in respect of waste water impact, where upgrades to both the treatment works (to the south of the town) and sewers would be required. A gravity-based sewer would involve digging up the High Street. An alternative, but more expensive, option, would be a pumping station and a new sewer alongside the A10 bypass.
- 4.5.4.8** There is some 20 hectares of undeveloped land between Ermine Street and the A10 and the vast majority has been promoted through the Call for Sites. Assuming a density of 25dph, this would equate to some 500 dwellings, equal to the 500 dwelling planning assumption threshold. As such, further consideration should be given to land to the north of Buntingford.

Area 7: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.

- 4.5.4.9** Buntingford North Sub-Area B scores positively against topics such as Designated Wildlife Sites, Strategic Gaps, Minerals and Waste Designations, Agricultural Land Classification and Environmental Stewardship.
- 4.5.4.10** In terms of landscape character, Buntingford North represents the last section of the River Rib that retains a distinctive valley form and associated land uses. Further north and out of the area the river climbs onto the high plateau and has more the character of a local stream. Whilst Ermine Street could form a clear western boundary feature, there are no clear boundaries in other directions. A dense swath of trees lies beyond the area of search to the north-east. The sub-area itself is covered by the historic parkland associated with Corneybury House, which is a Listed Building.

- 4.5.4.11** Development in this location would require highway improvements from the A10. Additional vehicular access points could be achieved although the cumulative effects of additional traffic on the town centre would need addressing. In respect of bus services, this Area of Search is likely to fall outside accessibility criteria and will require diversions and service enhancements. In respect of rail services this issue is not unique to this particular Area of Search; Buntingford as a whole scores poorly in this regard with Royston being the closest station 10.9km away.
- 4.5.4.12** One of the biggest issues in respect of this area of search is in respect of waste water impact, where upgrades to both the treatment works (to the south of the town) and sewers would be required. A gravity-based sewer would involve digging up the High Street. An alternative, but more expensive option, would be a pumping station and a new sewer alongside the A10 bypass. There is also an extensive area of Flood Zone 2 adjacent to the River Rib.
- 4.5.4.13** In terms of employment potential, access is considered reasonable via Ermine Street and there would be potential to expand an existing employment site at Park Farm providing for good clustering potential in this location. There are capacity issues and potential expansion issues in respect of secondary/middle education in Buntingford and as such, further technical work is required.
- 4.5.4.14** No land has been suggested for development in this particular sub-area.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.5.4.15** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that Buntingford North Sub-Area A is a suitable location to accommodate development, although further technical investigations are required, particularly in respect of the viability of bus service provision and waste water upgrades. Based on the assumption of 25dph, there is currently slightly insufficient land available to meet the 500 dwelling increase planning assumption in respect of Sub-Area A. However, this is not considered to be a significant issue.
- 4.5.4.16** In respect of Sub-Area B, it is considered that it would not be a suitable location for development, owing to the presence of historic assets and risk of flooding.

Area 7: Buntingford North

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Buntingford North. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 7	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B
500 dwellings	Marginal Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Marginal Fail	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	500	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes	No

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Education and waste water infrastructure are strategic issues that relate to the town as a whole, although in respect of the latter, the costs of such infrastructure provision need further investigation given the distance of this location from the existing sewage works. Highway issues also need consideration.

Sub-Area B: Failed because of Corneybury Parkland, flood risk and lack of available land. Education, waste water and highways would also be an issue in this location.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.5.5 Buntingford North-East (Sieve 1: Area 8)

4.5.5.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 8 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 8: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Landscape Character;

	Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.

- 4.5.5.2** Buntingford North-East Sub-Area A scores positively against topics such as Designated Wildlife Sites, Strategic Gaps, Minerals and Waste Designations, Environmental Stewardship and Noise Impacts.
- 4.5.5.3** In terms of landscape character, the character area represents the last section of the River Rib that retains a distinctive valley form and associated land uses. Further north and out of the area the river climbs onto the high plateau and has more the character of a local stream. Whilst development can be constrained by Wyddial Road and The Causeway, there are less clear boundary features north of Wyddial Road.
- 4.5.5.4** In terms of employment potential, Buntingford North-East is the least well connected of the Buntingford Areas of Search to the main roads in the town, being accessed only by local roads. There is however, good clustering potential to the existing employment sites. Highways infrastructure works would also be required, including to enable access from the A10 from a northerly direction. Accessibility to bus services is dependent upon the extent of development; the western parts are in fairly close proximity to existing transport provision in the High Street (Market Hill area) whereas the northern extremities become remote from existing service provision.
- 4.5.5.5** In respect of access to rail services, this issue is not unique to this particular Area of Search; Buntingford as a whole scores poorly in this regard with Royston being the closest station 11.3km away. Similarly, in respect of secondary/middle education, there are capacity issues and potential expansion issues and as such, further technical work is required.
- 4.5.5.6** Although the area of land at risk of flooding is not extensive, it forms the western edge of the Sub-Area closest to the existing built-up area of the town. As such, flood risk may pose greater challenges in terms of integrating any development to the town. Waste water is more of an issue, including for the town as a whole where further technical work is required in respect of the required upgrade to Buntingford sewerage treatment works.
- 4.5.5.7** Buntingford North-East Area of Search includes historic assets (e.g. Listed Buildings and Areas of Archaeological Significance) on both its eastern and western peripheries. The presence of land associated with the historic asset of 'Little Court' in the southwest of the Sub-Area may restrict

development. Although the majority of the Area of Search is classified as Grade 2 agricultural land, immediately adjacent to the urban area is Grade 3.

4.5.5.8 In terms of land availability, no land has been suggested for development within this particular Sub-Area.

Area 8: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Waste Water Impact; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.

4.5.5.9 Buntingford North-East Sub-Area B scores positively against a number of topics including Designated Wildlife Sites, Historic Assets, Green Belt, Strategic Gaps, Minerals and Waste Designations, Environmental Stewardship and Noise Impacts.

4.5.5.10 In respect of landscape character and boundary limits to growth, the area comprises an elevated arable landscape with extensive views over a gently undulating plateau. Whilst The Causeway and Hare Street Road could form clear north and south boundaries, there are only very minor field boundaries to the east, including a relatively recently planted tree belt. Although the majority of the Area of Search is classified as Grade 2 agricultural land, immediately adjacent to the urban area is Grade 3.

4.5.5.11 In terms of employment potential, Buntingford North-East is the least well connected of the Buntingford Areas of Search to the main roads in the town, being accessed only by local roads. There is however, good clustering potential to the existing employment sites. Highways infrastructure works would also be required including to enable access from the A10 from a northerly direction. Accessibility to bus services is dependent upon the extent of development: the western parts are in fairly close proximity to existing transport provision in the High Street (Market Hill area) whereas the northern extremities become remote from existing service provision. In respect of access to rail service, this issue is not unique to this particular Area of Search; Buntingford as a whole scores poorly in this regard with Royston being the closest station 11.7km away. Similarly, in respect of secondary/middle education, there are capacity issues and potential expansion issues and as such, further technical work is required.

- 4.5.5.12** Waste water is also an issue, including for the town as a whole where further technical work is required in respect of the required upgrade to Buntingford sewerage treatment works. This location is further from the treatment works, but a larger quantity of development to the east, perhaps including in tandem with Area of Search 9, would make this more viable.
- 4.5.5.13** One site has been submitted through the Call for Sites with the intention to bring forward the site for predominately residential development, including community leisure facilities and a cemetery. Development of this site could also enable the expansion of Layston First school to meet the required increases in capacity should they be required. However, the proposed site would not have the capacity to deliver the planning assumption of 500 dwellings.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.5.5.14** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that Buntingford North-East Sub-Area A would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver a strategic scale of development, including, due to its relationship to the existing built-up area where issues of flood risk prevail.
- 4.5.5.15** In respect of Sub-Area B, it is also considered that this would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver a strategic scale of development with only some 300 dwellings achievable. In addition to issues around waste water and education, expansion of the town in this location needs to be carefully considered in terms of the quantum and eastern extent of any development i.e. landscape, visual impact and boundary limits.

Area 8: Buntingford North-East

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Buntingford North-East. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 8	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B
500 dwellings	Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail	Marginal Pass
Sieve 1 Figure	0	300
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No	Yes

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Failed due to relationship with existing built-up area and issues of flood risk.

Sub-Area B: Education and waste water infrastructure are strategic issues that relate to the town as a whole. Particular issues in this location relate to landscape, visual impact and boundary limits.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.5.6 Buntingford East (Sieve 1: Area 9)

4.5.6.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 9 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites;

Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.

- 4.5.6.2** Buntingford East scores positively against a number of topics including Highways Infrastructure, Vehicular Access, Access to Bus Services, Designated Wildlife Sites, Historic Assets, Strategic Gaps, Minerals and Waste Designations, Environmental Stewardship, and Noise Impacts.
- 4.5.6.3** In respect of landscape character and boundary limits to growth, the area comprises an elevated arable landscape with extensive views over a gently undulating plateau. As such, there are poor boundary limits to any eastward development of the Area of Search, although a relatively recently planted tree belt has been planted, and south of Owles Lane there are no clear southern boundary limits.
- 4.5.6.4** In respect of access to rail services, this issue is not unique to this particular Area of Search; Buntingford as a whole scores poorly in this regard with Royston being the closest station 12.5km away. Similarly, an issue affecting Buntingford as a whole is in respect of secondary/middle education; there are capacity issues and potential expansion issues and as such, further technical work is required. In respect of access to bus services, the Area of Search is in close proximity to existing transport provision in Hare Street Road and High Street/Station Road/London Road. Vehicular access could potentially be achieved via Owles Lane, Snells Mead, Hare Street Road, and the roundabout with the Former Sainsbury's Depot, London Road/A10. However, in respect of the latter point of access, this conclusion was reached based on the assumption that any development to the east would occur in tandem with the redevelopment of the former Sainsbury's Depot which could then facilitate access. Following receipt of the planning application for the redevelopment of the depot for employment uses, it is considered that access from the A10 roundabout could not now be achieved. This calls into question the suitability of land for residential development immediately to the east of the depot (to the south of Owles Lane).
- 4.5.6.5** In terms of employment potential, Buntingford East would be well-connected to major road networks with good clustering potential to the existing employment sites.
- 4.5.6.6** A small part of the Area of Search is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (along Hailey Hill Ditch) and in terms of agricultural land, immediately adjacent to the urban area is Grade 3, then Grade 2. In respect of waste water impact, as with the other Areas of Search, treatment works upgrades would be required. This location is further from the treatment works, but a larger quantity of development to the east, perhaps including in tandem with development in Area of Search 8, would make this more viable.

4.5.6.7 Submitted through the Call for Sites, two sites have been proposed, to the north and south of Owles Lane totalling 30.5ha. Given the potential access issues to the south of Owles Lane it is considered that some 20 hectares could be developed for housing. Assuming 25dph, this would total some 500 dwellings, again equal to the planning assumption of 500 dwellings. Notwithstanding the above, the land to the east of the former Sainsbury's Depot could be accessed through the Depot itself and could, therefore, be considered suitable for employment development.

Conclusions and Next Steps

4.5.6.8 Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that there is sufficient land available to accommodate the 500 dwelling planning assumption. In addition to issues around waste water and education, expansion of the town in this location needs to be carefully considered in terms of the quantum and eastern extent of any development i.e. landscape, visual impact and boundary limits.

Area 9: Buntingford East

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Buntingford East. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 9	Sieve 1
500 dwellings	Marginal Pass
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Marginal Pass
Sieve 1 Figure	500
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations: Education and waste water infrastructure are strategic issues that relate to the town as a whole. Particular issues in this location relate to landscape, visual impact and boundary limits.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.5.7 Buntingford: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

- 4.5.7.1** Located in the rural north of the district, Buntingford has a clear role as a small market town and rural service centre, exhibiting traditional market town characteristics.
- 4.5.7.2** Whilst the town itself is small - being the smallest of the five in East Herts - and has a population of about 5,200, it is surrounded by an extensive rural hinterland with a combined population of 14,000. Buntingford is unusual in the East Herts context in that it is not located close to other towns; the nearest town being Royston in neighbouring North Hertfordshire district some 7 miles to the north. It is also the only town in the district without a railway station; the line to St Margarets via Much Hadham having closed in 1964. Buntingford is located on the A10 from Ware to Royston, although the road itself has bypassed the town since 1987 greatly improving the town centre and High Street environments.
- 4.5.7.3** As a smaller centre, it provides essential services and convenience goods shopping to its catchment. The mix of uses is expected for a town of its size although Buntingford's weaker comparison goods offer means that expenditure leaks to the larger towns of Bishop's Stortford and Stevenage, in particular. Any new retail scheme within the town centre or well related to it that might support the town's vitality and viability should be supported, although the historic nature of the town centre with its Conservation Area and number of Listed Buildings perhaps limits the ability of the town to adapt to accommodate a greater quantum and variety of retail floorspace.
- 4.5.7.4** Buntingford is served by four employment areas that score positively overall in terms of their provision. These sites provide a good mix, both in terms of smaller, local needs as well as larger warehousing with good road access. One of the largest employment sites in the district is the former Sainsbury's distribution depot, to the south of the town which has been vacant for a number of years (see below).
- 4.5.7.5** In terms of housing, Buntingford is located within the Cheshunt/A10 Corridor housing market area which also includes the towns of Broxbourne, Cheshunt, Hertford, Hoddesdon, Waltham Abbey, Waltham Cross and Ware. The housing market area reflects existing functional linkages between places where people live and work and their demand and preferences for housing. Buntingford grew significantly in the 1960's and along with the other towns in East Herts has witnessed further housing growth.
- 4.5.7.6** The key defining feature of Buntingford is its narrow valley setting at the crossing of the River Rib. Whilst the town centre has remained compact and respected this landscape context, modern housing development has diluted this somewhat, with development creeping up the valley slopes

particularly to the west along Baldock Road. A noticeable feature of the built form is the number of cul-de-sacs, reflecting design tastes in the second half of the 20th century.

- 4.5.7.7** In terms of passenger transport, as noted previously, Buntingford is not served by a railway station; the closest provision being either Royston or Stevenage. In terms of buses, no commercial services operate; all services being tendered by the County Council. On the whole, the existing built-up area is accessible to the existing services, whilst in respect of new peripheral development, it is considered that there is a danger that development could become remote from existing service provision. In terms of Green Infrastructure, enhanced links along the disused railway and river corridor have been suggested, as well as additional planting to screen the A10 to the south particularly.
- 4.5.7.8** Buntingford is served by a sewerage treatment works to the south of the town, which will require upgrading in order to accommodate significant development. Although there may be odour issues in the immediate environs of the sewage works itself, because of the costs associated with the provision of new infrastructure, locations nearer to the sewage works i.e. towards the south of the town are preferred for development by Thames Water, as these are unlikely to require additional infrastructure such as sewers and a possible pumping station. Flood risk is also an issue along the River Rib corridor and there have been a number of surface water flooding events recorded.
- 4.5.7.9** A three tier school system operates in Buntingford and the surrounding area (which includes Puckeridge). In Buntingford itself there are two first schools (Layston C of E and Millfield) whilst at the middle tier children go to either Edwinstree in Buntingford or Ralph Sadlier in Puckeridge. At the upper tier, there is one secondary school, Freman College, in Buntingford. At the primary level, there is some surplus capacity although additional provision may be needed if development results in a need of more than 1 Form of Entry (FE) i.e. over 850 dwellings.
- 4.5.7.10** However, not only is there no current capacity at the middle tier but there is also a deficit and feasibility work needs to be undertaken to establish whether either of the existing school sites could be expanded. It is assumed any expansion could resolve the deficit and cater for the needs of additional development. Secondary education is provided at Freman College, which was full in 2010 and has a 2 FE deficit. Development of between 500-850 dwellings would result in expansion by 1 FE and the school could be extended to the north to accommodate this (and the deficit), although the land is not currently in HCC or school ownership. It could come forward as part of any development to the north of the town. In terms of sports and recreation, additional football pitches and tennis courts are required and, subject to the level of growth, a sports hall serving the north of the district.

- 4.5.7.11** In terms of the quantum of development that Buntingford could deliver to 2031 and the direction/s of growth that could successfully accommodate this, the Areas of Search Assessments have reached a number of conclusions. In general terms, based on the interim evaluations (Sieve 1), it is considered that individually, each Area of Search Assessment in Buntingford could be suitable for some development.
- 4.5.7.12** In many respects, Buntingford Built-Up Area is considered to be the most sustainable location for development. However, given the size and nature of the town there is very little brownfield land available. Indeed, only 67 dwellings have been identified through the SLAA. One reason for this concerns the future of the former Sainsbury's Depot to the south of the town. The site has been vacant for a number of years and as such, was suggested as being potentially suitable for redevelopment in the Issues and Options consultation in 2010. However, in June 2012, East Herts Council received an outline planning application for replacement of the existing buildings with a single distribution facility. Although the application still needs to be formally determined by the Council's Development Control Committee, it indicates the intention of the landowner to continue employment use on the site. As such, the site is no longer considered as being available for residential redevelopment.
- 4.5.7.13** Providing that growth to the south and west of Buntingford was contained within the A10 bypass, some 620 dwellings could be delivered. However, issues in respect of noise from the A10 and odour from the sewage treatment works require further consideration, although in respect of the latter, this area is preferable in terms of new sewage infrastructure. Careful consideration also needs to be given to this area in terms of landscape, as although it is viewed as peripheral to the built-up area, it could play a useful role in creating a buffer between the town and the countryside.
- 4.5.7.14** Development to the north of Buntingford, could deliver some 500 dwellings between the A10 bypass and Ermine Street. In addition, to noise from the A10, the location is perhaps least preferable in terms of passenger transport and waste water, although it is most preferable in terms of respecting the landscape setting of the town. This location also has the potential to provide opportunities in respect of provision of land for non-residential uses such as education and employment, through extensions to the adjacent Freman College and Park Farm employment area. There are two technical solutions to accommodate development to the north; a gravity-based sewer requiring works along the High Street or, more expensively, a pumping station and new sewer along the A10 bypass. Further technical investigations are required to establish whether the quantum of development would be sufficient to resolve waste water and passenger transport issues.
- 4.5.7.15** To the northeast, the area is divided into two sub-areas; Sub-Area A to the north of The Causeway and Sub-Area B to the south between The Causeway and Hare Street Road. Sub-Area A is considered to relate poorly

to the existing built-up area, hampered by the fact that although the area at risk of flooding is not extensive, it forms the western edge of the Sub-Area closest to the existing built-up area of the town. As such, flood risk may pose greater challenges in terms of integrating any development to the town.

- 4.5.7.16** In respect of Sub-Area B, on land to the south of The Causeway (north of Hare Street Road), this Sub-Area could accommodate some 300 dwellings and development would have the potential to provide land for the expansion of the adjacent Layston First School. The site is being actively promoted by a developer for 160 dwellings, a cemetery and community leisure facilities, and the provision of additional burial space in close proximity to the existing burial ground is welcomed to address the urgent lack of capacity. However, as with all land to the east of Buntingford, there are issues in respect of the impact on the landscape setting of the town and in respect of waste water.
- 4.5.7.17** Given the distance of land to the northeast and east of Buntingford from the existing sewage treatment works, Thames Water have indicated that a larger quantum of development would make the provision of the necessary infrastructure more viable. However, it is unclear at this stage as to what the minimum quantum of development required is and whether the amount of development considered acceptable in all other respects would be sufficient. Further technical investigations and discussions with Thames Water are needed.
- 4.5.7.18** In respect of growth to the east, the issues identified are similar to those for land to the northeast, with careful consideration needing to be given to issues of landscape setting. Land has been submitted through the Call for Sites to the south of Hare Street Road and adjacent to the former Sainsbury's Depot, although owing to potential access constraints arising from the redevelopment of the Depot itself, this land is considered to be more suitable for employment uses. Land to the east could deliver some 500 dwellings.
- 4.5.7.19** A number of issues are applicable to Buntingford as a whole and affect all of the Areas of Search. In terms of waste water, the sewage treatment works to the south of the town will require upgrading, irrespective of the location of any development. Development towards the south is preferred in terms of the provision of new infrastructure such as sewers. Education has been flagged as an issue by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), which has requested that if significant levels of development are to occur in Buntingford, early discussions should take place around a strategy to ensure education provision. There are particular issues in respect of capacity at the middle and upper tiers; both suffer from existing deficits and would require expansion not only to resolve the deficit but to accommodate any additional growth. Further technical investigations are required in order to establish whether these issues may be able to be

resolved through school expansion, although it is unclear whether funding is available or whether the quantum of development is sufficient to fund any school expansion. Such expansion is technically possible, although in both cases the adjacent land is not in HCC or school ownership. Another issue affecting the whole town is the fact that Buntingford does not have a railway station; the nearest being Royston some seven miles to the north.

4.5.7.20 This alone, calls into question the suitability of Buntingford as a location for significant development. Indeed, if the figures quoted for all the Areas of Search were to be realised, this would total almost 2,000 dwellings over the period to 2031 (an average of 100 per annum). But the District Plan is more than about building houses; it is about creating sustainable communities and this requires growth in commercial and employment activities in tandem with any growth in housing. At one level, Buntingford could accommodate significant housing growth; perhaps being seen as the most suitable of the five towns since it is outside the Green Belt. However, such an approach would fundamentally change the role of Buntingford from a small market town to effectively a dormitory settlement. This is because there are considered to be limited opportunities within the town centre to increase its retail offer in parallel with the scale of housing. As the retail study noted, Buntingford is not and never will be a significant comparison retail destination. In addition, in employment terms, it is not considered that significant employment land would be delivered; instead there is potential for development by making better use of and/or extending the existing employment areas.

4.5.7.21 As such, it is considered that Buntingford should accept a more modest scale of development, although it is acknowledged that this could still be significant given the small size of the town. Because infrastructure thresholds are currently unknown at this stage, defining the appropriate quantum of development, as well as the most appropriate locations, is subject to further work in Sieve 3. Such work would need to consider waste water and highway issues in particular.

Next Steps

4.5.7.22 The District Plan strategy considers the district-wide implications of growth at 69 areas of search. The next step is therefore to consider whether there are other areas of the District which are potentially better locations for development than Buntingford. It will also be necessary to judge what the overall level of development should be, in terms of the balance of development impacts, tested against the agreed upper and lower limits derived from demographic work. A combination of the district-wide work and the local-area work contained in this chapter should suggest an appropriate level of development for each settlement. This will be the subject of *Chapter 5: Scenarios*.

4.5.7.23 *Chapter 6: Strategies* will then test the sustainability and deliverability of development at Buntingford and other locations, taking account of growth scenarios within and beyond the town. This process may lead to adjustments to the findings of Chapter 5. Without careful planning there are clear risks to the quality of life and successful functioning of settlements including Buntingford, arising from the combined effect of development within the town and at other locations. In the context of strategy development and testing, a number of specific areas for further investigation in Buntingford stand out:

- transport modelling and highway issues.
- realistic appraisal of the potential of the town centre to expand and provide the wider capacity for the growth of the town should a large scale of development occur.
- assessment of the costs and viability of waste water infrastructure.
- assessment into the educational needs of the community.

4.5.7.24 In addition to these critical issues the impact on retail provision would also need to be considered and the potential for additional employment opportunities explored further, especially in relation to effects on existing provision. Other details arising from issues raised in some of the remaining topic assessments would also need to be investigated further, if the key issue explorations indicate that the major obstacles to development could be surmounted.

4.5.7.25 At this stage it is considered that a modest scale of development would be appropriate for Buntingford, although the exact quantum is currently unknown and subject to further testing. Thus, it is considered appropriate that a scenario comprising 2,000 dwellings is carried forward to Sieve 3. Having said that, it should be stressed that whilst Buntingford is considered suitable for some development, such a high quantum of development represents the upper limit for further testing; it is not considered that 2,000 dwellings, which would represent more than doubling the size of the existing town could be delivered in Buntingford. Thus, based on that scale of growth Buntingford scores a Marginal Fail rating rather than a Marginal Pass.

4.5.7.26 Given that key choices remain to be made on the scale of development for the town it is not possible at this stage to provide a definitive revision to the Vision for Buntingford contained in the Issues and Options consultation. However, whichever development strategy is chosen for the town, it is likely that its main aims will remain, but are likely to be supplemented by strengthened references to sustainable transport and a mix of housing. Maintaining the landscape setting and historic character of the town should be specifically referred to.

Buntingford: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for Buntingford. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Buntingford	Scenario A	Scenario B
Scenario Description	Development in the Built-Up Area (67); north (500); south and west (620); east (500); north-east (300)	Development in the Built-Up Area (67); some development outside the Built-Up Area
Sieve 2 Figure	2,000 (rounded)	Fewer than 2,000
Sieve 2 Rating	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes	Yes

Main Considerations:

Scenario A: This level of development arises from consideration of each area of search in isolation. However, Sieve 2 concluded that this level of development would be out of scale with the existing town, which is a Minor Town Centre with little potential to expand. However, if suitable growth locations cannot be identified elsewhere within the district, then large-scale development in Buntingford could be needed in order to comply with NPPF requirements to meet objectively assessed housing needs on a district-wide basis.

Scenario B: Buntingford appears capable of accommodating a more modest level of development. However, as a proportion of the existing number of dwellings in the town, this level of growth could still be significant.

For both scenarios there is a need to refine the quantum of development through further investigation and testing including waste water, education, highways and potential for the town centre to expand.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of

the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.6 Hertford

This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to Hertford. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.6.1 Areas of Search

4.6.1.1 The Areas of Search are shown below.

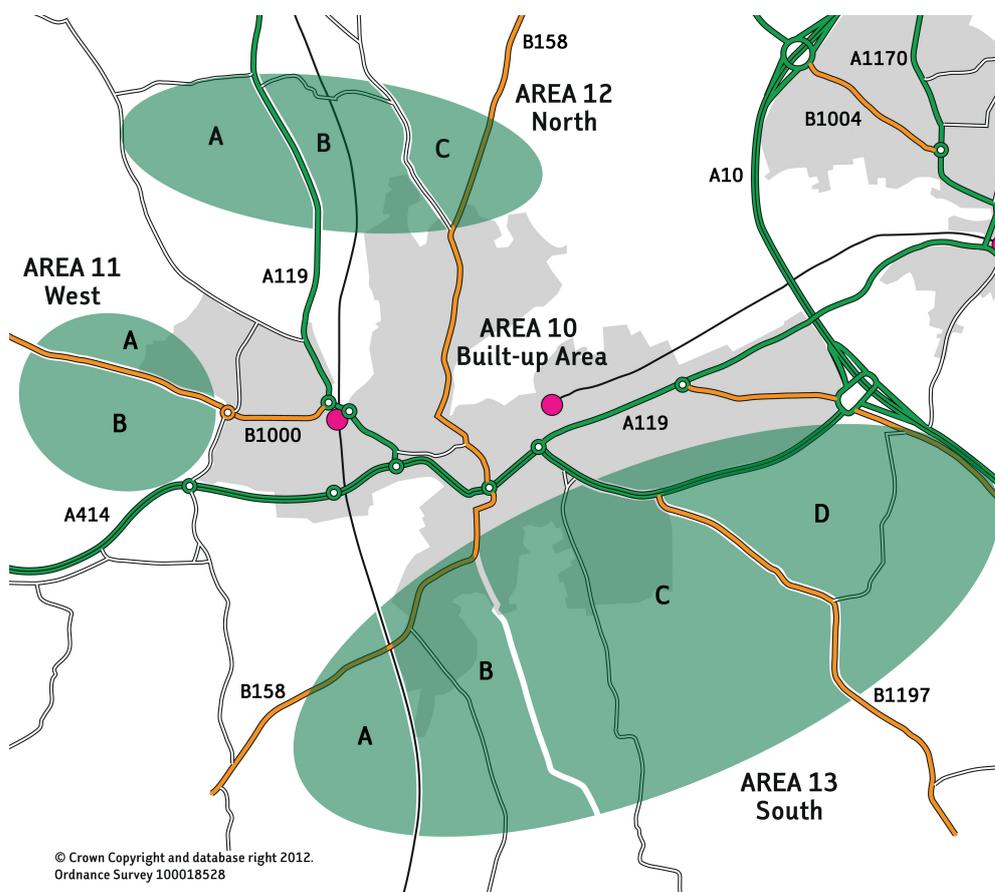


Figure 4.5 Hertford Areas of Search

4.6.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of each of the Areas of Search for Hertford are as follows:

- **Area 10 - Hertford Built-Up Area:**
Current settlement boundary as defined in the Local Plan 2007. No sub-division of specific locations within the Built-Up Area. However, Mead Lane is being addressed separately as a discrete work stream through the draft Mead Lane Urban Design Framework.
- **Area 11 - Hertford West (Sub-Area A):**

North of Welwyn Road (B1000)

- **Area 11 - Hertford West (Sub-Area B):**
South of Welwyn Road (B1000)/West of Thieves Lane
- **Area 12 - Hertford North (Sub-Area A):**
West of A119
- **Area 12 - Hertford North (Sub-Area B):**
Between A119 and Sacombe Road
- **Area 12 - Hertford North (Sub-Area C):**
Between Sacombe Road and the River Rib
- **Area 13 - Hertford South (Sub-Area A):**
West of railway line towards Bayfordbury
- **Area 13 - Hertford South (Sub-Area B):**
Between railway line and Morgan's Walk
- **Area 13 - Hertford South (Sub-Area C):**
Between Morgan's Walk and B1197
- **Area 13 - Hertford South (Sub-Area D):**
East of B1197

4.6.2 Hertford Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 10)

4.6.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 10 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classifications; Environmental Stewardship.

4.6.2.2 While the Area of Search scores well in terms of sustainable transport provision, access to existing services and facilities, employment opportunities, and other issues in respect of containing development within the built up boundaries of the town, school planning provision is of particular concern and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Secondary school provision would be a particularly important issue to be addressed.

4.6.2.3 Depending on locations proposed, vehicular access and issues around the effects of further development on existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed.

4.6.2.4 Areas of flood risk limit the potential location of development within the town, especially in river areas and where there are known flood risk locations. There are particular wildlife implications in certain areas, notably within the Green Finger areas and the potential for development to impact on numerous historic assets would need to be fully assessed. Potential future waste designations could also impact on residential amenity and limit development opportunities.

4.6.2.5 In terms of land availability, there are some areas in the town that have sites allocated in the East Herts Local Plan 2007 which are yet to be developed. While the majority of the areas of land to the west of Marshgate Drive in the Mead Lane area, and Riverside Yards have been developed, each have outstanding planning permissions yet to be fully constructed (Marshgate Drive and Adam’s Yard, respectively).

4.6.2.6 The emerging Mead Lane Urban Design Framework anticipates further development to the east of Marshgate Drive, in line with supporting text 12.3.12 to the Local Plan 2007. While development in the Mead Lane

area would involve some loss of employment land, this would primarily be on long-term vacant land that would need remediation prior to enabling development in any case. It is therefore anticipated that this development would supplement actual existing provision and result in a net gain in businesses. The Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan anticipates that in terms of traffic movements, between 300 and 500 dwellings could be accommodated in conjunction with employment provision, although this number is not fixed at this stage. Land has been submitted via the Call for Sites to support provision beyond that level of development in this general area (in multiple ownership). Additionally, the former British Rail land north of Hertford East Station is also known to be available, but has not featured as a Call for Sites submission to date. Significant highways and sustainable transport infrastructure provision would be required to bring development in the Mead Lane scheme to fruition. It should be noted that in order to enable continuation of the non-neighbourly uses in the area and to allow for further employment opportunities, a buffer of B1 employment development would be required, which would in turn have vehicular movement implications. Given the constraints on access and the highway network, the implications of this employment development would be that this would be likely to reduce the residential figure to around 300 dwellings maximum.

- 4.6.2.7** While the Mead Lane area would result in a net gain in business opportunities in the town in addition to residential provision, in respect of the Caxton Hill Employment Area (which was also submitted under the Call for Sites), there are significant concerns that the reverse could be the case and that employment opportunities in the area may be reduced. If utilised for residential purposes, this would necessitate a loss of employment land, which could detrimentally affect the employment offer in the town and therefore this area has therefore not been considered further at this stage.
- 4.6.2.8** Additionally, in terms of other employment land considered under Land Availability, it should be noted that the former McMullen's Brewery site was submitted as part of the Call for Sites, but has recently been developed as a food superstore and is therefore not available for development for housing purposes.
- 4.6.2.9** However, two other sites have the benefit of planning permission for residential development and are considered to be available. These involve 182 dwellings at Land West of Marshgate Drive and 126 dwellings at the former Hertford and Ware Police Station.
- 4.6.2.10** Other submitted sites in the Built-Up area are small (typically less than 1 ha) and would make only a limited contribution to strategic housing delivery. Planning permission has been granted for 77 dwellings at a number of small sites throughout the town, and it is considered likely that these will come forward early in the plan period. Deducting these and the

other large sites listed below, there is a residual figure of 190 dwellings which could be provided, mostly on small sites. The potential of these are being considered further through the SLAA process ⁽¹¹⁸⁾ It should be noted that the 190 figure is interim and subject to change.

Conclusion and Next Steps

4.6.2.11 In summary, the interim figures of possible options within the Built-Up area for Hertford are as follows:

- National Grid Site/Norbury Woodyard: up to 200 dwellings
- Land West of Marshgate Drive 182 (existing permission)
- Land south of Mead Lead: up to 100 dwellings
- Former Hertford and Ware Police Station: 126 (existing permission)
- Other permissions: 77
- Interim SLAA Sites: 190

4.6.2.12 These figures add up to a total of **875 dwellings for the Hertford Built-Up Area**. All of these options lie within the built-up area, which is in principle preferable to greenfield development beyond the existing built-up area. However, the impact of development would be likely to vary with the overall level of development. Therefore, in this context, the cumulative traffic impacts will, in particular, require further consideration, especially given the existing acknowledged congestion issues in the town, particularly at peak time. For this reason, Hertford Built-Up Area has been assigned a Marginal Pass under Sieve 1, although it is recognised that a figure of under 500 dwellings would be likely to have less impact.

4.6.2.13 In terms of other cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration would need to be given to the availability of educational places, especially in relation to secondary provision, although the current issues surrounding access to nearby primary education for children in the east of the urban area are also recognised.

4.6.2.14 Consistent with the strategic criteria-based approach, detailed assessment of particular sites has not been undertaken (with the exception of traffic modelling for locations included within Mead Lane Urban Design Framework area). However, strategic transport modelling will be needed in order to take account of the additional vehicular trips generated by this development

118 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment. See www.eastherts.gov.uk/sl原因 for further information and the latest updates. It should be noted that the 190 figure is based on an interim SLAA assessment of sites which could come forward. These sites differ in some respects from the land availability draft topic assessments, which were based on the Call for Sites prior to the latest round of SLAA consultation and assessment.

in the context of any planned additional development outside of the Built-Up Area. The strategy will need to retain sufficient flexibility to enable adaption to a possible range of known scenarios for the Built-Up Area.

- 4.6.2.15** For some locations, multiple land ownerships may affect the delivery of land and, particularly in respect of the Mead Lane area, the potential requirements for significant infrastructure, could also affect phasing.

Area 10: Hertford Built-Up Area

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the Hertford Built-Up Area. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 10	Sieve 1
500 dwellings	Marginal Pass
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Pass
Sieve 1 Figure	875
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations: Traffic impacts and educational provision.

Note: The Sieve 1 figure for the Built-Up Area is subject to finalisation of the SLAA and may therefore go up or down. Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.6.3 Hertford West (Sieve 1: Area 11)

- 4.6.3.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 11 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 11: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.

- 4.6.3.2** Hertford West Sub-Area A would be well located in relation to existing facilities in the town with good vehicular access and opportunities for passenger transport utilisation. Very limited infrastructure and other interventions would be required to enable delivery in this area. Local shops would also be within walking distance and likewise a secondary and two primary schools are within close proximity. However, in this respect, educational provision would be an area for concern as there is an existing shortfall of primary school places in the total Hertford Planning Area, although expansion of some existing schools may be possible, and secondary school provision is a particularly important issue to be addressed. Further community facilities may also be required to serve the area.
- 4.6.3.3** Another matter of particular concern is the potential effect of development on the Designated Wildlife Site in the area and this issue may prove difficult to overcome and would also involve the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land. But, the area has sometimes been used in part for unauthorised ad hoc leisure pursuits, a number of which have involved motorised vehicles, and these activities have left their mark on the landscape.
- 4.6.3.4** In terms of deliverability, an area of land that would allow for the construction of around 300 dwellings has been declared as immediately available for Sub-Area A through the Call for Sites. This area has extant permission for a David Lloyd tennis centre incorporating indoor courts, pool, gym and outdoor facilities including outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts and golf range. However, the land owners advise that this development is unlikely to proceed. It should also be noted that land availability for the area received a green traffic light rating on the basis of the whole Hertford West Area and not for the individual Sub-Area, which would not be likely to meet the 500 dwelling criterion.

Area 11: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.

- 4.6.3.5** As for Sub-Area A above, Hertford West Sub-Area B would be equally well located in relation to existing facilities in the town with good vehicular access and opportunities for passenger transport utilisation. Very limited infrastructure and other interventions would be required to enable delivery in this area. Local shops would also be within walking distance and likewise a secondary and two primary schools are within close proximity. However, in this respect, educational provision would be an area for concern as there is an existing shortfall of primary school places in the total Hertford Planning area, although expansion of some existing schools may be possible, and secondary school provision is a particularly important issue to be addressed. Further community facilities may also be required to serve the area.
- 4.6.3.6** Another matter of particular concern is the potential effect of development in the area on the Designated Wildlife Site, ancient woodland, and the historic asset of Panshanger Registered Park and Garden, which is located to the south and west of the Area of Search. These issues may prove difficult to overcome. However, part of the land is currently in agricultural use, although it is designated as non-agricultural land.
- 4.6.3.7** In terms of deliverability, one site has been put forward as part of the Call for Sites and this covers a section to the north and east of the Sub-Area. It is estimated that this area of land could potentially deliver around 300 dwellings. In respect of phasing, this land is described as immediately available. However, due to its proximity to known sand and gravel reserves, there may be workable minerals present and so opportunistic gravel extraction could potentially occur prior to built development taking place, which could delay delivery. No other land in the area is currently known to be available. It should also be noted that land availability for the area received a green traffic light rating on the basis of the whole Hertford West Area and not for the individual Sub-Area, which would not be likely to meet the 500 dwelling criterion.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.6.3.8** In summary, the interim figures of possible options within the Hertford West area are as follows:
- Sub Area A: 300
 - Sub Area B: 300
- 4.6.3.9** These figures add up to a total of **600 dwellings for the Hertford West Area**. Both of these options lie within the Green Belt, which is in principle less preferable to development within the existing built-up area.
- 4.6.3.10** Taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that Hertford West Sub-Area A may have the potential to accommodate development, although the particular concerns over wildlife issues would need especial consideration and could restrict development potential of the area. However, the extant permission on part of the area would seem to indicate that some development may be possible. Given the constraints in the area, if this location was to be brought forward it is unlikely that there would be sufficient deliverable land in this Sub-Area alone to enable the delivery of a 500 dwelling development.
- 4.6.3.11** For Hertford West Sub-Area B, taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that there may possibly be potential to accommodate some development in this location, although again, there are particular concerns over wildlife issues and also historic assets, which could undermine this potential. Should development proceed, these issues would need especial consideration to ensure the protection of these assets and could thereby restrict development potential of the area.
- 4.6.3.12** In terms of land availability, if this general location was to be brought forward it is likely that there would be sufficient deliverable land in the combined Hertford West area as a whole. However, given the other underlying constraints in the locality (especially in relation to wildlife issues), the ability of the area to enable the delivery of a 500 dwelling development could potentially be compromised.
- 4.6.3.13** Given that land availability within each separate Sub-Area would not enable the provision of 500 dwellings, each has been assigned a Fail on this basis under Sieve 1. However, taking all of the above into account, and given that each could potentially provide for a figure of under 500 dwellings, this rating changes to a Marginal Fail under this lesser dwelling scenario.
- 4.6.3.14** In terms of other cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration would need to be given to the availability of educational places, especially in relation to secondary provision (although the current issues surrounding access to nearby primary education for children in the east of the urban area are also recognised) along with any gaps in

community facilities. Additionally, potential timescales for delivery could be compromised if minerals and waste excavations are required in the area.

- 4.6.3.15** Furthermore, as the area extends from the existing built form to the west, the strategic gap between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City is a key matter to be taken into account, and should be considered alongside other development options in this area. However, in this respect it should be noted that a large part of Sub-Area A already benefits from an extant planning permission for a leisure complex. Moreover, a potential benefit of the Hertford West location would be the opportunities this could present to help enable the further progression of the Panshanger Country Park initiative.

Area 11: Hertford West

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Hertford West. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 11	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B
500 dwellings	Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	300	300
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes	Yes

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Wildlife; strategic gap issues; education; community facilities; potential minerals and waste matters; and Panshanger Country Park initiative.

Sub-Area B: Wildlife; historic assets; strategic gap issues; education; community facilities; potential minerals and waste matters; and Panshanger Country Park initiative.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.6.4 Hertford North (Sieve 1: Area 12)

4.6.4.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 12 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 12: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.6.4.2 Although Hertford North Sub-Area A would have limited employment potential, it does currently have good vehicular access to the town and the ability to access rail facilities to travel further afield. While a bus service exists which provides access between Stevenage and Hertford (and thus providing links to other journey possibilities) this could be improved, especially by the provision of evening and Sunday services. Some highways infrastructure works would be required, especially in relation to the upgrading of North Road into the town. Hertford has a good range of all community facilities within a fairly short vehicular journey time, but the Area of Search itself could benefit by more local provision. However, it should be noted that the Sub-Area would be more closely located to the village of Waterford and its more limited offer.

4.6.4.3 Educational provision would be an area for concern as there is an existing shortfall of primary school places in the Hertford Planning Area, although expansion of some existing schools may be possible, and secondary school provision is a particularly important issue to be addressed. Due to the position of parts of this Sub-Area, it is possible that for primary education there could be an overlap with the Watton District South Planning Area.

4.6.4.4 There is some availability of land in this Sub-Area (in one ownership), and with only a small area at flood risk, initial indications for this could seem quite positive; however, these aspects would need to be balanced against other issues. Where there is currently land available (to the south of the Sub-Area), aside from the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land, matters of specific concern are the potential effects on Goldings and its Registered Park and Gardens, the landscape character of the area, and the presence of Designated Wildlife Sites. The matter of maintaining the strategic gap between this area and the Sele Farm/North Road locality would also be

important. While these issues may not in themselves completely preclude development, they will be key factors for consideration. Furthermore, there is the concern that this Sub-Area could result in isolated development that, due to its many constraints, may not prove to be in a sustainable location.

Area 12: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.6.4.5 While much of the western side of Sub-Area B would have the same benefits as Sub-Area A in terms of good vehicular access and the potential to enhance access via sustainable transport modes, it has significant flood risk issues that would impede development in this part of the area, including a large area covered by Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the River Beane. The Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve also covers a large section of the Sub-Area and there is the presence of Designated Wildlife Site areas across all but a small proportion of the undeveloped area. There would also be the matters of the effect on landscape character and the future lack of secondary school places to be resolved.

4.6.4.6 As with Sub-Area A, there are a number of further issues that would require addressing, including the potential need for further community facilities nearer the area and increased bus services. Primary education may also be underprovided for in this location and development could also result in the loss of agricultural land. It should also be particularly noted that, while the Hertford North area as a whole has been rated 'green' for land availability, there has actually been no land submitted via the Call for Sites in Sub-Area B. Therefore, deliverability would also be an important issue to be addressed.

Area 12: Sub-Area C

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Green Belt; Minerals and Waste Designations.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.

- 4.6.4.7** Sub-Area C has differing characteristics to Sub-Areas A and B, being largely comprised of open land, which is mainly in agricultural use. The area has an established road network leading to it and vehicular access could potentially be achieved; however, the area suffers from heavy peak time congestion, which would only be exacerbated by further development. Due to existing development patterns, it is considered unlikely that it would be possible to solve these road congestion issues through infrastructure provision.
- 4.6.4.8** In terms of sustainable transport, while development often aids the commercial viability of bus service provision (where additional passenger numbers can often lead to increased frequencies of services), the peak time congestion on Bengo Street and Port Hill leading into the town could have a significant effect on reliability which could in fact undermine provision. The opening of the Sainsbury’s superstore off Hartham Lane is also expected to add to the traffic in the area and modelling predicts that the extent of this could have a significant impact on queuing from the Bengo area. This impact will be monitored as part of the Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan and potential proposals for addressing the acknowledged ‘Bengo Rat Run’ problem would be assessed following this. Notwithstanding these issues, it is still considered likely that the area would be able to achieve access to the town centre and rail services. Given the highway constraints in the area, it is likely that only a very modest scale of development of around 100 dwellings could be supported without any improvement to the network, and that even this amount would need to be fully tested under traffic modelling.
- 4.6.4.9** The Sub-Area may provide the potential for employment opportunities given reasonable road connections to the A602 and A10, and fairly close to the A414 corridor; however, access issues to the latter could apply, given the peak time congestion issues discussed above.
- 4.6.4.10** Local services in terms of shops, Post Office, churches and pubs are provided for in Bengo, in addition to facilities in Hertford Town Centre. The area is also well placed for primary school provision, with Bengo

Primary School situated directly on the edge of the Sub-Area boundary. However, while this school has temporary expansion plans in place for an additional form of entry for a single year group, concerns would remain over the existing deficit of places generally in the Hertford Planning Area, and particularly so for secondary place provision.

- 4.6.4.11** The development of this Sub-Area would involve the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land. To the north of the Sub-Area lies an Area of Archaeological Significance, which would need to be taken into account for development proposals. While there is a small element of Conservation Area (covering the allotments area) at the junction of Sacombe Road/B158 Wadesmill Road, there are no other significant historic or wildlife assets within the Sub-Area. However, the western section does border onto the Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve, which would need to be taken into account. Furthermore, on the eastern extremities of the Sub-Area, there is an area that could be prone to flood risk lying in Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the River Rib, with some areas also at risk of surface water flooding.
- 4.6.4.12** In terms of waste water infrastructure there are significant constraints in this area which would restrict the amount of development to the west of B158 Wadesmill Road. Up to 150 dwellings could be achieved in this location without sewer upgrades. However, development beyond this amount up to 500 dwellings would require upgrading the sewer in Bengoe Street, New Road and St Leonards Road. This upgrading would be very difficult and extremely disruptive to the local communities. If a number greater than 500 were proposed then a new connection to the west maybe financially viable, but would involve a new connection to the trunk sewer at Waterford which would require passing through Great Mole Wood and across Waterford Marsh, both of which are likely to raise environmental concerns.
- 4.6.4.13** Development to the east of Wadesmill Road of 100 dwellings is likely to be achievable without new sewer extension. 200 dwellings would only be acceptable with 450m of sewer across the valley upgraded and 300 dwellings would involve this measure and, additionally, 300m of sewer in Rib Vale would need to be upgraded. Beyond 300 dwellings this area would become very expensive to drain as any further upgrades would require new crossings under the River Lee. For the three latter options, environmental issues would also need to be assessed.
- 4.6.4.14** Land is available via the Call for Sites covering the majority of Sub-Area C, and beyond to the east, (within two land ownerships). This could achieve the delivery of around 1,500 - 2,000 dwellings. However, much of the area constituting Sub-Area C has been identified as a Preferred Area for future sand and gravel mineral extraction (adjacent to existing Rickneys Quarry) and subsequently may not be available to come forward for development

in the plan period. Hertfordshire County Council would be likely to object to development in this location due to minerals sterilisation. Deliverability may therefore be an issue for a significant part of the Sub-Area.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.6.4.15** Taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that although Hertford North Sub-Area A may possibly have the potential to accommodate some development, the limiting effects of matters of historic, landscape and wildlife importance are significant factors that could restrict the amount of growth that could be achieved. Furthermore, due to these constraints and its distance from the main settlement of Hertford and closer proximity to Waterford, it is likely that this could result in isolated development that would not be particularly well served in terms of local community facilities and not be a sustainable option. Consequently, it is considered that there would be very limited ability to accommodate development and therefore this Sub-Area has been assigned a Fail under Sieve 1.
- 4.6.4.16** For Hertford North Sub-Area B it is considered that there would be very limited ability to accommodate development and therefore this Sub-Area has been assigned a Fail under Sieve 1.
- 4.6.4.17** In respect of Hertford North Sub-Area C, it is considered that this area could possibly have the potential to accommodate future development and aid strategic housing delivery, should land availability (minerals Preferred Area) and access and congestion issues be surmountable. In terms of the cumulative impacts of development in relation to this specific Sub-Area, particular consideration would need to be given to the congestion issues in this part of the town and to waste water infrastructure constraints. At this stage it is considered likely that, whereas 500 dwellings would be assigned a Fail in this location, and notwithstanding recognised infrastructure difficulties, development of up to 100 dwellings in this Sub-Area could be acceptable and therefore a Marginal Fail has been assigned under Sieve 1.
- 4.6.4.18** In summary, the interim figures of possible options within the Hertford North area are as follows:
- Sub-Area C: 100 dwellings.
- 4.6.4.19** This would give a total of **100 dwellings for the Hertford North Area**. This area lies within the Green Belt, which is in principle less preferable to development within the existing built-up area.

4.6.4.20 In terms of the cumulative impacts of development for the whole of the Hertford North Area, particular consideration would need to be given to educational provision within the Hertford Planning Area; vehicular trip generation and combined effects on the town’s road network; and the need for additional waste water infrastructure.

Area 12: Hertford North

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Hertford North. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 12	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B	Sub-Area C
500 dwellings	Fail	Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail	Fail	Marginal Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0	0	100
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail	Fail	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No	No	Yes

Main Considerations:

Sub Area A: Failed due to impact on historic asset (Goldings Registered Historic Park); wildlife; and landscape matters coupled with the potential for unsustainable isolated development to occur due to its closer proximity to Waterford than Hertford.

Sub Area B: Failed due to flood risk; wildlife; landscape character; and land availability issues.

Sub Area C: Highways issues (access and congestion); potential waste water infrastructure; minerals and waste issues; education provision.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.6.5 Hertford South (Sieve 1: Area 13)

4.6.5.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 13 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 13: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land availability; Vehicular Access; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.6.5.2 Growth in this Sub-Area would involve development to the west of the railway line, which would place it in close proximity to the edge of the built up Hornsmill area of Hertford and local services nearby including public house and local store with Post Office. However, while access on foot to these limited services would be achievable, other sustainable transport options to wider locations and facilities would be more restricted, especially in terms of access to rail. While an existing bus service passes the site, should development in this location progress then a diversion of service and increase in frequency may be required. Although vehicular access could be achieved off the B158, due to the poor alignment and width of the road, the infrastructure required to achieve access to a development of this scale would be considered detrimental to the rural character of the road. Other infrastructure would be required as a result of development to enable an independent waste water connection into the Mimram trunk sewer.

4.6.5.3 It is considered that this location would be unlikely to offer employment opportunities due to current accessibility, visibility and proximity to major transport route issues, unless major road network provision was to be made to the south of the town.

4.6.5.4 Educational provision would also be an area for concern as there is an existing shortfall of primary school places in the Hertford Planning Area, although expansion of some existing schools may be possible, and secondary school provision is a particularly important issue to be addressed. Due to the presence of the railway line, it is not considered likely that any primary schools would be accessed by foot from this location, although bus services may offer an alternative sustainable transport option for part of the route. Despite having a railway line running along the edge of the area, this would be unlikely to bring any additional stations, but could

affect potential residents in terms of noise attenuation. In this latter respect, the B158 could also present noise issues due to the levels of traffic using this road.

- 4.6.5.5** Of particular concern would be the effect of development on designated local wildlife interests and on historic assets in the locality, especially the Grade II* Listed Building, Area of Archaeological Significance and Registered Historic Park and Garden at Bayfordbury. Development in this location could also pose some coalescence issues with smaller settlements in the vicinity, most notably Hertingfordbury, and would also result in the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land.
- 4.6.5.6** Only one submission has been made via the Call for Sites within this Sub-Area, comprising an area of land to south of Hornsmill Road, which could provide around 400 dwellings, but would not in itself be sufficient to allow provision of 500 dwellings. However, in terms of deliverability, this land is in single ownership and believed to be readily available.

Area 13: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classifications; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

- 4.6.5.7** Growth in this Sub-Area would involve development each side of Brickendon Lane between the railway line to the west and Morgans Walk to the east.
- 4.6.5.8** In terms of its employment potential, although the Tun Abdul Razak Research Centre operates with other smaller concerns within the Brickendonbury Estate (itself a Grade II Listed Building), this is unlikely to generate further significant employment opportunities. For attracting new enterprises, this location would not be well connected to major transport routes and, while the northern part of the area is in fairly close proximity to the edge of Hertford’s built form with its services and facilities, the rest of the area is becoming remote and difficult to access.
- 4.6.5.9** In terms of access opportunities by all means of transport, the Sub-Area does not perform well. It would require significant infrastructure improvements, which could both be difficult to achieve and detrimental to the rural character of the area. Existing bus service provision is sparse

and improvements would be unlikely to prove commercially sustainable and would thus require long-term additional subsidy. Access to rail services by sustainable means is unlikely to be a viable prospect. While Morgan’s Primary school would be in fairly close proximity, there is a deficit in primary places across the Hertford Planning Area that would need to be addressed. Richard Hale and Simon Balle Secondary Schools could also potentially be accessed by students by foot or cycle, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area.

- 4.6.5.10** In terms of natural assets, there are some concerns regarding the effects of development on Designated Wildlife Sites and noise impacts due to the presence of the railway line which could also impact on the amenity of future residents in parts of this location. Growth in this area would also result in the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land. A further concern would be the potential effects of coalescence with extending this area of Hertford towards other smaller settlements, most notably, Brickendon and Hertford Heath.
- 4.6.5.11** Brickendon Brook runs along Brickendon Lane, which lies in Flood Zone 3. As this extends across the lane, this could impact on the development potential of the area, especially if access were expected to be gained from points along this stretch of road. Should development exceed 500 dwellings in this area, an upgrade to waste water infrastructure would also be required, which would necessitate linking into the town centre and would be highly disruptive.
- 4.6.5.12** Two areas of land have been submitted via the Call for Sites in this Sub-Area including Land West of Brickendon Lane and part of the Dunkirksbury Farm area for consideration, which would be able to more than satisfy a development of around 500 dwellings and could provide up to 1,000 dwellings. Each area is in single ownership and both would be available for development either immediately or within five years.

Area 13: Sub-Area C

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Flood Risk; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.6.5.13** Growth in this Sub-Area would involve development from Morgans Walk to the west to the B1197 London Road to the east.
- 4.6.5.14** Being situated in fairly close proximity to the Foxholes Business Park, the area may have some potential for additional employment opportunities; however, to enable access to the Sub-Area for employment purposes to occur there could possibly be a need for new highways infrastructure. In highways access terms generally, while entrance to the Sub-Area could be achieved satisfactorily to individual development areas via Mangrove Road and/or London Road (B1197), improvements to local roads would be required to accommodate additional traffic levels. If development was to exceed 500 dwellings then a southern by-pass for Hertford would be required. In terms of access via sustainable transport modes, the Sub-Area does not perform well. There are very limited services operating in the Mangrove Road area and services to Hertford Heath would need supplementing. Overall, additional on-going subsidies would be likely to be required. Access to rail services would also be reliant on improved bus provision.
- 4.6.5.15** In relation to other infrastructure requirements, should development exceed 500 dwellings in this area, then an upgrade to waste water infrastructure would be required, which would necessitate linking into the town centre and be highly disruptive. However, there are no Flood Zone 2 or 3 issues to be taken into consideration in this location, and only a small area at risk of surface water flooding.
- 4.6.5.16** In terms of other natural assets, there would be significant concerns relating to the detrimental impact that development could have on Designated Wildlife Sites and to the Landscape Character of the area. Also, historic assets that would need especial consideration in any development proposals concerning the Registered Historic Park and Garden, Area of Archaeological Significance and Listed Buildings at Balls Park; other Areas of Archaeological Significance at Brickendonbury and Brickendonbury Farm, and the Listed Building at Jenningsbury. The Hertford Conservation Area also extends into part of the north west of the Sub-Area.
- 4.6.5.17** Additional matters of concern include Environmental Stewardship and Noise Impacts of development in this location, which would also involve the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land. Furthermore, part of the area lies within one of Hertford's 'Green Fingers'. There are also concerns over strategic gaps and coalescence issues, particularly with Hertford Heath.
- 4.6.5.18** In relation to community facilities, while these are largely provided for within the built up area of Hertford, there would be the potential to provide more local facilities within the development. However, one of the areas suggested via the Call for Sites would involve the loss of a community facility in the form of the Cricket Ground off Mangrove Road, which would need to be relocated elsewhere. It should be further noted that this area

and the area of land submitted under the Call for Sites to the West of Mangrove Road (comprising the former Christ's Hospital School playing fields) are both subject to LRC1 designations under the Adopted East Herts Local Plan, 2007, Saved Policies.

- 4.6.5.19** For primary educational provision, while Morgan's and Abel Smith Primary schools would be in fairly close proximity, there is a deficit in primary places across the Hertford Planning Area that would need to be addressed. Hertfordshire County Council, holding a dual role as Local Authority with responsibility for education in Hertfordshire and land owner, has suggested that the above mentioned Cricket Ground off Mangrove Road could potentially either be allocated as a reserve primary school site or be utilised as a detached playing field if an existing primary school were to be expanded in the town which resulted in that school having a deficiency in playing pitches. Further investigation of such proposals would be required if this Sub-Area were to be considered suitable to proceed further.
- 4.6.5.20** With regard to secondary education, Richard Hale and Simon Balle Secondary Schools could also potentially be accessed by students from this locality, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area.
- 4.6.5.21** In terms of land availability, submissions have been made via the Call for Sites for part of Dunkirksbury Farm; Land West of Mangrove Road (x2); Cricket Ground, Mangrove Road (each believed to be in single ownership). These combined areas would be large enough to make a significant contribution to strategic land delivery and deliver around 1,200 dwellings. Smaller sites have also been submitted at Land East of East Lodge, Balls Park; and Land West of London Road Cottages, Balls Park (again, each in single ownership).
- 4.6.5.22** While another small area (Land west of London Road (opposite no's 87-119)) also lies within the Sub-Area, this is located to the south of the Area of Search and is better related to the settlement of Hertford Heath. It has thus been considered in the context of evaluating the development prospects of that village, rather than Hertford South.

Area 13: Sub-Area D

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.6.5.23** Growth in this Sub-Area would involve development from the B1197 London Road in the west to the A10 dual carriageway to the east.
- 4.6.5.24** This location would suggest a good employment potential, with its close proximity to the existing Foxholes Business Park and the primary route network. However, while it is likely that access could be achieved via existing roads, significant infrastructure improvements may be required to both junctions and carriageways to serve both employment and residential uses, depending on the levels of development proposed. Bus services would also require significant improvement and would be likely to require additional peak time provision to enable onward connections; while access to rail services would also be dependent on improved bus provision.
- 4.6.5.25** For educational provision, while Morgan’s and Abel Smith Primary schools would be the nearest schools within the Hertford Planning Area, there is an identified deficit in primary places in that category that would need to be addressed. The nearest other school that could potentially serve the area is situated in the nearby village of Hertford Heath; however, this school is already full in most year groups and unable to provide capacity to accommodate children from any new development in that village, let alone from outside the immediate settlement. Richard Hale, Simon Balle and Presdales would be the nearest secondary schools located to the Sub-Area, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area.
- 4.6.5.26** In terms of other infrastructure required, waste water issues would require the construction of an independent connection running between Hertford and Ware to join the Hertford trunk sewer. While there are no areas designated as being within either Flood Zones 2 or 3, there are some areas at risk of surface water flood risk along the Foxholes Valley.
- 4.6.5.27** Development in this Sub-Area could involve the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land and it should also be noted in this respect that, while a further large proportion of the area is classified as non-agricultural land, it is currently in agricultural use. There would be significant concerns over the

development of this Sub-Area in terms of effects on nearby wildlife sites and impact on the landscape character of the area. The undulating nature of the landscape would not help in this respect. There is also a small area designated as SSSI to be taken into account to the south of the Sub-Area. In terms of historic assets there are Areas of Archaeological Significance to be taken into account and also listed buildings at Gamels Hall.

- 4.6.5.28** While the A10 dual carriageway would provide a clear boundary to easterly growth, it could result in detrimental environmental quality for residents in the area due to vehicular noise and emissions. Also, growth in this direction and to the south would result in coalescence issues within the strategic gap between Hertford and Hertford Heath, Ware, Great Amwell and Hoddesdon.
- 4.6.5.29** In terms of land availability, there is a large area of land that has been submitted via the Call for Sites to the east of Hertford Heath which is situated to the east and west of Downfield Lane that could provide in excess of 1,500 dwellings. It should be noted that, whilst this land lies within Sub-Area D, it is also being taken into account in terms of the potential for Hertford Heath to accommodate additional development in its own right. In terms of delivery, this land is in single ownership and likely to be available within 0-5 years.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.6.5.30** Taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that Hertford South Sub-Areas A, B and D would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver development due to their many constraints and have therefore been assigned a Fail rating for development at any level.
- 4.6.5.31** In terms of Hertford South Sub-Area C, it is considered that this area would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver a strategic scale of development due to its numerous constraints and would, on balance, lead to this Sub-Area as a whole not being progressed further on the basis of the provision of 500 dwellings and therefore being assigned a Fail rating for this level of development.
- 4.6.5.32** However, in terms of linking into existing services and facilities, there may be limited potential for some land around the south eastern edge of the existing settlement (Mangrove Road location) to achieve more modest growth. This development could potentially be accommodated within the existing developed area and be in a fairly sustainable location, albeit that it is recognised that sustainable transport options are currently limited in this locale; that there are some potential archaeological implications; and would involve incursion into a 'Green Finger'.

- 4.6.5.33** Furthermore, the two areas of land submitted under the Call for Sites that would be closest to the existing built up area are both currently subject to LRC1 designations under the Adopted East Herts Local Plan, 2007, Saved Policies, so not only would any development in these areas result in a loss of established currently used recreational land (Cricket Pitch) which would need re-providing elsewhere, with no alternative location suggested at this stage, it would also preclude the potential development of new sporting facilities to meet any identified need during the plan period (former Christ's Hospital Playing Field). However, in respect of the Cricket Pitch area, this could possibly provide a location to meet identified educational needs. Furthermore, development of either of these areas in Mangrove Road could allow the potential for this area to provide a definable boundary limit using the existing residential area of Oak Grove.
- 4.6.5.34** Notwithstanding the recognised constraints in this smaller part of Sub-Area C, at this stage it is considered that, whereas 500 dwellings would be assigned a Fail in this location, development of up to 100 dwellings should be investigated further, and therefore a Marginal Fail has been assigned under Sieve 1.
- 4.6.5.35** In summary, the interim figures of possible options within the Hertford South area are as follows:
- Sub Area C: 100 dwellings.
- 4.6.5.36** This would give a total of **100 dwellings for the Hertford South Area**. This land lies within the Green Belt, which is in principle less preferable to development within the existing built-up area.
- 4.6.5.37** In terms of the cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration would need to be given to educational provision within the Hertford Planning Area; vehicular trip generation and combined effects on the town's road network; the need for additional highways infrastructure; the potential need for local community facilities (especially the possible need to replace a cricket pitch if that area suggested via the Call for Sites were to be progressed); and potential effects on natural and historic assets. In terms of linking into existing services and facilities, the north eastern edge adjacent to the existing settlement would be the most likely area to achieve the most sustainable form of development; however sustainable transport options are currently limited in this area and the likely long-term subsidy of additional bus services would need to be considered.

Area 13: Hertford South

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Hertford South. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 13	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B	Sub-Area C	Sub-Area D
500 dwellings	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail	Fail	Marginal Fail	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0	0	100	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail	Fail	Marginal Fail	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No	No	Yes	No

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Failed due to employment; education; highways infrastructure; access to rail services; historic assets; wildlife; coalescence issues; and loss of agricultural land.

Sub-Area B: Failed due to employment; education; highways infrastructure; access to bus services; access to rail services; waste water impact; flood risk; wildlife; strategic gap and coalescence issues; community facilities; and loss of agricultural land.

Sub-Area C: Education; highways infrastructure; effects of vehicular trip generation on wider road network; bus services; community facilities; and natural and historic assets.

N.B. Large-scale development failed due to strategic gap coalescence issues with neighbouring settlements; highways infrastructure (requirement for bypass beyond 500 dwellings); waste water infrastructure; wildlife; landscape character; and historic assets.

Sub-Area D: Failed due to education; access to bus services; access to rail services; wildlife; landscape character; strategic gaps and coalescence issues; noise; highways infrastructure; vehicular access; waste water impact; community facilities; environmental stewardship; and loss of agricultural land.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.6.6 Hertford: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

- 4.6.6.1** The historic County town of Hertford forms a confluence for four rivers where the Rib, Beane and Mimram join the River Lea to flow into the Lee Navigation towards London, which lies approximately 19.2 miles to the south. The presence of the four rivers has largely dictated where the growth of the built form has occurred from Saxon times to date. The Meads form a natural river valley break to the east between Hertford and Ware and the floodplains have constrained development in this direction. To the north, the Bengoe area of Hertford is bounded by Sacombe Road; the area beyond that being mainly formed of agricultural land. Archers Spring and the Panshanger Estate lie to the west of the Sele Farm area, with Long Wood and Bramfield Road providing definable boundaries to the north of this locale, but there being a more open aspect to the western edge. The A414 and the village of Hertingfordbury frame the south-west of the town. The rural environs of Bayfordbury, Brickendonbury, and Hertford Heath lie to the south of the town.
- 4.6.6.2** Hertford's retail function is one of a secondary town centre, in that its role is to provide essential food shopping and services, coupled with a limited comparison goods offer. It has been noted that, although it retains some of its comparison expenditure, the town is not a large attractor of shopping visits from elsewhere and that Welwyn Garden City is a significant draw in this respect. However, the town has a good night-time economy.
- 4.6.6.3** In terms of employment, it is noted that Hertford is considered to be a secondary centre in relation to office provision; however, it continues to facilitate a large local authority presence, both at County Hall and Wallfields. In relation to industrial uses, while offering various areas with a mixture of type and age of stock, Hertford has some difficulties with its employment sites in terms of accessibility. In particular, the Caxton Hill area requires improvements to its offer, both in access terms and quality of stock. Conversely, the Foxholes Business Park has good access to the primary route network and modern units. The Mead Lane area is seen as an area of opportunity for further development within its existing employment designation and the Council is in the process of developing an Urban Design Framework for the area which would, *inter alia*, encourage the regeneration of derelict and underutilised land for employment purposes. Regarding future employment development prospects for Hertford, it is unlikely that significant new land opportunities will come forward within the urban area and thus consideration would need to be given in respect of potential provision via any proposed urban extensions.

There may be some opportunity in growth areas to the west of Hertford and parts of the south, as these locales are well served in terms of proximity to the A414 and connection to the wider primary route network. However, accessibility and visibility issues for employment provision within the potential growth areas to the north and other parts of the south of Hertford would appear to preclude such development.

- 4.6.6.4** Hertford has a number of issues in relation to transport. In terms of passenger transport it is well provided for in terms of rail, with Hertford East and Hertford North stations serving London and wider destinations via two alternative lines, and the town also benefiting from a centrally located bus station serving wide ranging networks. However, some parts of the town are not well provided for (e.g. the Pegs Lane/County Hall area, which has a large employment base and poor bus coverage to/from wider destinations, especially at peak time).
- 4.6.6.5** National Cycle Network Route 61 provides a (mainly) off-road route through Hertford between St Albans and Rye House, which offers another option to car borne travel. However, other existing dedicated cycling routes in the town are few and the potential to provide further routes is limited, mainly due to topography and carriageway width constraints dictated by the historic built form. The town offers relatively good permeability in terms of pedestrian access and the potential for expansion of existing routes has been identified⁽¹¹⁹⁾; however, certain deficiencies in both pedestrian and cycle routes have also been identified⁽¹²⁰⁾ (e.g. no crossing facility from Port Hill to Hartham Common and its leisure offer).
- 4.6.6.6** With regard to road usage, on one hand Hertford has fairly good access to the primary road network via the A414 and A10 and their linkages to the A1, M11 and M25 beyond, which makes travel to other settlements relatively easy, while on the other hand it suffers from having the A414 dual carriageway bisecting the settlement and significant part-time traffic congestion issues throughout this area and the central core of the town. The Bengoe and Mead Lane areas are also of particular note in this regard and had separate studies completed as part of the Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan (UTP).
- 4.6.6.7** One of the potential congestion mitigating schemes suggested in the UTP was the potential to provide a Park and Ride (P&R) facility between the two towns to complement other sustainable transport measures. However, the economic viability of such a scheme would be dependent on securing an appropriate level of population in both towns. A 2007 report⁽¹²¹⁾ looking into P&R nationally showed that a number of towns with populations of between 45,000 and 85,000 have P&R; larger towns and cities of 90,000

119 *Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan, 2010*

120 *Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan, 2010*

121 *Park & Ride Great Britain, 2007, TAS Publications, 2007* <http://www.taspublications.co.uk/content/park-a-ride>

population plus often have more than one P&R site; and consideration is being given for P&R to be introduced in some smaller towns with populations of less than 45,000.

- 4.6.6.8** The population of Hertford was cited as 24,180 in the 2001 census, with the population for Ware at 17,133, giving a total of 41,313 for the two settlements combined. Given the passage of time and developments constructed in the interim it is likely that the (*as yet unreleased*) data from the 2011 census will show an increase in population that may be approaching the lower level of potential viability stated in the report. However, this level would normally be in respect of a lone settlement with a single central core (rather than two smaller towns located in close proximity to each other with potentially less critical mass of employment, shops and services than the traditionally larger settlements served by P&R), and may thus require a higher level of population to become economically sustainable.
- 4.6.6.9** Additionally, a suitable location would still need to be identified for any potential P&R scheme (an arc between the two towns was suggested within the UTP, but this would be subject to further scrutiny and other potential locations would need to be considered). Depending on the finally selected location, this may aid the levels of inbound traffic, but potentially not help congestion issues to any large degree for those living in the town, particularly from areas to the south and west where journeys through the congested areas would still be required to enable access to the P&R. Furthermore, the broad area identified in the UTP is within the strategic gap between the two towns and could have a negative impact on coalescence issues; while a large part of the area is also within the Meads, where flooding and other environmental and wildlife concerns would predicate against such a location and from where accessing the primary route network could prove problematic. Also, any P&R scheme would need to be financed and development contributions would certainly be key to such provision; but, importantly, the scheme is very much seen as a long-term UTP aspiration.
- 4.6.6.10** In terms of the amount of residential development that the town could provide and the direction/s of growth that could successfully accommodate this, the Areas of Search Assessments have reached several conclusions.
- 4.6.6.11** Firstly, notwithstanding traffic congestion issues, the Built-Up Area would be the most sustainable location to bring forward development and could potentially achieve the delivery of around 900 dwellings. However, the supply of land to bring forward in this location may be limited, especially in the short term. Of note, the proposed regeneration of the Mead Lane area, covered by the emerging Mead Lane Urban Design Framework, could result in the delivery of around 300 dwellings, but would require significant infrastructure provision to enable development to proceed. Other sites are also likely to be suitable for development for residential

purposes; however, there would be concerns about bringing forward land that would involve change of use of locations that are currently designated as employment areas, as this could result in the need for additional employment land for the town to be allocated elsewhere over the Plan period. It is noted that the Caxton Hill employment area is of particular concern in terms of its rating for continued employment use given its access and visibility issues, but possible improvements to the current access arrangements could enhance the investment potential of this location.

- 4.6.6.12** Within the existing urban area of Hertford, the density of any future residential development would also impact on the number of dwellings to be provided and it is noted that, while higher density could provide more units, there have been many representations seeking that any future development should reflect the character of the locality where it is to be constructed. If this approach were to be adopted then this could result in a lesser amount of dwellings being delivered than for higher density.
- 4.6.6.13** Development beyond the town's boundaries would necessarily involve Green Belt release/s and would have differing implications, depending on the direction of growth.
- 4.6.6.14** In consideration of growth to the north of the town, the three Sub-Areas have differing characteristics that may suggest varying outcomes in terms of future development potential. Sub-Area A would score well in terms of good road access, reasonably close access to Hertford North station (albeit not within walking distance) and limited flood risk. It also benefits from land availability within the area. However, due to river and other natural and built features, it would result in development somewhat remote from the town itself in an isolated location that would be considerably closer to the village of Waterford than to the main settlement of Hertford.
- 4.6.6.15** Sub-Area B has major environmental, wildlife and other constraints that would make its development potential negligible.
- 4.6.6.16** Sub-Area C would offer the best prospects for achieving sustainable development, but even in this location there are conflicting messages which could limit its potential for delivery. On the one hand, the area would be ideally suited in terms of access to existing services, location of the local primary school, and access to the existing bus network. However, this locality also has several constraints that could constrain its development potential including a waste water infrastructure issue that would limit numbers of dwellings to 150 in the Sacombe Road area to the west of B158 Wadesmill Road and/or between 100 and 300 dwellings to the east of B158 Wadesmill Road without major sewer upgrades.

- 4.6.6.17** However, even these numbers of dwellings would generate significant vehicular movements in an area already well documented as experiencing heavy congestion⁽¹²²⁾. So while development could help support some local services, it could also have the opposite effect for other service areas. Notably, this level of development would add to the existing strain on highways infrastructure in terms of effects on the road network into the town centre. This could in turn predicate against the maintenance of existing bus provision, whereby delays on the route/s could make services unreliable and threaten economic viability. The recent opening of the Sainsbury's superstore and the traffic likely to be generated by this development is another factor for consideration.
- 4.6.6.18** Notwithstanding these particular obstacles to development, there are other potentially negative issues to be considered further relating to future minerals extraction, educational provision, wildlife and other historic asset and landscape character matters. Additionally, development in this location would involve the loss of grade 3 agricultural land. It is therefore likely that only limited development, of around 100 dwellings, may prove acceptable in this locale.
- 4.6.6.19** Development to the west of the town would be likely to offer the best potential for growth. This area of search would be well placed in relation to existing local services, community facilities, passenger transport connections and access to the primary route network for private vehicular travel. Additionally, the waste water infrastructure feedback would imply that development in this location would be the least likely to involve the need for expensive and/or disruptive construction of sewer connections. Land availability in this area would indicate potential for the provision of around 600 dwellings to be constructed.
- 4.6.6.20** This area of search could, however, have implications in respect of strategic gap issues, especially when viewed in the context of Welwyn Garden City and the potential for expansion to the east of that settlement. The cumulative impact of development in both locations could reduce the strategic gap between the two towns and this is an important factor to be taken into account in the assessment of development in this area. However, one of the benefits of development to the West of Hertford would be that it could help enable the further progression of the Panshanger Country Park initiative; albeit that this would need to be balanced against the effects that development could have, especially in relation to recognised wildlife concerns.
- 4.6.6.21** Growth in the majority of the area to the south of Hertford (Sub-Areas A, B and D) would be unlikely to be acceptable due to coalescence issues within the strategic gap between the town and the settlements of Ware, Hertford Heath, Great Amwell, Stanstead Abbots and Hoddesdon; plus

122 E.g. see stand alone study within the *Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan*, 2010.

the need for the provision of a southern bypass should development exceed 500 dwellings within the central part of this Area of Search. There would also be additional concerns within certain Sub-Area locations regarding: education; highways issues; access to sustainable transport options; waste water impact; flood risk; historic assets; wildlife; community facilities; environmental stewardship; and potential loss of grade 3 agricultural land.

- 4.6.6.22** However, it is considered that there may be limited potential for some land around the north eastern edge of the existing settlement (Mangrove Road location) within Sub-Area C, to achieve more modest growth of around 100 dwellings. This development could potentially be accommodated within the existing developed area and be in a fairly sustainable location, albeit that it is recognised that sustainable transport options are currently limited in this locale; that there are some potential archaeological implications; and would involve incursion into a 'Green Finger'. Additionally, the potential loss of land covered by LRC1 designations under the Adopted East Herts Local Plan, 2007, Saved Policies, would need to be considered. Alongside this would be the issue of primary educational provision and the potential for this area to support an increase in facilities.
- 4.6.6.23** It is recognised that, if suitable growth locations cannot be identified elsewhere within the district then large-scale development would need to be considered in order to comply with NPPF requirements to meet objectively assessed housing need on a district-wide basis. However, due to strategic issues relating to coalescence with neighbouring settlements and the need for the provision of a southern bypass for a level of development beyond 500 dwellings (which would prove extremely expensive and environmentally damaging), in addition to several other key constraints, then a southerly direction of growth should not be further considered in this context. Therefore, the option to examine development beyond 1,700 should not be carried forward to Sieve 3.

Next Steps

- 4.6.6.24** The District Plan strategy considers the district-wide implications of growth at 69 areas of search. The next step is therefore to consider whether there are other areas of the District which are potentially better locations for development than Hertford. It will also be necessary to judge what the overall level of development should be, in terms of the balance of development impacts, tested against the agreed upper and lower limits derived from demographic work. A combination of the district-wide work and the local-area work contained in this chapter should suggest an appropriate level of development for each settlement. This will be the subject of *Chapter 5: Scenarios*.
- 4.6.6.25** *Chapter 6: Strategies* will then test the sustainability and deliverability of development at Hertford and other locations, taking account of growth scenarios within and beyond the town. This process may lead to

adjustments to the findings of Chapter 5. Without careful planning there are clear risks to the quality of life and successful functioning of settlements including Hertford, arising from the combined effect of development within the town and at other locations, for example in Ware and, wider, at Welwyn Garden City. In order to more fully understand the major infrastructure requirements and the impact of large-scale development on the town then three key areas of further investigation would need to be undertaken in the context of strategy development and testing for Hertford:

- There is a need for a detailed appraisal of waste water requirements that future development to the north of the town would need to deliver to ensure that Hertford's infrastructure would have the capacity to cope with the demands of an increased population. This should be carried out in conjunction with Thames Water.
- In terms of highways provision a full assessment is required in respect of the effects of development in the potential growth areas taken forward to the next stage in the event that development in these locations should proceed. In particular, this evaluation should cover issues of effects on the town's existing highway network and implications for access to the town's main services. This should be carried out in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority.
- As there is currently insufficient capacity within the existing schools to provide for growth of significant proportions, the primary and secondary schools capacity issues will need to be addressed and a strategy devised to deal with the increased population. This should be carried out in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council as Local Authority with responsibility for education.

4.6.6.26 In addition to these critical issues, the impact on retail provision for the town would also need to be considered and the matter of employment, both in terms of maintaining existing provision and potential for additional employment opportunities, should be explored further, especially in relation to the existing designated employment areas. Other details arising from issues raised in some of the remaining topic assessments may also need to be investigated further, in the event that the key issue explorations indicate that the already identified major obstacles to development above could be surmounted.

4.6.6.27 Should it transpire that large-scale development would not prove feasible for Hertford then, even if only a limited amount of growth is proposed for the town, there would still be a need for various matters to be subject to further investigation. In particular, waste water, highways considerations and school place provision matters would still need to be addressed to ensure that even a limited amount of development would be achievable.

Also, the need for the provision of additional junior and mini football and rugby facilities would need to be taken into account, along with other sporting facilities, including the potential need for cricket pitch re-provision.

- 4.6.6.28** Given that key choices remain to be made on the scale of development for the town and locational choices, it is not possible at this stage to provide a definitive revision to the Vision for Hertford contained in the Issues and Options consultation. However, whichever strategy is chosen for the town, it is likely that its main aims will remain, but are likely to be supplemented by strengthened references to employment, retail and the synergy of new development with the existing character of the town and its setting and the need to balance environmental, social and economic needs. The vision should also include a strong emphasis on sustainable transport in order to address congestion within the town, and also on preserving and enhancing the town's green infrastructure, especially the Green Fingers and other natural assets. Informed by all of the above, it should be possible to draw together local and strategic considerations into a coherent vision for Hertford and other locations in the district, in order to provide a realistic and succinct statement of how the town is anticipated to change over the next twenty years, and how such change can be managed.

Hertford: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for Hertford. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Hertford	Scenario A	Scenario B
Scenario Description	Development in: the Built-up area (900); west (600); north (100); and south (100)	Development in: the Built-up area (900); west (600); north (100); and south (100) plus considerable additional development to the south
Sieve 2 Figure	1,700	More than 1,700
Sieve 2 Rating	Marginal Pass	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes	No

Main Considerations:

Scenario A: Impact of development on strategic gap issues (especially to the west and south of the town); traffic impacts, taking into account the cumulative effects of development on the town’s road network in addition to local effects; the need for additional primary and secondary education provision; and, the capacity of the town centre and its services to accommodate additional population.

Scenario B: Failed due to strategic gap coalescence issues with neighbouring settlements and the need to provide a southern bypass for development to the south; cumulative traffic impacts on the local area and town centre for any additional development to the north, in addition to waste water and minerals and waste constraints; strategic gap coalescence issues with neighbouring settlements and natural asset issues for additional development to the west; and coalescence, flooding, and natural asset issues for any development to the east.

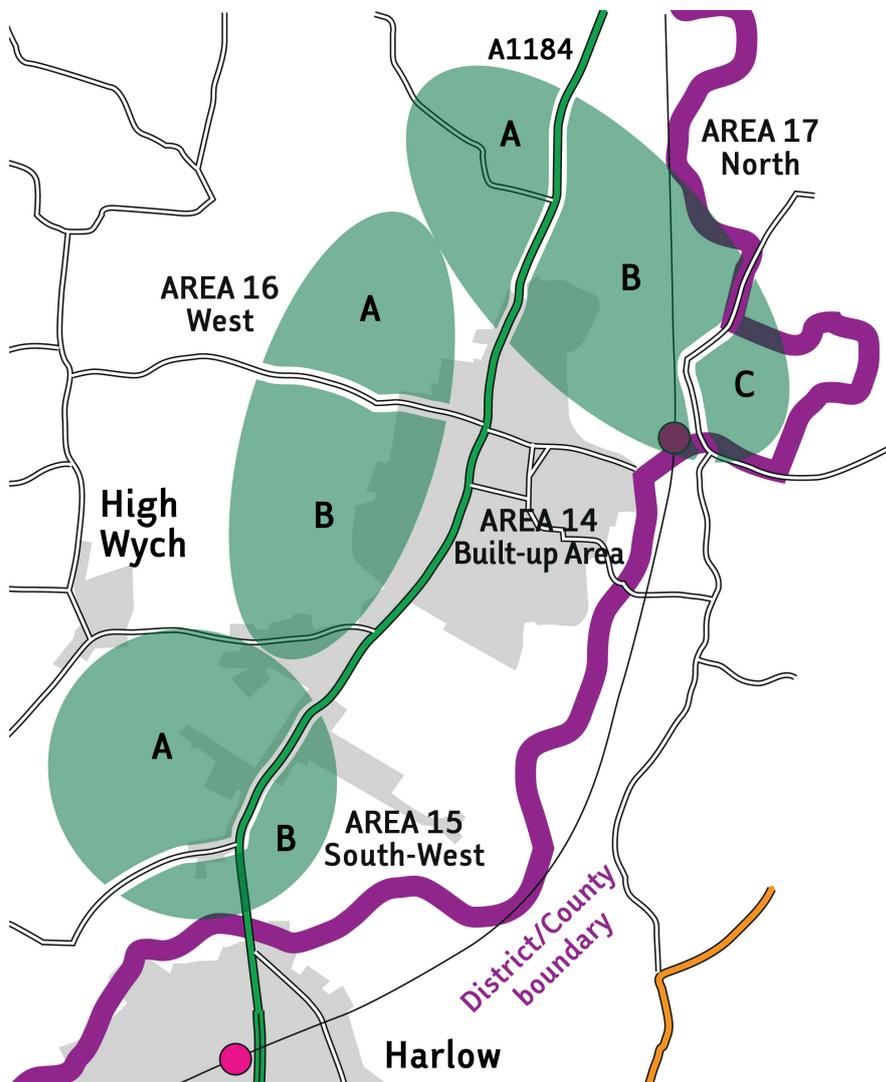
Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.7 Sawbridgeworth

This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to Sawbridgeworth. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.7.1 Areas of Search

4.7.1.1 The Areas of Search are shown below.



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Figure 4.6 Sawbridgeworth Areas of Search

4.7.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of each of the Areas of Search for Sawbridgeworth are as follows:

- **Area 14 - Sawbridgeworth Built-Up Area:**
Current settlement boundary as defined in the Local Plan 2007. No strategically significant locations within the Built-Up Area of Sawbridgeworth.
- **Area 15 - Sawbridgeworth South-West (Sub-Area A):**
North of A1184 and Redricks Lane
- **Area 15 - Sawbridgeworth South-West (Sub-Area B):**
South of A1184 and Redricks Lane
- **Area 16 - Sawbridgeworth West (Sub-Area A):**
North of West Road
- **Area 16 - Sawbridgeworth West (Sub-Area B):**
South of West Road to High Wych Road Road
- **Area 17 - Sawbridgeworth North (Sub-Area A):**
West of A1184
- **Area 17 - Sawbridgeworth North (Sub-Area B):**
Between A1184 and Hallingbury Road
- **Area 17 - Sawbridgeworth North (Sub-Area C):**
East of Hallingbury Road

4.7.2 Sawbridgeworth Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 14)

4.7.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 14 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Waste Water Impacts; Designated Wildlife Sites.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

4.7.2.2 While the Area of Search scores well in terms of sustainable transport provision, access to existing services and facilities, employment opportunities, and other issues in respect of containing development within the built-up boundaries of the town, school planning provision is of particular concern and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Housing development of this scale would result in the need for extra capacity at local schools where there is an existing deficit both at primary and secondary level, although there is some capacity for expansion at The Leventhorpe School.

4.7.2.3 Sawbridgeworth is less preferable in employment land terms than nearby Bishop’s Stortford and Harlow. Any new employment provision in Sawbridgeworth should be mindful of the competing centres and focus on providing a resource for local-scale employment only. It should however, be acknowledged that there is limited land availability within the built-up area and little flexibility on existing employment sites. For all forms of development, depending on the locations proposed, vehicular access and possible implications on exacerbating existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed.

4.7.2.4 Areas of flood risk limit the potential location of development within the town, especially in river areas and where there are known flood risk locations. A major sewer upgrade would also be required but would be costly and difficult to achieve. Given the compact character of the town, with few possible development locations and the coverage of the Conservation Area and historic assets it is likely that in order to accommodate this scale of development much of the character of the town

would be at risk of degradation. As the majority of the town is within 2km of Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI there would be implications from this level of development on the environmental quality of the SSSI.

- 4.7.2.5** New development within the existing built-up area may assist in making local services and facilities more viable. The town centre is thriving but it is limited, with much expenditure in retail being lost from Sawbridgeworth in favour of Harlow and Bishop's Stortford. Whilst it would be easier to accommodate new development on brownfield sites within the existing built-up area in terms of connections to utilities for example, the cumulative impact of this proposed scale of development on major infrastructure networks such as road and sewage networks would need to be considered. Given the limited land availability in the existing built-up area it is not possible to accommodate 500 homes without major redevelopment. Conversely, a smaller level of development may have similarly damaging impacts but without the possible gains a larger scale of development could contribute.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.7.2.6** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, it is concluded that the existing built-up area of Sawbridgeworth could not accommodate the proposed planning assumption of 500 dwellings. In terms of land availability, there are not enough areas of land identified within the Area of Search to accommodate this scale of development. There is only one site put forward through the Call For Sites exercise which is proposed for a small-scale residential development of three houses. Access to the site would be from the Rivers Hospital access road and would therefore be limited according to plans for the hospital itself. Planning permission for six dwellings has been granted at a number of small sites throughout the town, and these are likely to come forward early in the plan period. A further 25 dwellings on mostly small sites which could have potential, are being considered in more detail through the SLAA process⁽¹²³⁾. It should be noted that these figures are interim and subject to change.

- 4.7.2.7** The interim figures of possible locations for growth within the Built-Up area for Sawbridgeworth are as follows:

- Sawbridgeworth Football Club, Crofters (a previously allocated site that would need to be relocated): up to 80 dwellings
- Interim SLAA Sites: up to 25 dwellings
- Other permissions: up to 6 dwellings

123 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment. See www.eastherts.gov.uk/slaa for further information and the latest updates. It should be noted that the 25 dwelling figure is based on an interim SLAA assessment of sites which could come forward. These sites differ in some respects from the land availability draft topic assessments, which were based on the Call for Sites prior to the latest round of SLAA consultation and assessment.

- 4.7.2.8** These figures add up to a total of **111 dwellings for the Sawbridgeworth Built-Up area**. The Football Club site at Crofters is immediately adjacent to the Built-Up area. Despite being an allocated site for future housing in the 2007 Local Plan, the Football Club gained planning permission for upgraded facilities including permanent stands and club house. The Club state this permission has been implemented, which would impact on the potential deliverability of the site. However, whilst temporary stands have been installed there has been no construction work on the club house, suggesting the permission has not been implemented and would now be lapsed. Regardless, the development of this site would be dependant upon the relocation of the football club ground into a suitable alternative site. Further investigation into the deliverability of this site will be necessary. Given the location of the Crofters site, it is also considered in relation to possible development in the Sawbridgeworth West Sub-Area A and Sawbridgeworth North Sub-Area A assessments.
- 4.7.2.9** Consistent with the strategic criteria-based approach, detailed assessment of particular sites has not been undertaken. However, strategic transport modelling will be needed in order to take account of the additional vehicle trips generated by this level of development within the Built-Up area in the context of any planned additional development outside the Built-Up Area, particularly in relation to any potential development in Bishop's Stortford or Harlow. Further technical work would be required to determine the potential impacts of a smaller amount of development, particularly in terms of education, highway and sewage networks and the environmental quality of the nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest of Sawbridgeworth Marsh.

Area 14: Sawbridgeworth Built-Up Area

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the Sawbridgeworth Built-Up Area. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 14	Sieve 1
500 dwellings	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Marginal Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	111
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary school capacity, highways and environmental impact

Note: The Sieve 1 figure for the Built-Up Area is subject to finalisation of the SLAA and may therefore go up or down. Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.7.3 Sawbridgeworth South-West (Sieve 1: Area 15)

4.7.3.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 15 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 15: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land availability; Employment Potential; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

- 4.7.3.2** While the Area of Search scores well in terms of sustainable transport provision and employment opportunities, school planning provision is of particular concern and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Housing development of this scale would result in the need for extra capacity at local schools, where there is an existing deficit both at primary and secondary level both within Sawbridgeworth and Harlow.
- 4.7.3.3** Sub-Area A is some distance from the town centre facilities within Sawbridgeworth and is likely to function as much a part of Harlow as Sawbridgeworth. Sawbridgeworth is less preferable in employment land terms than nearby Bishop’s Stortford and Harlow. Any new employment provision in Sawbridgeworth should be mindful of the competing centres and focus on providing a resource for local-scale employment only. For all forms of development, depending on the locations proposed, vehicular access and issues around the effects of further development on existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed. Development of this scale could warrant major infrastructure improvements in the form of a bypass and upgrades to the A1184. Further assessments into the potential impacts of locating development in areas subject to noise will also need to be undertaken. Depending upon the location and scale of development there may also be issues relating to access to passenger transport networks. While Harlow Mill Station is reasonably close, the route to the station along the A1184 would not be a pleasant nor safe journey on foot.
- 4.7.3.4** One of the biggest concerns facing this Sub-Area is the loss of the strategic gap between Sawbridgeworth, High Wych and Harlow. There is already a considerable extent of ribbon development along Redricks Lane and the A1184 south of Sawbridgeworth and neighbouring Harlow has extended

as far north as the county boundary; the River Stort. The gap that remains therefore has even greater significance in preventing coalescence. Development of the scale proposed in Sub-Area A would remove this gap.

4.7.3.5 With only a small Wildlife Site in the Sub-Area and most of the land being within Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification and no land being subject to flood risk, measures to minimise the impact of development on sensitive landscapes could be built into any design. Although the sub-area is separated from Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI by the existing built-up area of the town, the cumulative impact of increased vehicle movements along the A1184 and any major new road infrastructure required to enable the development will need to be considered in terms of its impact on the wider environment.

4.7.3.6 The whole of Sub-Area A contains approximately 86ha and an initial assessment into land availability indicates there is more than sufficient land proposed (52.6ha) yielding 1,315 dwellings (at 25dph). Development of this scale would need to be phased and some land assembly may be required in order to enable access to some of the sites.

Area 15: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land availability; Employment Potential; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

4.7.3.7 While the Area of Search scores well in terms of sustainable transport provision and employment opportunities, school planning provision is of particular concern and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Housing development of this scale would result in the need for extra capacity at local schools, where there is an existing deficit both at primary and secondary level both within Sawbridgeworth and Harlow.

4.7.3.8 Sub-Area B is some distance from the town centre facilities within Sawbridgeworth and is likely to function as much a part of Harlow as Sawbridgeworth. Sawbridgeworth is less preferable in employment land

terms than nearby Harlow. Any new employment provision in Sawbridgeworth should be mindful of the competing centres and focus on providing a resource for local-scale employment only. For all forms of development, depending on the locations proposed, vehicular access and issues around the effects of further development on existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed. Development of this scale could warrant major improvements in the form of a bypass and upgrades to the A1184. Further assessments into the potential impacts of locating development in areas subject to noise will also need to be undertaken. Depending upon the location and scale of development there may also be issues relating to access to passenger transport networks. While Harlow Mill Station is reasonably close, the route to the station along the A1184 would not be a pleasant nor safe journey on foot.

- 4.7.3.9** One of the biggest concerns facing Sub-Area B is the loss of the strategic gap between Sawbridgeworth, High Wych and Harlow. There is already a considerable extent of ribbon development along Redricks Lane and the A1184 south of Sawbridgeworth and neighbouring Harlow has extended as far north as the county boundary; the River Stort. The gap that remains therefore has even greater significance in preventing coalescence. Development of the scale proposed in Sub-Area B would remove this gap.
- 4.7.3.10** Whilst there are no designated wildlife sites in Sub-Area B, all of the land is within Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification and there are also small areas subject to surface water flooding. Although the sub-area is separated from Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI by the existing built-up area of the town, the cumulative impact of increased vehicle movements along the A1184 and any major new road infrastructure required to enable the development will need to be considered in terms of its impact on the wider environment.
- 4.7.3.11** The whole of Sub-Area B contains approximately 28ha and an initial assessment into land availability indicates there is insufficient land proposed (approximately 4.07ha) yielding approximately 100 dwellings south of Redricks Lane. As the majority of the Sub-Area contains the Rowneybury Estate it is unlikely that this land will become available.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.7.3.12** Given the distance from the town centre of Sawbridgeworth, development in this Area of Search of 500 dwellings would be less accessible and would not function well as part of the wider town. It would potentially result in a separate settlement. This scale of development would also have significant infrastructure implications in terms of exacerbating existing congestion problems along the A1184 from Harlow Mill Roundabout to Bishop's Stortford. Most importantly, development at this scale would remove the open strategic gap between Harlow and Sawbridgeworth.

- 4.7.3.13** On balance it is considered that the importance of this location in protecting the strategic gap between Harlow and Sawbridgeworth outweighs other benefits of locating development in this Area of Search. As such, both Sub-Areas have been assigned a Fail under Sieve 1.
- 4.7.3.14** The same conclusion would apply to less than 500 dwellings.

Area 15: Sawbridgeworth South-West

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Sawbridgeworth South-West. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 15	Sub-Area A and B
500 dwellings	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Sub-Areas A and B: Fail due to the loss of the strategic gap between Sawbridgeworth and Harlow

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.7.4 Sawbridgeworth West (Sieve 1: Area 16)

- 4.7.4.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 16 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 16: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Community Facilities; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impact.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

- 4.7.4.2** The Area of Search scores relatively poorly in terms of sustainable transport provision as the area is located away from the main bus routes. Whilst it would be expected that a development of 500 homes could enable improvements or a new route, there are doubts that this would be possible. One of the greatest areas of concern is the potential impact of this scale of development on the highway network. A new by-pass is likely to be needed in order to facilitate this scale of development, particularly as the Sub-Area is already removed from the major road network. Further technical work would be needed to assess the potential cumulative impact of several smaller scale developments in and around Sawbridgeworth as a whole.
- 4.7.4.3** School planning provision is of particular concern in Sawbridgeworth and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Housing development of this scale would result in the need for extra capacity at local schools where there is an existing deficit both at primary and secondary level. Sub-Area A is near to both Mandeville Primary School and The Leventhorpe School which both have the potential to expand. However, development of this scale may exceed these expansions. Further technical work would be needed, which would depend to some degree on the outcome of the Bishop’s Stortford Schools Inquiry.
- 4.7.4.4** Sawbridgeworth is less preferable in employment land terms than nearby Bishop’s Stortford and Harlow. Any new employment provision in Sawbridgeworth should be mindful of the competing centres and focus on providing a resource for local-scale employment only. Sub-Area A would be nearer and have better potential for access to the A1184 compared to Sub-Area B. However, employment land here would be limited without a by-pass. For all forms of development, depending on the locations proposed, vehicular access and issues around the effects of further development on existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed.

- 4.7.4.5** The southern most part of Sub-Area A is at risk of surface water flooding and there are several small watercourses running across the area. A major sewer upgrade would also be required but would be costly and difficult to achieve. Agricultural land in Sub-Area A is high quality and due to the nature of the landscape, development here would be highly visible. Despite there being no designated wildlife sites within this Sub-Area, it is closer to Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI than Sub-Area B and would therefore need more detailed assessment, particularly in relation to the wider implications of increased vehicle movements along the A1184 and the major infrastructure improvements that would be necessary to support this level of development.
- 4.7.4.6** New development in and around Sawbridgeworth may assist in making local services and facilities more viable. The town centre is thriving but it is limited, with much expenditure in retail being lost from Sawbridgeworth in favour of Harlow and Bishop’s Stortford. In order to ensure that new development is well linked to the existing built-up area and the town centre, it should be located as close to the existing urban edge as possible. Given the proposed scale of 500 dwellings, many of these properties could end up remote from the town centre, thus increasing the possibility that many residents would choose to drive to the town centre or further afield. A smaller scale of development would be easier to integrate into the existing built fabric, but may not be able to deliver infrastructure or community facility improvements.
- 4.7.4.7** The Sub-Area as a whole covers approximately 49ha, which would yield 1,225 dwellings (at 25dph). In terms of land availability, approximately 37ha of land has been submitted as being available, which would yield 925 dwellings (at 25dph). There is therefore more than sufficient land available in the Sub-Area.

Area 16: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Community Facilities; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Minerals and Waste Designations.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

- 4.7.4.8** The Area of Search scores relatively poorly in terms of sustainable transport provision as the area is located away from the main bus routes. Whilst it would be expected that a development of 500 homes could enable improvements or a new route, there are doubts that this would be possible. One of the greatest areas of concern is the potential impact of this scale of development on the highway network. A new by-pass is likely to be needed in order to facilitate this scale of development, particularly as the Sub-Area is already removed from the major road network. Further technical work would be needed to assess the potential cumulative impact of several smaller scale developments in and around Sawbridgeworth as a whole.
- 4.7.4.9** School planning provision is of particular concern in Sawbridgeworth and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Housing development of this scale would result in the need for extra capacity at local schools where there is an existing deficit both at primary and secondary level. Sub-Area B is potentially near to High Wych Primary School as well as to schools within Sawbridgeworth and further technical assessments would be needed to assess the potential impact of development in Sub-Area B and neighbouring High Wych. At secondary level, further technical work would be needed, which would depend to some degree on the outcome of the Bishop's Stortford Schools Inquiry.
- 4.7.4.10** Sawbridgeworth is less preferable in employment land terms than nearby Bishop's Stortford and Harlow. Any new employment provision in Sawbridgeworth should be mindful of the competing centres and focus on providing a resource for local-scale employment only. Sub-Area A would be nearer and have better potential for access to the A1184 compared to Sub-Area B. However, employment land here would be limited without a by-pass. For all forms of development, depending on the locations proposed, vehicular access and issues around the effects of further development on existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed.
- 4.7.4.11** The eastern most part of Sub-Area B is at risk of flooding and there are several small watercourses running across the area. A major sewer upgrade would also be required but would be costly and difficult to achieve. Agricultural land in Sub-Area B is high quality and due to the nature of the landscape, development here would be highly visible. The Sub-Area contains land associated with Thomas Rivers and is an important traditional orchard and Local Wildlife Site. Land surrounding the orchard is a particularly important foraging ground for bats. Bats are a European Protected Species and therefore more evidence would be required as to the potential impacts this scale of development and infrastructure would have on valuable agricultural land, bat foraging land and flight lines. Sub-Area B is further away from Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI than Sub-Area A and is separated by the existing built-up area of Sawbridgeworth. However, the potential impacts of increased vehicle

movements along the A1184 and the major infrastructure improvements that would be necessary to support this level of development will need to be assessed in more detail.

4.7.4.12 New development in and around Sawbridgeworth may assist in making local services and facilities more viable. The town centre is thriving but it is limited, with much expenditure in retail being lost from Sawbridgeworth in favour of Harlow and Bishop's Stortford. In order to ensure that new development is well linked to the existing built-up area and the town centre, it should be located as close to the existing urban edge as possible. Given the proposed scale of 500 dwellings, and the built form of the existing impermeable urban fringe adjacent to Sub-Area B, many of these properties could end up remote from the town centre, thus increasing the possibility that many residents would choose to drive to the town centre or further afield. This would be exacerbated by the swath of land subject to flood risk further limiting access improvements. A smaller scale of development would be easier to integrate into the existing built fabric, but may not be able to deliver infrastructure or community facility improvements.

4.7.4.13 The Sub-Area as a whole contains approximately 80ha, which would yield 2,000 dwellings. In terms of land availability, there is more than sufficient land available in the Area of Search as a whole, to accommodate 500 dwellings. Approximately 65ha of land was submitted as being available, which would yield 1,625 dwellings (at 25dph). There is therefore more than sufficient land available. However, one concern is that the southern part of Sub-Area B would be closer to High Wych Lane which has already been significantly urbanised. Heron Close has already connected the smaller cluster of development along High Wych Lane to The Crest. Further development west of Heron Close would remove the strategic gap in this location and act as a precedent for further development south of High Wych Lane to Chaseways and even further south to Redricks Lane. There remains the potential for a much smaller scale of development to be accommodated to the north of Sub-Area B subject to the consideration of flood risk.

Conclusions and Next Steps

4.7.4.14 Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, it is concluded that there are so many major infrastructure issues such as the need for a new western bypass and new waste water infrastructure, congestion along the A1184, and the proximity of Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI, that any benefits of locating development of this scale in both Sub-Area A and B may be outweighed by the infrastructure and environmental constraints.

4.7.4.15 Given that there are some potential benefits from locating development in and around Sawbridgeworth, a smaller scale of development could have the potential to accommodate future development and aid strategic housing

delivery, should highway and waste water issues, education capacity and environmental issues be surmountable. Given the highway and waste water infrastructure constraints in the area, only a modest scale of development of around 200 dwellings could be supported, although even this amount would need to be subject to further testing. Therefore, at this stage it is considered likely that, whereas 500 dwellings would be assigned a Fail in this location, development of up to 200 dwellings across these two Sub-Areas could be acceptable and therefore a Marginal Fail has been assigned under Sieve 1. An alternative option would be to plan for a by-pass to the west of the town which would open up the possibility of a development of a much greater scale which may have the potential to fund the necessary infrastructure improvements needed. This option will therefore need to be assessed in Sieve 2 in relation to development in and around the town as a whole.

4.7.4.16 In summary, the interim figures of possible options within the Sawbridgeworth West area are as follows:

- Sub-Areas A and B: 200 dwellings; or
- Sub-Area A and B: land within a western by-pass 3,000 dwellings

4.7.4.17 This would give a total of either 200 or 3,000 dwellings for the Sawbridgeworth West Area. Both of these options lie within the Green Belt, which is in principle less preferable to development within the existing built-up area.

4.7.4.18 In terms of cumulative impacts of development for the whole of the Sawbridgeworth West Area, particular consideration would need to be given to education provision within the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth School Planning Area; vehicular trip generation and the combined effects on the town's road network; and the need for additional waste water and highway infrastructure.

Area 16: Sawbridgeworth West

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Sawbridgeworth West. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 16	Sub-Area A and B
500 dwellings	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Marginal Pass
Sieve 1 Figure	200 or 3,000
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass or Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A and B: A relatively small-scale development of around 200 dwellings could be accommodated west of Sawbridgeworth without significant new infrastructure provision. For development above this level the infrastructure challenges are considerable, including a Sawbridgeworth bypass to alleviate pressure on the A1184 and a new sewer to connect with the trunk sewer further south. Under this large-scale development scenario, most of the development could occur to the west, where a new bypass would form a clear boundary limit to growth. A relatively small proportion of the development could occur to the north. Further work is needed before the quantum of development in each direction could be suggested for testing purposes. See also Area 17: Sawbridgeworth North.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.7.5 Sawbridgeworth North (Sieve 1: Area 17)

4.7.5.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 17 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 17: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character Assessment; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Community Facilities; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Minerals and Waste.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

4.7.5.2 Sub-Area A scores relatively well in terms of sustainable transport depending upon the location of development. With a development of this scale large parts of the area could be remote from locations currently serviced and are likely to fall outside of accessibility criteria for potential new routes. At an approximate distance of 2km (along likely existing pedestrian routes) the Sub-Area may be beyond comfortable walking distance from Sawbridgeworth Station. One of the greatest areas of concern is the potential impact of this scale of development on the highway network. A new by-pass could be needed in order to facilitate this scale of development, as the main point of access would be via Parsonage Lane onto the A1184.

4.7.5.3 Sawbridgeworth is less preferable in employment land terms than nearby Bishop’s Stortford and Harlow. Any new employment provision in Sawbridgeworth should be mindful of the competing centres and focus on providing a resource for local-scale employment only. Sub-Area A would be nearer and have better potential for access to the A1184 compared to Sub-Areas B and C, though they are closer to the town centre and to the existing businesses at The Maltings. However, employment land here would be limited without a by-pass. For all forms of development, depending on the locations proposed, vehicular access and issues around the effects of further development on existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed.

- 4.7.5.4** School planning provision is of particular concern in Sawbridgeworth and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Housing development of this scale would result in the need for extra capacity at local schools where there is an existing deficit both at primary and secondary level. Sub-Area A is near to both Mandeville Primary School and The Leventhorpe School which both have the potential to expand. However, development of this scale may exceed these expansions. Further technical work would be needed, which would depend to some degree on the outcome of the Bishop's Stortford Schools Inquiry.
- 4.7.5.5** Whilst the Sub-Area is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3, a small part of the area is at risk of surface water flooding. A major sewer upgrade would also be required but would be costly and difficult to achieve. Agricultural land in Sub-Area A is high quality and due to the rising landscape, development here would be highly visible. Despite there being no designated wildlife sites within this Sub-Area, a development of this scale would have implications on the nearby Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI and Thorley Flood Pound SSSI, particularly in relation to the wider implications of increased vehicle movements along the A1184 and the major infrastructure improvements that would be necessary to support this level of development.
- 4.7.5.6** New development in and around Sawbridgeworth may assist in making local services and facilities more viable. The town centre is thriving but it is limited, with much expenditure in retail being lost from Sawbridgeworth in favour of Harlow and Bishop's Stortford. In order to ensure that new development is well linked to the existing built-up area and the town centre, it should be located as close to the existing urban edge as possible. Given the proposed scale of 500 dwellings, many of these properties could end up remote from the town centre, thus increasing the possibility that many residents would choose to drive to the town centre or further afield. A smaller scale of development would be easier to integrate into the existing built fabric, but may not be able to deliver infrastructure or community facility improvements.
- 4.7.5.7** Whilst Sub-Area as a whole contains approximately 48ha which could yield 1,200 dwellings, only approximately 15.5ha is available. This amount of land would yield 388 dwellings (at 25dph). This land is part of a much larger swathe of land submitted in the Call for Sites exercise which runs around the west of the town. There is therefore insufficient land available within this Sub-Area. There would be some scope for some development in this Sub-Area if considered as part of a further assessment of Sawbridgeworth West Sub-Area A.

Area 17: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character Assessment; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

- 4.7.5.8** Sub-Area B scores relatively well in terms of sustainable transport depending upon the location of development. With a development of this scale large parts of the area could be remote from locations currently serviced and are likely to fall outside of accessibility criteria for potential new routes. Sub-Area B is however, closer to Sawbridgeworth Station than Sub-Area A. One of the greatest areas of concern is the potential impact of this scale of development on the highway network. A new by-pass could be needed in order to facilitate this scale of development, as the main point of access would be directly onto the A1184 given that much of the Sub-Area would be inaccessible due to the flood plain along the River Stort.
- 4.7.5.9** Sawbridgeworth is less preferable in employment land terms than nearby Bishop’s Stortford and Harlow. Any new employment provision in Sawbridgeworth should be mindful of the competing centres and focus on providing a resource for local-scale employment only. Depending upon the location of development in Sub-Area B, parts of it would have good access, provided this could be achieved directly from the A1184. As already stated, Sub-Area B would be closer to the town centre and to the existing businesses at The Maltings than Sub-Area A, though access to Station Road would be difficult. However, employment land here would be limited without a by-pass. For all forms of development, depending on the locations proposed, vehicular access and issues around the effects of further development on existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed.
- 4.7.5.10** School planning provision is of particular concern in Sawbridgeworth and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Housing development of this scale would result in the need for extra capacity at local schools where there is an existing deficit both at primary and secondary level. Sub-Area B is near to both Reedings Junior School (at capacity) and The Leventhorpe School which has the potential to

expand. However, development of this scale may exceed this expansion. Further technical work would be needed, which would depend to some degree on the outcome of the Bishop's Stortford Schools Inquiry.

- 4.7.5.11** A large part of Sub-Area B is within Flood Zones 2 and 3, with further parts at risk of surface water flooding. A major sewer upgrade would also be required but would be costly and difficult to achieve. Agricultural land in Sub-Area B is of less quality than Sub-Area A and the landscape quality has already been degraded by residential and agricultural developments. The greatest area of concern is the presence of Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI and the proximity of nearby Thorley Flood Pound SSSI. A development of this scale would have significant implications on the SSSIs not least from the wider implications of increased vehicle movements along the A1184 and the major infrastructure improvements that would be necessary to support this level of development.
- 4.7.5.12** New development in and around Sawbridgeworth may assist in making local services and facilities more viable. The town centre is thriving but it is limited, with much expenditure in retail being lost from Sawbridgeworth in favour of Harlow and Bishop's Stortford. In order to ensure that new development is well linked to the existing built-up area and the town centre, it should be located as close to the existing urban edge as possible. Given the proposed scale of 500 dwellings, many of these properties could end up remote from the town centre, thus increasing the possibility that many residents would choose to drive to the town centre or further afield. A smaller scale of development would be easier to integrate into the existing built fabric, but may not be able to deliver infrastructure or community facility improvements.
- 4.7.5.13** Although Sub-Area B is approximately 100ha which would yield 2,500 dwellings, the majority of the land in Sub-Area B is unsuitable for development through being either close to the railway line or part of the River Stort floodplain and Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI. Part of Sub-Area B already contains residential development and even the town's cemetery. While there has not been an assessment into future burial space and crematoria needs at this stage, it would be premature to prejudice the ability of the facility to expand by locating residential or employment development in proximity to the cemetery grounds. The remaining potentially developable area would therefore equate to approximately 26ha, yielding 650 dwellings (at 25dph). However, only approximately 7ha has been submitted as available, which would only yield 182 dwellings (at 25dph).

Area 17: Sub-Area C

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character Assessment; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Strategic Gap; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

- 4.7.5.14** Sub-Area C scores relatively poorly in terms of sustainable transport despite its proximity to Sawbridgeworth Station due to the poor access to bus services which is unlikely to be improved even with a significant scale of development. One of the greatest areas of concern is the potential impact of this scale of development on the highway network. A new by-pass could be needed in order to facilitate this scale of development, and the majority of vehicle movements would need to go through Station Road to access the A1184, which already suffers peak time congestion. An upgrade would also be required to improve pedestrian facilities at the level crossing.
- 4.7.5.15** Sawbridgeworth is less preferable in employment land terms than nearby Bishop’s Stortford and Harlow. Any new employment provision in Sawbridgeworth should be mindful of the competing centres and focus on providing a resource for local-scale employment only. Given its lack of direct access to the A1184, Sub-Area C would not be as suitable for employment uses compared to the other Sub-Areas. However, as already stated, Sub-Area C would have better connections to the existing businesses at The Maltings than Sub-Areas A and B. However, employment land here would be limited without a by-pass. For all forms of development, depending on the locations proposed, vehicular access and issues around the effects of further development on existing peak time congestion problems would need to be fully assessed.
- 4.7.5.16** School planning provision is of particular concern in Sawbridgeworth and could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Housing development of this scale would result in the need for extra capacity at local schools where there is an existing deficit both at primary and secondary level. Sub-Area C is further from existing schools than Sub-Areas A and B, with the nearest schools being Reedings Junior School (at capacity) and The Leventhorpe School which has the potential to

expand. However, development of this scale may exceed this expansion. Further technical work would be needed, which would depend to some degree on the outcome of the Bishop's Stortford Schools Inquiry.

- 4.7.5.17** Sub-Area C lies on higher ground beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3, with no known risk of surface water flooding. A major sewer upgrade would also be required but would be costly and difficult to achieve. Agricultural land in Sub-Area C is of less quality than Sub-Area A and the landscape quality is of particular value, with the majority of the Sub-Area being part of the Great Hyde Hall Estate containing areas of archaeological significance and historic assets. The greatest area of concern is the presence of Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI and the proximity of nearby Thorley Flood Pound SSSI. A development of this scale would have significant implications on the SSSIs not least from the wider implications of increased vehicle movements along the A1184 and the major infrastructure improvements that would be necessary to support this level of development.
- 4.7.5.18** New development in and around Sawbridgeworth may assist in making local services and facilities more viable. The town centre is thriving but it is limited, with much expenditure in retail being lost from Sawbridgeworth in favour of Harlow and Bishop's Stortford. In order to ensure that new development is well linked to the existing built-up area and the town centre, it should be located as close to the existing urban edge as possible. Given the proposed scale of 500 dwellings, many of these properties could end up being remote from the town centre, thus increasing the possibility that many residents would choose to drive to the town centre or further afield. A smaller scale of development would be easier to integrate into the existing built fabric, but may not be able to deliver infrastructure or community facility improvements.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.7.5.19** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, it is concluded that there are so many major infrastructure issues, such as the need for a new western bypass and new waste water infrastructure, congestion along the A1184, and the proximity of Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI, that any benefits of locating strategic development in this Area of Search may be outweighed by the infrastructure and environmental constraints.
- 4.7.5.20** Given that there are some potential benefits from locating development in and around Sawbridgeworth as an existing town, a smaller scale of development could have the potential to accommodate future development and aid strategic housing delivery, should highway and waste water issues, education capacity and environmental issues be surmountable. At this stage it is considered likely that, whereas 500 dwellings would be assigned a Fail in this location, and notwithstanding the issues raised, a small scale

of development may be acceptable in this Sub-Area and therefore a Marginal Fail has been assigned under Sieve 1. The most appropriate location is considered to be land to the north west of the town.

- 4.7.5.21** There would be some scope for development to the north of the town within Sub-area B but this would be closer to the Local Wildlife Sites and Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI and as such is a less favourable location. As such, Sub-Area B has been assigned a Fail under Sieve 1.
- 4.7.5.22** Development in Sub-Area C would require upgrades to the railway crossing and any development here would be closer to Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI. The whole of Sub-Area C contains approximately 30ha, which would yield 750 dwellings (at 25dph). However, there is no land available for development in Sub-Area C, and given that the land is part of the Great Hyde Hall Estate is unlikely to become available. As such, Sub-Area C has been assigned a Fail under Sieve 1.
- 4.7.5.23** An alternative option would be to plan for a by-pass to the west of the town which would open up the possibility of a development of a much greater scale which may have the potential to fund the necessary infrastructure improvements needed. This option will therefore need to be assessed in Sieve 2 in relation to development in and around the town as a whole.
- 4.7.5.24** In summary, the interim figures of possible options within the Sawbridgeworth North area are as follows:
- Sub-Area A: Fewer than 500 dwellings; and
 - Sub-Area B and C: no development; or
 - Sub-Area A and Sawbridgeworth West Sub-Areas A and B: land within a western by-pass 3,000 dwellings
- 4.7.5.25** This would give a total of **a proportion of a small scale of development or 3,000 dwellings for the Sawbridgeworth North Area**. Both of these options lie within the Green Belt, which is in principle less preferable to development within the existing built-up area. The scale of such development would need to be assessed to avoid the majority of impacts associated with development along the A1184 corridor.

Area 17: Sawbridgeworth North

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Sawbridgeworth North. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 17	Sub-Area A	Sub-Areas B and C
500 dwellings	Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	Share of 3,000 (combined with Sawbridgeworth West)	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes	No

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: In isolation, small-scale growth in this Sub-Area would not relate well to the existing town. However, some growth could occur in this area as part of a much larger development to the west of the town, involving the delivery of a new bypass. Further work is needed before the quantum of development in each direction could be suggested for testing purposes. See also Area 16: Sawbridgeworth West.

Sub-Area B: Failed due to flood risk and environmental impact

Sub-Area C: Failed due to access/highways constraints and environmental impact

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.7.6 Sawbridgeworth: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

4.7.6.1 Sawbridgeworth has a clear function as a small market town serving a local rural hinterland. However, its location between Bishop’s Stortford and Harlow, which are major centres of strategic importance, and its good railway connection to Cambridge and London, blurs its role somewhat.

The services and facilities provided in the town centre are typical of a small market town in that they are suitable to serve the needs of local residents. However, the town provides little in the way of convenience and comparison shopping as this is provided in the two nearby major retail centres. The historic nature of the town centre with its large Conservation Area and high number of Listed Buildings limits the ability of the town to adapt to accommodate a greater quantum and variety of retail floorspace.

- 4.7.6.2** The town is predominantly a dormitory stepping stone between the competing centres of Bishop's Stortford and Harlow, largely inhabited by out-commuters seeking employment in Central London, Harlow, Stansted Airport and Bishop's Stortford respectively. The Maltings Industrial Estate, technically within Epping Forest District functions as part of the town but its focus is the antiques market, a niche interest providing only limited employment for the towns' residents. Even with a significant level of growth in Sawbridgeworth it would never be able to compete as an employment or retail location given the town's proximity to its two larger neighbours, with their greater offer and better connections to the major road networks.
- 4.7.6.3** Piecemeal extensions to the town in recent history have significantly altered the compact shape of the town, extending southwards along the A1184 and High Wych Road. These developments are less well-connected to the town centre and have reduced the distance between Sawbridgeworth and its neighbouring village of High Wych to the south-west and Harlow to the south. Recent housing developments have not only reduced the compactness of the town but also the permeability for both pedestrians and motorists, as access is limited to single estate roads with no other access points. The town therefore has unrealised potential for more walking and cycling.
- 4.7.6.4** There are few connections between Lower Sheering (which lies across the County boundary in Essex) and Sawbridgeworth as the River Stort and railway line provide clear physical barriers. As such, Lower Sheering functions as a residential suburb of Sawbridgeworth, with no shops or schools of its own. Responses to the Issues and Options consultation indicated a desire to keep the two settlements separate but in functional terms this is difficult. The facilities and services provided in Sawbridgeworth town centre would inevitably serve the needs of Lower Sheering residents.
- 4.7.6.5** Passenger transport in terms of buses is relatively poor in Sawbridgeworth with bus routes travelling mostly along the A1184/London Road. One service serves the Bullfields area and the railway station, but the majority of the residential areas of the town are not accessible to bus services. The County Passenger Transport Unit have indicated that although a large scale development would result in increased demand, this would be unlikely to generate new or re-routed services and the majority of any new development around the town would be out of the reach of existing or new services.

- 4.7.6.6** The A1184/London Road runs between Bishop's Stortford and Harlow and therefore carries a large volume of traffic. Sawbridgeworth as a whole is a pinch-point on this carriageway with congestion caused by The Leventhorpe School, the double roundabout junction of Station Road and West Road, the Bell Street junction and High Wych Road junction. Many proposals have been put forward to attempt to alleviate the delays caused by these junctions but have all faced difficulties. There are few alternatives to the current road layout. Hertfordshire County Council has indicated that a threshold of circa 500 dwellings either in one large scale development or cumulatively through a number of smaller developments within or around Sawbridgeworth would trigger the need for a by-pass. This would have to be located around the west of the town given the physical constraints to the east. There may also be a need for an upgrade to the level crossing over the railway line. The financial and environmental constraints of this scale of infrastructure are likely to be costly. A development of 500 dwellings would not be able to even part-fund a new road of this scale never mind the land ownership and environmental concerns in this area. A development of the scale needed to facilitate a by-pass could have significant implications on the town and the aforementioned environmental assets.
- 4.7.6.7** Stakeholder consultation indicates that Sawbridgeworth suffers from relatively small water/sewage pipes and a historic sewerage and waste water network. Development within the existing built-up area could be more easily connected to existing networks but the cumulative impact of this scale of development would need further technical work. However, new waste water infrastructure would be needed to facilitate an extension to the town in any direction. The network would discharge towards the River Stort and making connections to this outlet would require major engineering work within the existing network i.e. under the existing built-up area of the town or through the floodplain in the north of the town i.e. through Sawbridgeworth Marsh SSSI. The financial and environmental constraints of this scale of infrastructure are prohibitive. A development of 500 dwellings may not be able to fund a new waste water network of this scale. A development of greater than 500 dwellings could have significant detrimental impacts on the environmental assets around the town.
- 4.7.6.8** In terms of primary education, there are three primary schools within the town and a further two in the nearby villages of Spellbrook and High Wych. There is a general shortage of places, with some capacity in High Wych and potential room to expand at Mandeville Primary in the north-west of the town. However, a development of this scale is likely to exceed the potential capacity of the schools even if expansion was to occur at Mandeville Primary School. In terms of secondary education, The Leventhorpe School has the potential to expand but this would require significant investment. Similar to other infrastructure requirements, this may make a development unviable. As Sawbridgeworth falls within the

Bishop's Stortford Secondary School Planning Area, any future strategy for managing the overall secondary education demand and provision in the area will depend upon the outcome of the Bishop's Stortford Schools Planning Inquiry.

- 4.7.6.9** The Historic Parks and Gardens, large private estates, orchards, and nationally important environmental features have shaped and defined both the historic and modern growth of Sawbridgeworth and these assets should be retained. While it may be possible to mitigate some impacts of development, it is inevitable that any development around the town will impact on these assets. Further technical work will be needed to assess the possible scale of development that Sawbridgeworth could accommodate without significant harm occurring to the environmental assets that help define the character of the town.
- 4.7.6.10** It is clear from the interim evaluations that Sawbridgeworth would have difficulty accommodating a large quantum of development either in the form of one large development or from a number of smaller developments. There is a clear threshold established by the County Council as Highway Authority, of 500 dwellings before major new infrastructure is required such as a new bypass. There are other clear limitations in the waste water infrastructure networks as new utility provision would be difficult and costly to achieve. Indications suggest that development located closer to existing infrastructure would be easier to manage but the cumulative impact of developments may have implications in terms of discharge and treatment. Further technical work would be needed to assess the potential impacts of different levels of development in different locations on the town's various environmental assets.
- 4.7.6.11** The interim evaluations suggest that there is scope however, for a smaller level of development circa 200 dwellings within Sawbridgeworth West - Sub-Areas A and B and Sawbridgeworth North – Sub-Area A. Development in Sawbridgeworth West - Sub-Area B would need to be located north of The Crest in order to avoid issues with coalescence and to reduce impacts on the Rivers Nursery and Orchard and its surrounding foraging land for bats. There are few known locations within the existing built-up area which could accommodate development. The possibility that land will come forward during the plan period as windfall developments should be considered.
- 4.7.6.12** Just adjacent to the existing built-up area in the north-west of Sawbridgeworth is the Crofters Football Club ground which is allocated for housing within the Local Plan 2007. If this site were to come forward, it may yield approximately 80 dwellings. However, the football club have permission for permanent stands and a larger clubhouse and changing facility (yet un-started) and is therefore unlikely to come forward in the short term and only then if a replacement ground could be found. It is therefore considered appropriate that the long term status of this allocated

land should be re-assessed in relation to this wider location as a whole and should include the provision of improved leisure and educational facilities as well as residential development. A total of 300 dwellings, a combination of developments within the built-up area and to the western edge of the town (north and south of West Road) was suggested as a reasonable scenario to take forward for further testing.

- 4.7.6.13** It is important that any development in this location should not prejudice the ability to plan for a by-pass in the future, which may be needed regardless of development within the town. A by-pass may instead be warranted as a result of potential development to the north of Harlow and even at Bishop's Stortford, as large amounts of development within this corridor will increase vehicle movements along the A1184. If scenario testing revealed that a by-pass was needed this would potentially open up an alternative option to development in Sawbridgeworth – that of building up to the by-pass. A theoretical desk-top mapping exercise suggests that a possible by-pass route would contain approximately 150ha of land to the west of Sawbridgeworth yielding 3,000 dwellings (at 20dph). Further technical work will be needed, including transport modelling to test this option. A strategic Green Belt review will be needed to address development in this location.

Next Steps

- 4.7.6.14** The District Plan strategy considers the district-wide implications of growth at 69 areas of search. The next step is therefore to consider whether there are other areas of the District which are potentially better locations for development than Sawbridgeworth. It will also be necessary to judge what the overall level of development should be, in terms of the balance of development impacts tested against the agreed upper and lower limits derived from demographic work. This will need to consider the impact of development across administrative boundaries, in the case of Sawbridgeworth, principally in Harlow District. A combination of the district-wide work and the local-area work contained in this chapter should suggest an appropriate level of development for each settlement. This will be the subject of *Chapter 5: Scenarios*.
- 4.7.6.15** *Chapter 6: Strategies* will then test the sustainability and deliverability of development at Sawbridgeworth and other locations, taking account of growth scenarios within and beyond the town. This process may lead to adjustments to the findings of Chapter 5. Without careful planning there are clear risks to the quality of life and successful functioning of settlements including Sawbridgeworth, arising from the combined effect of development within the town and at other locations, for example in Essex. In the context of strategy development and testing, a number of specific areas for further investigation in Sawbridgeworth stand out:

- there is a need for a realistic appraisal of the potential of the town centre to expand and provide the wider capacity for the growth of the town should a large scale of development occur.
- there is a need to assess the costs and viability of a by-pass to the west of the town and waste water infrastructure and the potential implications of the provision of infrastructure on the nearby environmental assets.
- an assessment into the educational needs of the community will be needed.

4.7.6.16 At this stage it is considered that there are two options for development in Sawbridgeworth; small-scale development within and to the north-west of the town; or a major development wrapping the western edge of the town complete with bypass and associated infrastructure. In order to more fully understand the major infrastructure requirements and the impact of large-scale development on the town, three key areas of further investigation would need to be undertaken involving matters of waste water, highways and educational provision. The impact on retail provision would also need to be considered and the potential for additional employment opportunities explored further, especially in relation to effects on existing provision. Sawbridgeworth town centre would not be suitable in its current form to provide for the needs of an additional 3,000 dwellings. Indeed a bypass may make it easier to travel away from the limited high street to either Bishop's Stortford or Harlow. Other details arising from issues raised in some of the remaining topic assessments would also need to be investigated further, if the key issue explorations indicate that the major obstacles to development could be surmounted.

4.7.6.17 The more realistic option of small-scale development would still require further investigation. In particular, waste water, highways considerations and school place provision matters would still need to be addressed to ensure that even a limited amount of development would be achievable.

4.7.6.18 Given that key choices remain to be made on the scale of development for the town, it is not possible at this stage to provide a definitive revision to the Vision for Sawbridgeworth contained in the Issues and Options consultation. However, whichever of the two potential development strategies are chosen for the town, it is likely that its main aims will remain, but are likely to be supplemented by strengthened references to education, employment, retail and the synergy of new development with the existing character of the town. The vision should also include a strong emphasis on sustainable transport in order to address congestion within the town, further education, and also on preserving and enhancing the town's green infrastructure and the Stort Valley.

Sawbridgeworth: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for Sawbridgeworth. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Sawbridgeworth	Scenario A	Scenario B
Scenario Description	Development in the Built-up Area (100) and West (200)	Development in: the Built-up Area (100) and up to 3,000 within a western bypass
Sieve 2 Figure	300	3,100
Sieve 2 Rating	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes	Yes

Main Considerations:

Scenario A: Scenario A would not require significant new infrastructure but there may be local issues which require further investigation.

Scenario B: This level of development would be out of scale with the existing town, which has a Minor Town Centre with little potential to expand. However, if suitable growth locations cannot be found elsewhere in the district, then large-scale development could be needed in Sawbridgeworth in order to comply with NPPF requirements to meet objectively assessed housing needs on a district-wide basis. Large-scale development would require a bypass to the west of the town, the feasibility and financial viability of which would need to be assessed. Additional work would relate to the potential impacts on waste water networks, the capacity of the retail areas and on sites of environmental importance.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.8 Ware

4.8.1 This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to Ware. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.8.1 Areas of Search

4.8.1.1 The Areas of Search are shown below.

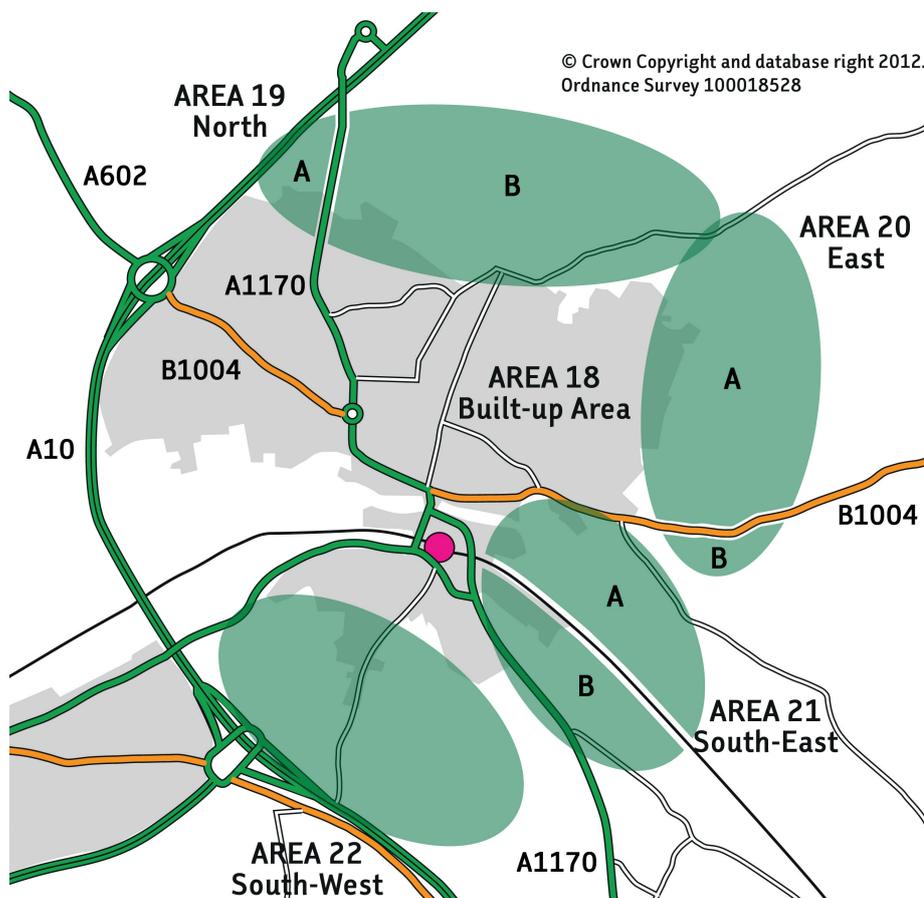


Figure 4.7 Ware Areas of Search

4.8.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of each of the Areas of Search for Ware are as follows:

- **Area 18 - Ware Built-Up Area:**
Current settlement boundary as defined in the Local Plan 2007. No strategically significant locations within the Built-Up Area of Ware.
- **Area 19 - Ware North (Sub-Area A):**
A10 Bypass, A1170 (Ermine Street) and the Built-Up Area (Quincey Road)

- **Area 19 - Ware North (Sub-Area B):**
East of A1170 (Ermine Street) as far as the Built-Up Area (Linwood Road/Elder Road)
- **Area 20 - Ware East (Sub-Area A):**
Between Fanhams Hall Road and Widbury Hill
- **Area 20 - Ware East (Sub-Area B):**
South of Widbury Hill
- **Area 21 - Ware South-East (Sub-Area A):**
North of the railway line to Widbury Hill/ Hollycross Road
- **Area 21 - Ware South-East (Sub-Area B):**
South of the railway line to A1170 (London Road)
- **Area 22 - Ware South-West:**
A10 to the south-west, Hertford Road (A119) and the Built-Up Area to the north and footpath west of Amwellbury farm to the east

4.8.2 Ware Built-Up Area (Sieve 1: Area 18)

4.8.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 18 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classifications; Environmental Stewardship.

4.8.2.2 The Ware Built-Up Area scores well as an Area of Search in terms of many key assessment areas, especially those relating to sustainable transport and access to community facilities and services. Being a contained location, there is limited concern in relation to effects on the natural environment, with the main issues relating to sites outside the Built-Up Area itself. In terms of historic assets, these would need to be taken into account on a site specific basis, depending on the location and nature of development proposed.

- 4.8.2.3** The employment potential of the area is seen as limited, with the main employer, GSK, having almost reached capacity in terms of further expansion. However, recent announcements from the company suggest that the manufacturing side of the operation in Ware is likely to benefit from future investment.
- 4.8.2.4** The key area of concern for future development in the town relates to educational provision and this could affect the ability to develop within the area if future needs cannot be met. Secondary school provision would be a particularly important issue to be addressed.
- 4.8.2.5** Other issues that could limit the potential to develop within the town, concern vehicular access, waste water impact, noise effects, and areas of flood risk, especially in river areas and where there are known flood risk locations.
- 4.8.2.6** In terms of land availability, there are some areas in the town that have sites allocated in the East Herts Local Plan 2007 (Saved Policies) which are yet to be developed, including 103 New Road and Land East of the Trinity Centre; however, both have extant planning permissions for residential development, the latter site currently in outline only. Other sites may have a limited contribution to make and while the Cintel site in Watton Road has the benefit of planning permission and may make some residential provision, the majority of the site has permission for retail development. However, it should be noted that some of the other areas suggested via the Call for Sites are currently within designated Employment Areas and therefore would only be available for residential development should there be a change in policy stance in this respect.
- 4.8.2.7** Deducting the sites with planning permission and those submitted sites within designated employment areas from the assessment, there is a residual figure of 34 dwellings which could be provided, all on small sites. The potential of these are being considered further through the SLAA process⁽¹²⁴⁾. As the initial land availability assessment would indicate that Ware Built-Up Area would not meet the 500 dwelling planning assumption, the area has been assigned a Fail rating under Sieve 1 in this respect. However, as it is likely that a lesser amount of development would be able to be brought forward, then Ware Built-Up Area has been assigned a Pass rating for fewer than 500 dwellings.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.8.2.8** In summary, the interim figures of possible options with the Built-Up area for Ware are as follows:

124 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment. See www.eastherts.gov.uk/SLAA for further information and the latest updates. It should be noted that the 34 figure is based on an interim SLAA assessment of sites which could come forward. These sites differ in some respects from the land availability draft topic assessments, which were based on the Call for Sites prior to the latest round of SLAA consultation and assessment.

- Land east of the Trinity Centre: 81 (existing permission)
- Other permissions: 32
- Interim SLAA sites: 34

4.8.2.9 These figures add up to a total of **147 dwellings for the Ware Built-Up Area**. All of these options lie within the built-up area, which is in principle preferable to greenfield development beyond the existing built-up area.

4.8.2.10 In terms of the cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration would need to be given to the availability of educational places, especially in relation to secondary provision; the effects of additional traffic generation in an area that is already recognised as experiencing peak time congestion; and waste water and flood risk implications.

Area 18: Ware Built-Up Area

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the Ware Built-Up Area. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 18	Sieve 1
500 dwellings	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Pass
Sieve 1 Figure	147
Sieve 1 Rating	Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations: Education; traffic impacts; historic assets; waste water; wildlife; and flood risk implications

Note: The Sieve 1 figure for the Built-Up Area is subject to finalisation of the SLAA and may therefore go up or down. Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.8.3 Ware North (Sieve 1: Area 19)

4.8.3.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 19 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 19: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.8.3.2 Ware North Sub-Area A would be well located in relation to existing facilities in the town with good vehicular access and opportunities for passenger transport operation. Very limited road infrastructure interventions would be required to enable delivery in this area. Given the connections to the A10 via the A1170, there would be good employment potential for this area. Additionally, there would be opportunities to use existing clear boundaries to demark the edges of the area, and the area is largely unaffected by flood risk; minerals and waste designations; or matters of environmental stewardship concerns. In terms of land availability, the whole of the Nun’s Triangle area to the south of the A10 slip road has been submitted for development under the Call for Sites; however, this whole Sub-Area covers only 10.65ha, which could achieve around 200 dwellings, but would be unlikely to deliver a development of 500 dwellings on its own.

4.8.3.3 Moreover, this area is part of a Registered Historic Park and Garden (Poles Park); and development could also have effects on landscape character; and would have implications for designated wildlife sites beyond the Area of Search. Additionally, this area would be exposed to traffic noise from the A10, its slip road, the A1170 (Wadesmill Road), plus vehicular noise and potential light pollution from the floodlighting associated with the activities at Wodson Park and Ware Football Club. Furthermore, there would be significant waste water impact implications that may prove difficult to surmount and could prove to be a show-stopper. This would either involve considerable disruption to Wadesmill Road through to Ware High Street to enable construction, or expensive new sewer facilities to be provided to the east of the town; the former not likely to prove cost effective on its own for the amount of development that could be achieved on the site, and latter of which could only be achieved if linked with development in Sub-Area B.

4.8.3.4 For educational provision, Kingshill Infant/St Mary’s Junior, St Catherine’s and Tower schools would be the nearest Primary schools. However, within the Ware Planning Area there is an identified deficit in primary places that would need to be addressed. Chauncy and Presdales would be the nearest secondary schools, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area. In terms of other community facilities, while there is a wide range provided both within Ware and the neighbouring town of Hertford, there may be opportunities for further local provision in this area; but, it is recognised that this Sub-Area may not be large enough on its own to ensure delivery of such facilities.

Area 19: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Agricultural Land Classifications.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.8.3.5 This Sub-Area covers a large area to the north of Ware. Land availability would indicate that around 1,500 dwellings could be provided in this location. While there may be implications for the gap between Ware and the settlements of Thundridge and Cold Christmas, it would be well located in relation to existing facilities in the town, especially sports opportunities, and local shops at Kingshill. It would have good vehicular access to the main road network, particularly to the A1170 Wadesmill Road and A10 to the west of the Sub-Area. Only limited road infrastructure would be required to enable delivery from this area of the town; however, depending on the extent of development, there may be the need for provision of a northern link road further to the east. This could potentially be expanded to include development to the east of the town (Area 20: Ware East), to provide a link from the A1170 to the Widbury Hill area. While there would also be town-wide traffic congestion issues that would need to be addressed, this area would present good opportunities for passenger transport operation.

4.8.3.6 Given the connections to the A10 via the A1170, there could be good employment potential for this area. Additionally, the area is largely unaffected by flood risk or minerals and waste designations. However, development in this location would involve the loss of Grade 2 agricultural land (except for an area to the north of Heath Drive between Chiltern Close and High Oak Road, which is not classified as agricultural land), and there could also be environmental stewardship concerns. Furthermore,

development could have effects on the landscape character of the area. There would also be implications for designated wildlife sites beyond the Area of Search. Fanhams Hall, a Grade 2* listed building and its Registered Historic Park and Garden, also lies to the east of the Area of Search and any development within the Sub-Area would need to take this into account.

- 4.8.3.7** Furthermore, limited parts of the western section of the Sub-Area (nearest to the A1170) could potentially be subject to light pollution from floodlighting plus vehicular and other noise associated with activities at Wodson Park and Ware Football Club.
- 4.8.3.8** In terms of land availability, a large proportion of the Area of Search has been submitted for development via the Call for Sites. For educational provision, Kingshill Infant/St Mary's Junior, Tower, and Priors Wood would be the nearest Primary schools. However, within the Ware Planning Area there is an identified deficit in primary places that would need to be addressed. Depending on the level of development, this could necessitate the provision of at least one additional primary school in the town. Chauncy and Presdales would be the nearest secondary schools, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area, which would need to be addressed. In terms of other community facilities, while there is a wide range provided both within Ware and the neighbouring town of Hertford, there may be opportunities for further local provision in this area.
- 4.8.3.9** In terms of potential employment provision in the area, consideration would need to be given to the wider implications in relation to the continued vitality of Ware's existing designated employment areas and to ensure that these areas would not suffer at the expense of developing new employment opportunities in this location.
- 4.8.3.10** A potential show-stopper for this area would be the need to provide major waste water infrastructure. This would either involve considerable disruption to Wadesmill Road through to the High Street to enable construction, or expensive new sewer facilities to be provided to the east of the town. Depending on the level of development, the latter may be able to be provided as part of the development infrastructure; however, it could transpire after further investigations as yet to be undertaken, that this may only be financially achievable if combined with development to the east of the town (Area 20: Ware East).
- 4.8.3.11** Should it not prove feasible to achieve development of this magnitude due to any of the many infrastructure constraints, and development of under 500 dwellings be considered, then the utilisation of waste water infrastructure following The Bourne might be possible to serve a development of around 200 dwellings in the High Oak Road/Fanhams Hall Road area. However, while the topography of the area would make development in this location a design challenge, this may be surmountable.

There may also be highway matters in this area that would need further investigation involving potential access and cumulative impact on the highway network issues. As this area is also known to be used locally as informal recreation land (e.g. dog walking, annual firework display), this would need to be taken into account in any development proposals, along with all the many other issues to be addressed, particularly that of educational provision.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.8.3.12** Taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that Ware North Sub-Area A may have the potential to deliver development; however, this would only be possible at the expense of historic and natural assets and the area would be subject to considerable traffic noise from the A10 and A1170, plus activities at Wodson Park, which can also involve light issues. However, development in this location could only proceed subject to the resolution of waste water issues, which could prove to be a show-stopper.
- 4.8.3.13** Given the size of this location, if it was to be brought forward there would not be sufficient deliverable land in this Sub-Area alone to enable the delivery of a 500 dwelling development and it has therefore been assigned a Fail rating. If the many constraints were to prove surmountable, then 200 dwellings could potentially be delivered in this location, but only if linked to a much larger scheme incorporating land within Sub-Area B, that would also require waste water issue resolution. A Marginal Fail rating has been assigned for Sub-Area A for development of fewer than 500 dwellings.
- 4.8.3.14** In respect of Ware North Sub-Area B, this location may have the potential to deliver development of between 200 and 1,500 dwellings; however, for the majority of the area this would only be possible at the expense of Grade 2 agricultural land and other natural assets and would potentially involve the need for additional highways infrastructure, in addition to the identified waste water issues and educational deficit.
- 4.8.3.15** For the Ware North Area of Search as a whole there would be land availability to provide development significantly in excess of 500 dwellings that could potentially deliver between 200 and 1,700 dwellings. In terms of the cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration would need to be given to educational provision within the Ware Planning Area; traffic congestion issues in the town; environmental stewardship issues; and any gaps in the provision of community facilities. There are also significant water infrastructure constraints that would need to be surmounted, which could prove to be a show-stopper. However, in this respect there is a smaller area that could possibly be accommodated via existing infrastructure.

- 4.8.3.16** Therefore, the part of the Area of Search that would be considered most likely to be able to deliver a more modest amount of development (around 200 dwellings) would be within the area to the immediate north of the Kingshill estate/High Oak Road/Fanhams Hall Road locale. Land availability, expressed via the Call for Sites, also exists within this location. Taking all issues into account, this scenario has been assigned a Marginal Pass rating. Due to the constraints associated with the wider Area of Search, larger scale development (i.e. 1,500 dwellings) has been assigned a Marginal Fail rating.

Area 19: Ware North

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Ware North. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 19	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B
500 dwellings	Fail	Marginal Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail (on its own)	Marginal Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0 (on its own) or 200 (combined with 1,500 at Sub-Area B)	200 (Kingshill estate etc) or 1,500
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail (on its own) or Marginal Fail (200 combined with 1,500 at Sub-Area B)	Marginal Pass (200) or Marginal Fail (1,500)
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes (combined with 1,500 at Sub-Area B)	Yes

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: In this area, development would require new waste water infrastructure. On its own, development of this area would not be of a sufficient scale to make the provision of a new sewer financially viable. However, development of around 200 dwellings could potentially be achieved in this area if 1,500 dwellings in Sub-Area B adjacent were also to come forward. This area is part of a Registered Park.

Sub-Area B: In this area, early indications are that around 200 dwellings could be accommodated without significant new infrastructure if the development were carefully located in relation to the existing waste water and highways infrastructure and appropriate mitigation measures put in place. Larger scale development would require new waste water infrastructure and a new link road to the A1170/A10. Such infrastructure would become more financially viable at higher levels of development, and therefore a figure of 1,500 is suggested, making 1,700 for Area 19 in total.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.8.4 Ware East (Sieve 1: Area 20)

4.8.4.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 20 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 20: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.8.4.2 While development in this Sub-Area would have minimal effect on historic assets and strategic gap implications, it would require the loss of a significant amount of Grade 2 and some Grade 3 agricultural land, coupled with areas of environmental stewardship. There would also be a detrimental effect on the landscape character of the area and there would be significant wildlife site concerns.

4.8.4.3 Regarding educational provision, Prior’s Wood, Tower and Christchurch would be the nearest Primary schools. However, within the Ware Planning Area there is an identified deficit in primary places that would need to be addressed, although there may be the potential to expand Prior’s Wood by one form entry should land outside the ownership of the County Council become available. Chauncy and Presdales would be the nearest secondary schools, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area. In terms of other community facilities, while there is a wide range provided both within Ware and the neighbouring town of Hertford, there may be opportunities for further local provision in this area.

4.8.4.4 This Area of Search does not score well in terms of employment potential, neither being very visible or well connected to major transport routes. Furthermore, vehicular access to the Sub-Area would need addressing as the capacity of existing junctions would be unable to accommodate significant levels of development. This could potentially be resolved by the construction of a new road linking to the A1170 at north of Ware, which could become more economically viable if this Sub-Area were to be combined with development to the north of the town (Area 19: Ware North). However, on its own without this new link road, the impact of the traffic generated by development in this area on the existing street network in the Widbury Hill/Star Street vicinity, combined with existing traffic

congestion issues in the town, would not be acceptable. There are also concerns in terms of access to bus services, where the larger part of this location is remote from the town centre and existing transport provision. New routes, or the diversion of existing routes would be necessary to access this location and it would require a critical mass of development for this area to become commercially viable.

4.8.4.5 In terms of availability, land has been submitted via the Call for Sites to provide for development significantly in excess of 500 dwellings.

Area 20: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Environmental Stewardship.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.8.4.6 As with Sub-Area A, this element of the Area of Search does not score well in terms of employment potential, not being very visible or well connected to major transport routes. Furthermore, an amount of employment land in close vicinity to the Sub-Area within a designated Employment Area has been changed to residential use in recent years.

4.8.4.7 In terms of vehicular access, it is considered that the capacity of existing junctions would be unable to accommodate significant levels of development. If taken into account with Sub-Area A, these issues could potentially be resolved by the construction of a new road linking to the A1170 at north of Ware, which could become more economically viable if this Sub-Area were to be combined with development to the north of the town (Area 19: Ware North). However, on its own without this new link road, the impact of the traffic generated by development in this area on the existing street network in the Widbury Hill/Star Street vicinity, combined with existing traffic congestion issues in the town, would not be acceptable. As with Sub-Area A, there are also concerns in terms of access to bus services, where the larger part of this location is remote from the town centre and existing transport provision. New routes, or the diversion of existing routes would be necessary to access this location and it would require a critical mass of development for this area to become commercially viable. However, this Sub-Area is significantly smaller than Sub-Area A, and it may therefore not prove economically viable to support additional services in this location, with it lying to the south of Widbury Hill (B1004).

- 4.8.4.8** While development in this Sub-Area would have minimal effect on historic assets and strategic gap implications, it would require the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land, coupled with areas of environmental stewardship. There would also be a detrimental effect on the landscape character of the area and part of Widbury Wood, which is ancient woodland, is also included in the area. Furthermore, nearly all of the Sub-Area is designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance and there could also be significant wildlife site concerns.
- 4.8.4.9** Regarding educational provision, Christchurch, Prior's Wood and Tower would be the nearest Primary schools. However, within the Ware Planning Area there is an identified deficit in primary places that would need to be addressed, although there may be the potential to expand Prior's Wood by one form entry should land outside the ownership of the County Council become available. Chauncy and Presdales would be the nearest secondary schools, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area. In terms of other community facilities, while there is a wide range provided both within Ware and the neighbouring town of Hertford, there may be opportunities for further local provision in this area.
- 4.8.4.10** While land has been submitted via the Call for Sites for the overall Area of Search, there is no known land availability within Sub-Area B. Potential for development in this Sub-Area would therefore be considered unlikely.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.8.4.11** Taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that, due to its significant constraints, Ware East Sub-Area A would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver development in isolation. However, if it could be linked with development at Ware North in order to provide a link road to the A1170/A10 to relieve traffic pressure in this location, there may be some potential for this option to be investigated further. Consequently the assignment of Marginal Fail would be appropriate for this area solely on the basis that it is considered within the context of a linked development with Area 19: Ware North. Development of under 500 dwellings would not be able to deliver such infrastructure and in highways terms alone would not be acceptable and has therefore been assigned a Fail rating.
- 4.8.4.12** For Ware East Sub-Area B, it is considered that, due to its significant constraints, it would also be unlikely to have the potential to deliver development, unless linked to Ware North. However, in addition to the highways and access to buses issues, this area also has additional constraining issues including an Area of Archaeological Significance and wildlife site concerns, which would predicate against development in this location. This Sub-Area has therefore been assigned a Fail rating for development at all levels.

4.8.4.13 In summary, an interim total of 1,300 dwellings for the Ware East area should be carried forward to Sieve 2 as follows:

- Sub-Area A: 1,300 dwellings
- Sub-Area B: Nil

4.8.4.14 In terms of the cumulative impacts of development for further assessment, particular consideration would need to be given to educational provision within the Ware Planning Area for primary education and within the Hertford and Ware Planning Area for secondary education; traffic congestion issues in the town; bus services; wildlife; environmental stewardship issues; impact of this scale of development on the services in the town (both existing and any potential to increase provision); and any gaps in the provision of community facilities.

Area 20: Ware East

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Ware East. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 20	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B
500 dwellings	Marginal Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	1,300	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes	No

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: In this location, even small-scale development would require substantial new infrastructure provision, including new waste water infrastructure and a link road to the A10 to avoid unacceptable levels of congestion in the town centre. Such infrastructure is unlikely to be financially viable without large-scale development. Therefore a figure of 1,300 dwellings is suggested for further assessment. See also Area 19: Ware North, at which similar issues apply.

Sub-Area B: Failed due to traffic impact issues; access to bus services; archaeological and wildlife constraint

s; and land availability.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.8.5 Ware South-East (Sieve 1: Area 21)

4.8.5.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 21 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 21: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Waste Water Impact; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.8.5.2** Given the existence of two designated employment areas in this Sub-Area, there would be reasonable prospects of employment potential, albeit that some parts currently suffer from low visibility, older units, and some low market perception. In terms of vehicular access, this area would be quite well placed, although some, potentially significant, new infrastructure may be required, depending on proposed levels of development in any given location within the Sub-Area. This area would also be quite well located for accessing rail services.
- 4.8.5.3** However, considering its edge of town position, bus provision in the Widbury Hill/Star Street locality is currently poor and would require a critical mass of new development for it to become commercially sustainable to operate additional services in this area. While there is some land availability in the Sub-Area, the land in the Widbury Hill area already has the benefit of an extant planning permission with development currently under construction, mainly for residential purposes. Therefore, this decreases the likelihood of further development potential in this area to support increased bus provision.
- 4.8.5.4** Other land that has been submitted for this Sub-Area via the Call for Sites is situated to the south-east of Crane Mead. However, it is considered unlikely that this land alone would be sufficient to provide for 500 dwellings or over and there would also be concerns over residential provision in this location given the non-neighbourly uses operating in the Marsh Lane employment area very close by on the other side of the railway line, which in itself would have noise implications.
- 4.8.5.5** In terms of educational provision, while Sacred Heart Catholic, St John the Baptist VA C of E Primary, Great Amwell, and Christ Church C of E VA Primary schools would be the nearest schools, none of these would be particularly easy to reach by sustainable transport modes. Also, within the Ware Planning Area there is an identified deficit in primary places that would need to be addressed. Presdales, Chauncy, Simon Balle and Richard Hale would be the nearest secondary schools in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area; but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary

school places. In terms of other community facilities, while there is a wide range provided within Ware and within the neighbouring town of Hertford, given the limited area of developable land there may not be many, if any, opportunities for further local provision in this particular area.

- 4.8.5.6** Regarding development generally in this Sub-Area, there is a specific concern about growth outward from Ware in this direction due to coalescence issues within the strategic gap between the town and the settlements of Great Amwell, Stanstead Abbots and Hoddesdon.
- 4.8.5.7** The majority of the Sub-Area also lies within the boundaries of the Lee Valley Regional Park, where the potential for development is necessarily limited. Furthermore, in addition to the potential loss of Grade 3 agricultural land and some areas of higher level environmental stewardship, there are numerous natural asset and wildlife constraints in this location and most of the Sub-Area lies within Flood Zone 3. Additionally, to link to the Rye Meads Treatment Works, a new direct connection to the trunk sewer would be required, which would involve pumping across the floodplain.

Area 21: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Secondary/Middle Schools; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Waste Water Impact; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

- 4.8.5.8** Sub-Area B benefits from the designated employment area at Marsh Lane and would therefore have some employment potential; however, some parts suffer from low visibility, older units, and some low market perception. There are also a number of non-neighbourly uses in this location which could compromise the ability of adjacent sites to successfully accommodate residential provision. Noise impacts from the railway line and the A1170, London Road, would also add to these concerns over residential amenity.
- 4.8.5.9** In terms of vehicular access, this Sub-Area would be quite well placed in terms of direct access to the west of London Road (A1170); however, access to the east would be more difficult given the presence of the New River and could potentially require the construction of a new bridge; the use of a private access; or utilising the access route serving the existing Marsh Lane employment area. Some, potentially significant, infrastructure may be required, depending on proposed levels of development in any

given location within the Sub-Area. Development in the Sub-Area would be in fairly close proximity to rail provision, and much of the area is well served by good bus provision.

- 4.8.5.10** As with Sub-Area A, for educational provision, Sacred Heart Catholic, St John the Baptist VA C of E Primary, Great Amwell, and Christ Church C of E VA would be the nearest Primary schools. However, these would be difficult to access by sustainable transport modes from this Sub-Area. Also, within the Ware Planning Area there is an identified deficit in primary places that would need to be addressed. Presdales, Chauncy, Simon Balle and Richard Hale would be the nearest secondary schools in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places. In terms of other community facilities, while there is a wide range provided within Ware and within the neighbouring town of Hertford, there may be opportunities for further local provision in this area.
- 4.8.5.11** In terms of land availability, only one small site of 0.65ha has been submitted via the Call for Sites, and this site actually lies within the built up area of the settlement of Great Amwell, rather than Ware.
- 4.8.5.12** As with Sub-Area A, there is a specific concern about growth outward from Ware in this direction due to coalescence issues within the strategic gap between the town and the settlements of Great Amwell, Stanstead Abbots and Hoddesdon. Also, the majority of this Sub-Area lies within the boundaries of the Lee Valley Regional Park, where the potential for development is necessarily limited. Furthermore, in addition to the potential loss of grade 3 agricultural land, there are numerous natural asset and wildlife constraints in this location and most of the Sub-Area lies within Flood Zone 3. Additionally, to link to the Rye Meads Treatment Works, a new direct connection to the trunk sewer would be required, which would involve pumping across the floodplain.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.8.5.13** In summary, and taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that, due to its significant constraints, Ware South East Sub-Area A would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver development either for 500 dwellings or a lesser number.
- 4.8.5.14** Likewise for Ware South East Sub-Area B it is also considered that, due to its significant constraints, it would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver development either for 500 dwellings or a lesser number.

- 4.8.5.15** On balance it is considered that the importance of this location in protecting the strategic gap between Ware and the other neighbouring settlements of Great Amwell, Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets, and Hoddesdon would outweigh any other benefits of locating development in this Area of Search. As such, both Sub-Areas have been assigned a Fail rating under Sieve 1.

Area 21: Ware South-East

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Ware South-East. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 21	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B
500 dwellings	Fail	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No	No

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Failed due to flood risk; natural asset and wildlife constraints; effect on Lee Valley Regional Park; and coalescence with neighbouring settlements

Sub-Area B: Failed due to flood risk; effect on Lee Valley Regional Park; and coalescence with neighbouring settlements

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.8.6 Ware South-West (Sieve 1: Area 22)

- 4.8.6.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 22 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Vehicular Access; Historic Assets; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk, Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.

- 4.8.6.2** The Area of Search scores well in terms of waste water implications. There are no flood risk areas in the vicinity and development in this location would have little impact on the loss of good quality agricultural land, with clear boundary limits set for most of this area.
- 4.8.6.3** This location would suggest some employment potential, with its close proximity to the primary route network, albeit that, without direct access from the A10 dual carriageway, the area would not be so viable. However, while it is likely that access could be achieved via existing roads for either employment or residential uses, this would require highways infrastructure improvements to both junctions and carriageways (in some cases quite significant), for the levels of development proposed. Also, the cumulative effect of additional traffic on the A10 would need to be taken into account. As bus services are currently virtually non-existent in this location, significant improvements to provision would be needed, and would require peak time services to the area. It is likely that on-going subsidy would be necessary.
- 4.8.6.4** For educational provision, while Sacred Heart Catholic, St John the Baptist VA C of E Primary, Great Amwell, and Christ Church C of E VA Primary schools would be the nearest schools, none of these would be easy to reach by sustainable transport modes. Also, within the Ware Planning Area there is an identified deficit in primary places that would need to be addressed. Presdales, Richard Hale, Simon Balle and Chauncy would be the nearest secondary schools, but again, there is a forecast deficit of secondary school places in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area. It is noted that Pinewood and Middleton Schools would be situated within this Sub-Area; however, these schools serve children with special educational needs rather than providing for mainstream education. In terms of other community facilities, while there is a wide range provided within Ware and within the neighbouring town of Hertford, there may be opportunities for further local provision in this area.

- 4.8.6.5** In terms of effects on nearby wildlife sites, it should be noted that there would be significant concerns over the development of this Area of Search. Post Wood is also designated as Ancient Woodland. There is also a significant area to the west of the search area which is designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance.
- 4.8.6.6** While the A10 dual carriageway would provide a clear boundary to southerly growth, it could result in detrimental environmental quality for residents in the area due to vehicular noise and emissions. This area includes Presdales Pit, a former quarry that has not been restored to its former levels. This particular site has been identified within Hertfordshire County Council's waste site allocations document as having potential for a future waste site, the implications of which may mean, firstly, that land that has been submitted via the Call for Sites may not be available, and secondly, that use of this area for waste purposes could impact on a wider area and possibly limit development potential further.
- 4.8.6.7** Furthermore, an important issue to be taken into account would be that growth in this Area of Search would present significant coalescence issues within the strategic gap between Ware and Hertford, Hertford Heath, Great Amwell and Hoddesdon. In this respect, any development in this location would seriously compromise the strategic gap and significantly add to existing coalescence pressures, particularly in the vulnerable areas between Ware and Hertford and Ware and Great Amwell. Hertford Heath would also be affected by development in that direction, and likewise Hoddesdon, albeit to a lesser extent.
- 4.8.6.8** Regarding land availability, various submissions have been made which could enable the development of around 1,200 dwellings. In terms of delivery, these areas of land are in several ownerships, and likely to be available within 0-10 years. However, it should be noted that, in addition to the former quarry land potential non-availability detailed above, another parcel of land submitted would involve the relocation of an existing rugby club to other land within the search area. Therefore, in this respect, not all of the land submitted via the Call for Sites may actually be available for development for residential purposes and the estimated potential delivery figure of 1,200 could be significantly reduced.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.8.6.9** In summary, and taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that, due to its significant constraints, Ware South West would be unlikely to have the potential to deliver development of either 500 dwellings or a lesser number.

4.8.6.10 On balance, it is considered that the importance of this location in protecting the strategic gap between Ware and the other neighbouring settlements of Hertford, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, and Hoddesdon would outweigh any other benefits of locating development in this Area of Search. As such, this Area has been assigned a Fail rating under Sieve 1.

Area 22: Ware South-West

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Ware South-West. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 22	Sieve 1
500 dwellings	Fail
Fewer than 500 dwellings	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations: Failed due to coalescence issues in the strategic gap between Ware and neighbouring settlements.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.8.7 Ware: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

4.8.7.1 Ware is an historic settlement which has evolved around its river setting and gradually expanded over time from the valley outwards, with its flood plains constraining development in some locations. The north-western side of the town is clearly demarked by the A10 bypass, while the rest of the town has more open and natural features for its boundaries, including some undulating topography. The shape of any future development in or around the town will also be influenced by these characteristics.

4.8.7.2 Ware has a clear function as a smaller market town serving a limited hinterland of villages for education, convenience shopping and some other services. However, its poor comparison goods offer means that travel to

other locations for this type of shopping is inevitable e.g. since the closure of Peacocks there is nowhere in the town to purchase children's clothing beyond a very limited baby/toddler age group offer. An ASDA superstore does have the benefit of planning permission which could improve the town's retail offer in this and other respects and would also help to reduce some of the diversion of retail expenditure from the town. However, there is no firm commitment from the company to commence construction at this time. Without this additional store, the existing Tesco store is likely to continue to be the main outlet for convenience goods. The concern is that there is currently no other store of a significant size to be able to supplement this offer for weekly shopping and that the store is already trading at levels above its national rate. In the event that the ASDA development was not to proceed, then any additional development in the town would be likely to further stretch the existing convenience resource.

- 4.8.7.3** Ware has fairly good access to the primary road network via the A10 and A602 and their linkages to the A414, A1, M11 and M25 beyond, which makes travel to other larger settlements and their more attractive retail offers, relatively easy. The town is served by trains to Hertford and London, albeit at limited frequency, and by buses to numerous locations, enabling travel by multiple modes. National Cycle Network Route 61 provides a (mainly) off-road route through Ware between Rye House and St Albans, which offers another option to car borne travel. However, other existing dedicated cycling routes in the town are few and the potential to provide further routes is severely limited, mainly due to topography and carriageway width constraints dictated by the historic built form. The town offers relatively good permeability in terms of pedestrian access; however, certain deficiencies in both pedestrian and cycle routes have been identified⁽¹²⁵⁾ e.g. access to Wodson Park Sports Centre.
- 4.8.7.4** While the A10 bypass, completed in 1975, provides an alternative to the town centre for through-traffic, there remain significant congestion issues in the town centre, particularly in the High Street. In this location, in addition to peak time increased flows, the constraints of narrow road width and lack of alternative servicing facilities mean that delivery and collection vehicles impede the free-flow of traffic and cause queuing at other times too. Other traffic related problems are apparent in the town, largely due to historic development patterns linked to the scale of traffic using these roads, especially at peak times.
- 4.8.7.5** The Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan (UTP) examined the issues for the central core of the town but, other than measures that would encourage a modal shift from the car to other more sustainable forms of transport, there were only limited schemes identified that could help ease this problem and none that would have a major impact on significantly reducing congestion.

- 4.8.7.6** One of the potential mitigating schemes suggested in the UTP was the potential to provide a Park and Ride (P&R) facility between the two towns to complement other sustainable transport measures. However, the economic viability of such a scheme would be dependent on securing an appropriate level of population in both towns. A 2007 report⁽¹²⁶⁾ looking into P&R nationally showed that a number of towns with populations of between 45,000 and 85,000 have P&R; larger towns and cities of 90,000 population plus often have more than one P&R site; and consideration is being given for P&R to be introduced in some smaller towns with populations of less than 45,000.
- 4.8.7.7** The population of Ware was cited as 17,133 in the 2001 census, with the population for Hertford at 24,180, giving a total of 41,313 for the two settlements combined. Given the passage of time and developments constructed in the interim it is likely that the (*as yet unreleased at the time of writing*) data from the 2011 census will show an increase in population that may be approaching the lower level of potential viability stated in the report. However, this level would normally be in respect of a lone settlement with a single central core (rather than two smaller towns located in close proximity to each other with potentially less critical mass of employment, shops and services than the traditionally larger settlements served by P&R), and may thus require a higher level of population to become economically sustainable.
- 4.8.7.8** Additionally, a suitable location would still need to be identified for any potential P&R scheme (an arc between the two towns was suggested within the UTP, but this would be subject to further scrutiny and other potential locations would need to be considered). Depending on the finally selected location, this may aid the levels of inbound traffic, but potentially not help congestion issues to any large degree for those living in the town, particularly from areas to the south and east. Furthermore, the broad area identified in the UTP is within the strategic gap between the two towns and could have a negative impact on coalescence issues; while a large part of the area is also within the Meads, where flooding and other environmental and wildlife concerns would predicate against such a location and from where accessing the primary route network could prove problematic. Also, any P&R scheme would need to be financed and development contributions would certainly be key to such provision; but, importantly, the scheme is very much seen as a long-term UTP aspiration.
- 4.8.7.9** It is apparent, therefore, that any further development in Ware would only be likely to compound the existing congestion issues in the central area (especially in the short-term). This is a serious consideration to be taken into account in the formulation of any development strategy for the town,

as peak time conditions especially already subject traffic to lengthy delays and even off-peak flows are impeded when deliveries occur in the High Street.

- 4.8.7.10** In terms of employment, although the town is home to the largest single employer in the district (GSK), neither this enterprise on its own, nor the other employment opportunities in the town, serve to contain the working population of Ware. According to the SHMA, over 50% of the working population is employed in other locations. Even if some of these people may use sustainable transport modes, the 2001 Census showed that some 63.9% of workers living in Ware travelled by car to their place of employment. While the town may be perceived by some as a dormitory settlement serving London, in fact only 9.2% of the working population was actually ascribed to travelling to employment by train, which may belie that picture.
- 4.8.7.11** While there are designated employment areas in the town, significant parts of two of these (at Broadmeads and Widbury Hill) have been lost in recent years to residential development. The current situation would suggest that if further large-scale residential development was permitted in Ware then, unless significant suitable opportunities were to present themselves on existing or new employment sites, there would be a risk of a further increase in out-commuting, which would be contrary to sustainable development principles. In terms of further new employment site opportunities, the area to the North of Ware would have the best potential in terms of access and visibility. However, there is a concern that, quite apart from the distance of this from the station to aid sustainable commuting patterns, development in this location might 'pull' against the existing employment areas to the south-east of the town, where the need for further investment and improvement has already been identified. Moreover, there is a waste water infrastructure issue to the North⁽¹²⁷⁾, which may predicate against development in this location. Employment provision in other areas on the edge of the town to the South West would also be visible, and therefore could be attractive to potential occupants, but would have other significant development constraints.
- 4.8.7.12** In terms of the amount of residential development that the town could provide and the direction/s of growth that could successfully accommodate this, the Areas of Search Assessments have reached several conclusions. Firstly, while this would be viewed as the most sustainable location, the Built-Up Area would have very little land to bring forward, as a significant amount of brownfield development has occurred in the past that has drained the supply. Only limited available land remains via Call for Sites submissions and the SLAA assessment that are considered likely to be available and which do not already have the benefit of planning permission.

127 See the Waste Water Impacts Topic Assessment (Appendix A)

- 4.8.7.13** Development beyond the town's boundaries would involve Green Belt release/s.
- 4.8.7.14** Growth to the South West of Ware would involve coalescence issues in the strategic gap between Ware and the settlements of Hertford, Hertford Heath, Great Amwell and Hoddesdon, and would also be affected by wildlife and archaeological constraints. It would also have poor sustainable transport links and be poorly related to general primary school provision. Potential future waste proposals could have implications for land availability and residential amenity.
- 4.8.7.15** Development to the South East of the town would be unlikely to be acceptable due to coalescence issues within the strategic gap between the town and the settlements of Great Amwell, Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets, and Hoddesdon; plus additional concerns regarding: the Lee Valley Regional Park; potential loss of grade 3 agricultural land and some areas of higher level environmental stewardship; natural asset and wildlife constraints; Flood Zone 3 implications; non-neighbourly uses; and waste water infrastructure requirements.
- 4.8.7.16** The North of Ware could offer the best potential for growth if waste water issues could be resolved and other constraints overcome. However, in respect of the waste water infrastructure deficit, the solution would not be easy – either involving significant prolonged disruption during construction to Wadesmill Road and the High Street, which would not be favoured by Thames Water, or requiring lengthy pipe construction over several kilometres. For either scenario, in order for this infrastructure provision to be financially viable, it is likely that large-scale development would be required in order to enable delivery. But, this in turn would place additional strain on the town's current resources and exacerbate existing identified congestion problems.
- 4.8.7.17** Growth to the East of the town would only be considered acceptable if particular constraining issues could be overcome. Notwithstanding other constraints of high grade agricultural land, coupled with areas of environmental stewardship, landscape character and significant wildlife concerns, the most crucial of matters to be considered would be the impact of the traffic generated by development. In particular, the effects would be most notable on the existing highway network in the Widbury Hill/Star Street vicinity, with capacity issues of existing junctions in the area already identified. This combined with existing traffic congestion issues throughout the wider town, would mean that, without mitigation measures, the area would be unable to accommodate further significant levels of development. A scheme that could potentially partially resolve this issue would involve the construction of a new road linking to the A1170 to the north of the town. Without this new link road, development in this location would not be likely to be acceptable to the highway authority. As this would be an expensive measure, it may be that the provision of this infrastructure could

only be economically supported if combined with development to the North of the town and therefore, development to the East of Ware may not prove to be viable on its own.

- 4.8.7.18** Given the cost of provision of waste water infrastructure and highway infrastructure improvements, areas of potential growth to the North and/or East of the town would necessitate a significant level of development to achieve financial viability. It is estimated that a combined area of growth to include both northerly and easterly expansion over an area of approximately 150ha could deliver around 3,000 dwellings. However, should this strategy be adopted, then the major concern about such further large scale expansion of the town is the ability of the town's services and existing infrastructure to cope with the demands on them that the additional population would bring. Notwithstanding wildlife, historic asset and potential flooding matters, particular issues in respect of acknowledged traffic congestion, provision of school places, the current limited convenience retail provision and poor comparison goods offer, plus waste water deficit (in locations to the north) would make it questionable whether the town's infrastructure would have the ability to accommodate more than a modest amount of additional development. A further scenario could involve development to the north only, which could provide around 1,500 dwellings, but this would be dependent on the construction of waste water infrastructure over an area of land to the east of the town, which would be outside of this development area.
- 4.8.7.19** Therefore, a series of straightforward choices appear to present themselves. The first option (Scenario A in table below) would be to accept that only a modest amount of development would be appropriate in order to maintain the character of the town; avoid service overload; and not exacerbate the existing 'leakage' issues from the town in terms of goods, services and employment.
- 4.8.7.20** The second option (Scenario C in table below) would be for Ware to accept large scale development of around 3,000 to the north and east of the town. This would involve a level of development that would clearly be out of scale with the existing capacity of the town and risk the overload of its services and infrastructure, especially in the town centre. There are also very few available land opportunities to increase service provision and the traffic situation is already very poor in the central core. Additionally, it would need to be recognised that the population would undoubtedly need to travel elsewhere for many of its goods and services (which would be contrary to the sustainable aims of the Plan). Furthermore, with an existing identified educational deficit, further development could necessitate the provision of at least one additional primary school in the town and further secondary provision in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area.

- 4.8.7.21** The third option (Scenario B in table below), presents a mid-way position and would involve development of around 1,500 dwellings to the north. The viability of this scenario, which would involve a large waste water infrastructure project, is yet to be evaluated in respect of establishing economic feasibility; but, the impact on the town and its existing infrastructure would certainly be less than for a development of 3,000 dwellings. However, even this reduced number of dwellings would be considered out of scale with the existing capacity of the town and, as in the scenario above, would also risk the overload of its services and infrastructure, especially in the town centre. Furthermore, with an existing identified educational deficit, further development could necessitate the provision of at least one additional primary school in the town and further secondary provision in the Hertford and Ware Planning Area.
- 4.8.7.22** While it is recognised that the latter two options would be of a level considerably out of scale with the existing settlement and its services and infrastructure, if suitable growth locations cannot be identified elsewhere within the district then large-scale development in Ware could be needed in order to comply with NPPF requirements to meet objectively assessed housing need on a district-wide basis. On that basis all three options should be carried forward to Sieve 3.
- 4.8.7.23** However, if, taking into account all of the above, it is considered appropriate that on balance Ware should accept only modest development then this should be confined to the Built-Up area of the town and, if further investigations prove positive, to the North in the Kingshill estate/High Oak Road/Fanhams Hall Road locale.

Next Steps

- 4.8.7.24** The District Plan strategy considers the district-wide implications of growth at 69 areas of search. The next step is therefore to consider whether there are other areas of the District which are potentially better locations for development than Ware. It will also be necessary to judge what the overall level of development should be, in terms the balance of development impacts tested against the agreed upper and lower limits derived from demographic work. A combination of the district-wide work and the local-area work contained in this chapter should suggest an appropriate level of development for each settlement. This will be the subject of *Chapter 5: Scenarios*.
- 4.8.7.25** *Chapter 6: Strategies* will then test the sustainability and deliverability of development at Ware and other locations, taking account of growth scenarios within and beyond the town. This process may lead to adjustments to the findings of Chapter 5. Without careful planning there are clear risks to the quality of life and successful functioning of settlements including Ware, arising from the combined effect of development within the town and at other locations, for example in Hertford. In order to more

fully understand the major infrastructure requirements and the impact of large-scale development on the town then three key areas of further investigation would need to be undertaken in the context of strategy development and testing for Ware:

- there is a need for a detailed appraisal of waste water requirements that future development would need to deliver to ensure that Ware's infrastructure would have the capacity to cope with the demands of an increased population in the event that large scale development to the north and east of the town should proceed. This should be carried out in conjunction with Thames Water.
- In terms of highways provision a full assessment is required of the need to provide a new road linking the area to the east of Ware to the north at the A1170, in the event that development in these locations should proceed. In particular, this evaluation should cover issues of route, effects on the town's existing highway network and potential cost of provision plus consider implications for access to the town's main services. This should be carried out in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority.
- as there is currently insufficient capacity within the existing schools to provide for growth of significant proportions, the primary and secondary schools capacity issues will need to be addressed and a strategy devised to deal with the increased population. This should be carried out in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council as Local Authority with responsibility for education.

4.8.7.26 In addition to these critical issues, the impact on retail provision would also need to be considered and the potential for additional employment opportunities explored further, especially in relation to the effects on existing provision. Other details arising from issues raised in some of the remaining topic assessments would also need to be investigated further, if the key issue explorations indicate that the major obstacles to development could be surmounted.

4.8.7.27 Should large-scale development not prove feasible, then even if only a limited amount of growth is proposed for the town, there would still be a need for various matters to be subject to further investigation. In particular, waste water, highways considerations and school place provision matters would still need to be addressed to ensure that even a limited amount of development would be achievable. Also, the need for the provision of additional junior and mini football and rugby facilities would need to be taken into account, along with other sporting and community facilities.

4.8.7.28 Given that key choices remain to be made on the scale of development for the town, it is not possible at this stage to provide a definitive revision to the Vision for Ware contained in the Issues and Options consultation.

However, whichever of the three potential development strategies are chosen for the town, it is likely that its main aims will remain, but are likely to be supplemented by strengthened references to employment, retail and the synergy of new development with the existing character of the town and its setting. The vision should also include a strong emphasis on sustainable transport in order to address congestion within the town, further education, and also on preserving and enhancing the town's green infrastructure and the Lee Valley Regional Park. Informed by all of the above, it should be possible to draw together local and strategic considerations into a coherent vision for Ware and other locations in the district, in order to provide a realistic and succinct statement of how the town is anticipated to change over the next twenty years, and how such change can be managed.

Ware: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for Ware. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Ware	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
Scenario Description	Development in the Built-up area (150); and north (200)	Development in the Built-up area (150); and north (1,700)	Development in the Built-up area (150); to the north (1,700) and east (1,300)
Sieve 2 Figure	350	1,850	3,150
Sieve 2 Rating	Marginal Pass	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Main Considerations:

Scenario A: Small-scale Greenfield development to the north of the Built-Up Area. This scenario would not require significant new infrastructure but there may be local issues which require further investigation.

Scenario B: Large scale development to the north of Ware. This scenario would require a new northern link road to the A10 avoiding the town centre congestion hotspot. It would also require a new edge-of town sewer to the east to serve development to the north in order to avoid prolonged disruption caused by upgrades to the existing sewer, which runs under the High Street. Provision of an eastern sewer would require consent from the landowners.

Scenario C: Large scale development to the north and east of Ware. This scenario would require a Ware northern bypass in order to provide access to the A10 from development to the east. As under scenario B, a new eastern sewer would be required, although this would form part of the new development rather than running through undeveloped land.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various

other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.9 Villages

This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to Villages. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.9.1 Areas of Search

4.9.1.1 The Areas of Search are shown below.

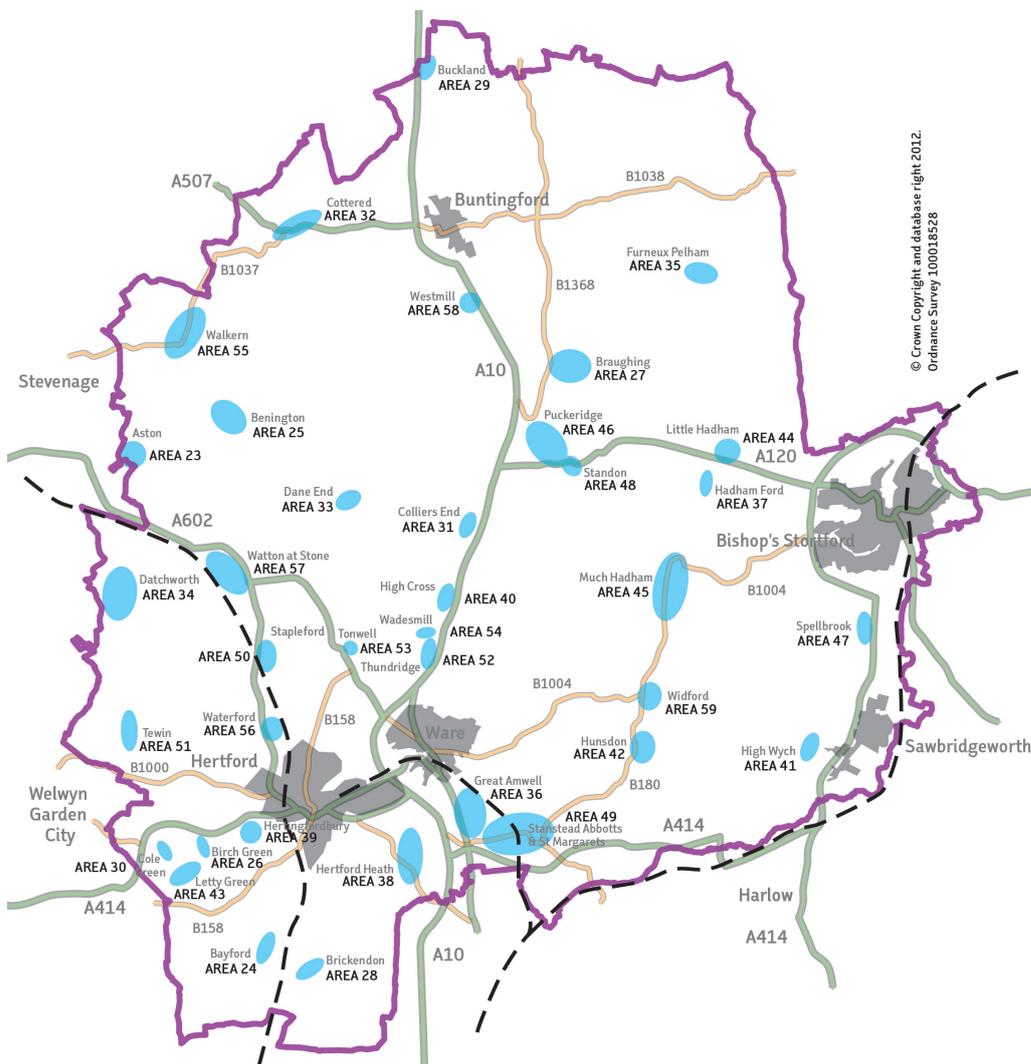


Figure 4.8 Villages Areas of Search

4.9.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The Areas of Search for the Villages are indicative areas encircling each village. It should be noted that for strategic planning purposes Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets (Area 49) are considered together as a single village.

4.9.2 Aston (Sieve 1: Area 23)

4.9.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 23 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.9.2.2 Aston scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Aston has good accessibility to bus services and a range of community facilities. The primary school also has capacity and expansion potential, albeit subject to highway issues.

4.9.2.3 At the secondary tier, Aston is served by the Buntingford school planning area where capacity issues have been identified, although these may be resolved through school expansion. Further technical work is required. Whilst close to Stevenage, Aston is some distance from the town centre and therefore scores poorly in terms of both employment potential and accessibility to rail services. Notwithstanding this, Aston is close to the A602 and poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.

4.9.2.4 In terms of rural considerations, Aston scores ‘amber’ against strategic gaps, agricultural land and environmental stewardship and ‘red’ against landscape character and the Green Belt. The countryside around Aston, therefore, plays an important role in preventing coalescence. The amber score in respect of strategic gaps is based on the scale of the growth proposed. Aston is also located within 2km of Benington High wood SSSI, and therefore the scale and cumulative effect of development has the potential to cause negative effects.

4.9.2.5 In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets and the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.2.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.2.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Aston would be a suitable location that could accommodate development. Whilst the limited range of community facilities is considered to be an issue, Aston is in close proximity to Stevenage for services with good (relative to villages) access to bus services. Notwithstanding this, careful consideration needs to be given to the scale and location of growth in respect of landscape and the Green Belt.

Area 23: Aston

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Aston. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 23	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Strategic gap, environmental impact and secondary education

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.3 Bayford (Sieve 1: Area 24)

4.9.3.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 24 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.9.3.2 Bayford scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Bayford has a range of community facilities. The poor accessibility to bus services is perhaps outweighed by the fact that Bayford is considered to have good access to rail services, albeit that the station is sited 0.5 km to the east, outside the Area of Search. In terms of primary education, there are currently capacity issues and potential for expansion is subject to further technical work.

4.9.3.3 In terms of secondary education, Bayford falls within the Hertford and Ware school planning area where there is a deficit. Thus, growth in Bayford needs to be considered in relation to growth in this area as a whole. In terms of employment potential, Bayford is poor in terms of location, access, visibility and clustering potential.

4.9.3.4 In terms of rural considerations, Bayford scores ‘amber’ against agricultural land and environmental stewardship and ‘red’ against landscape character since the bulk of the village is considered to lie within landscapes worth conserving and strengthening. Bayford is also located in the Green Belt, although it is not considered that the Area of Search plays an important role in protecting the strategic gap between settlements.

4.9.3.5 In terms of more site-based considerations, there is a Scheduled Monument to the east of the village and Bayford is also located within 2km of Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC NNR SSSI. Noise may also be an issue given Bayford’s proximity to the railway and there is a need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.3.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently insufficient land available to meet even the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption. The site that is available is proposed for residential use.
- 4.9.3.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Bayford would be a suitable location that could accommodate development.

Area 24: Bayford

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Bayford. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 24	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Secondary schools and environmental impact

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.4 Benington (Sieve 1: Area 25)

4.9.4.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 25 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Environmental Stewardship.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Green Belt; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.9.4.2 In terms of the key considerations for villages, despite Benington being located in reasonable proximity to Stevenage, the village has relatively poor access to bus and rail services. This lack of access has contributed to Benington retaining its rural character and also means the village would not be ideal for employment uses apart from providing a hub for small businesses. This lack of access to rail services could result in an over-dependency on private vehicles for transport needs, though this is an acknowledged common issue for most rural settlements.

4.9.4.3 Benington has evolved into a predominantly residential village, which benefits from a primary school, nursery and part-time surgery. There is however, no post office and the recreation ground is at the far eastern end of the village, although this is near the residential estates of Three Stiles and Blacksmiths Hill. The village shop functions from The Bell Inn. Facilities in Benington serve nearby Burns Green and Hebing End villages and hamlets along Town Lane and Whempstead Road. The village has two different areas; the historic village with narrow lanes and large houses in large plots and the post 1960's estates. The narrow lanes and presence of listed buildings makes the historic part of Benington unsuitable for development.

4.9.4.4 In terms of primary education, Benington has a primary school that serves both Benington and neighbouring settlements. Benington Church of England Primary School has some capacity but no expansion potential. In terms of secondary education, Benington falls within both the Buntingford and Stevenage school planning areas. There are current and forecast capacity deficits in both school planning areas that would need to be resolved.

4.9.4.5 In terms of rural considerations, Benington scores 'amber' against agricultural land, 'green' against noise impacts, but 'red' against landscape character and environmental stewardship. The landscape around the

village is particularly dominant, with gradient differences that have shaped the growth of the village. However, the presence of large properties in large plots and the development of ribbon development over time have degraded the quality of the landscape in some areas. Benington's relatively remote location and lack of main roads contributes to the tranquillity of the village.

- 4.9.4.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, the greatest concern is the proximity of the village to Benington High Wood SSSI, which lies to the west of the village. Much of the land around Benington is subject to environmental stewardship schemes and there are few natural features apart from the topography to act as natural limits to development. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed. An assessment into the site-specific quality of agricultural land, particularly land subject to environmental stewardship along with an assessment into the potential impact on wildlife habitats would be needed.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.9.4.7** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% planning assumption growth. All but one of the sites submitted are under single ownership and would all be available immediately. However, given the lack of passenger transport and possible cumulative impacts of development on education capacity, there is some doubt as to the suitability of locating more residential properties in this remote village.

Area 25: Benington

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Benington. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 25	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education, environmental impact and accessibility to passenger transport

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.5 Birch Green (Sieve 1: Area 26)

4.9.5.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 26 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Rail Services; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.9.5.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Birch Green is essentially a large housing estate constructed during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Despite its proximity to both Hertford and Welwyn Garden City, Birch Green does not have good access to either bus or rail services but benefits from indirect access to the A414 through neighbouring villages. The village is

not visible from the A414 and with relatively poor passenger transport access and its lack of direct access to the main road Birch Green is limited in terms of potential employment opportunities. A small scale of development is likely to be able to be accommodated within the existing road and waste water network. However, improvements would be needed to the passenger transport network to facilitate development in the village.

- 4.9.5.3** Apart from a playground there are no community facilities within Birch Green, nor the cluster of villages of which it is a part. Residents are required to travel to either Hertford or Welwyn Garden City to access services.
- 4.9.5.4** In terms of primary education, Birch Green benefits from Hertingfordbury Cowper C of E VA Primary, which has the potential to expand to accommodate a 10% growth of Birch Green. Further technical work will be needed to assess the capacity of the school in relation to growth within other nearby villages. In terms of secondary education, Birch Green lies within the Hertford and Ware School Planning Area which has an acknowledged deficit of places. The cumulative impact of development affecting the catchment of this school area will require new secondary school infrastructure and will warrant further consideration.
- 4.9.5.5** In terms of rural considerations, Birch Green scores ‘red’ against landscape character, and ‘amber’ against agricultural land classification. The landscape in which Birch Green sits is considered good condition but of moderate character, suffering in part from the urbanising effects of the A414, and is considered in need of restoration. Being a planned residential estate there is little variation in building design, roads are of standard width and the layout is open and spacious, the opposite of a typical rural village in this part of Hertfordshire.
- 4.9.5.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, Birch Green is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3 and there are few natural features to help to contain development beyond the existing built-up area. Consideration will need to be given to the scale of development and its potential impact on nearby wildlife habitats. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.5.7** While an initial land availability assessment indicates that there is sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption, it should be acknowledged that only one of the two sites could be considered to be within the boundary of the village. The other site is part of a much larger submission to the west of Birch Green. Approximately 130 hectares

of land under single ownership is available. However information submitted in the Call for Sites exercise indicated that only small scale development sympathetic to the villages would be proposed.

- 4.9.5.8** In order to overcome the lack of passenger transport and community facilities a major development would be required. This level of development would have significant impacts on the Broxbourne Woods complex and Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods National Nature Reserve and on the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.
- 4.9.5.9** On balance, whilst it is considered that a 10% growth to Birch Green could be accommodated physically, this level of growth will not facilitate provision of the additional community facilities and services needed. Given this lack of access to passenger transport and community facilities further development in the village would not be considered sustainable. Development would need to be of a scale that supported the creation of services and facilities to serve the locality.

Area 26 Birch Green

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Birch Green. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 26	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Lack of community facilities and accessible transport networks

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.6 Braughing (Sieve 1: Area 27)

- 4.9.6.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 27 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Landscape Character.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.

- 4.9.6.2** Braughing scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Braughing has good accessibility to bus services and a good range of community facilities, lacking only a doctor’s surgery, which is provided in nearby Puckeridge. In terms of primary education, whilst a limited amount of development in the village may be appropriate, the school suffers from having no further expansion potential.
- 4.9.6.3** At the secondary tier, Braughing is served by two school planning areas, both with capacity issues. In the Buntingford school planning area these issues may be resolved through school expansion and further technical work is required. In the Bishop’s Stortford secondary school planning area, issues are still to be determined following the outcome of the Bishop’s Stortford Schools Inquiry. Other cumulative issues that need to be taken into account include employment. Whilst not a suitable area for new employment land, Braughing needs to be considered in the context of growth in the wider A10 corridor. The poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.
- 4.9.6.4** In terms of rural considerations, Braughing scores ‘amber’ against agricultural land and ‘red’ against landscape character, reiterating that the village is considered to lie within landscapes worth conserving.
- 4.9.6.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets (including a Scheduled Monument outside the Area of the Search to the south), protecting designated wildlife sites (including bats), the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development and flood risk. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.6.6** While an initial land availability assessment may be able to exceed the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption, it should be noted that the majority of these sites are outside the current development boundary of the village, albeit they all immediately adjoin it. The only known available

land within the current boundary is at Pentlows Farm, which is a remaining Local Plan 2007 housing allocation. Sites have been suggested for housing/mixed use, although it should be noted that over half of the available land (6.7ha) is proposed for open space in conjunction with the residential development of an adjacent site.

- 4.9.6.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Braughing would be a suitable location that could accommodate development, although the capacity at the primary school tier is an issue. Many of the issues identified are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that development in Braughing needs to be carefully located and designed, including in respect of landscape and wildlife.

Area 27: Braughing

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Braughing. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 27	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education and landscape character

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.7 Brickendon (Sieve 1: Area 28)

- 4.9.7.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 28 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.9.7.2** Brickendon scores positively against a number of topics. However, in terms of the key considerations for villages, Brickendon scores poorly in terms of community facilities and accessibility to bus services, although this is perhaps outweighed by the fact that Brickendon is considered to have good access to rail services, albeit that Bayford station is sited 0.8km to the west, outside the Area of Search. In terms of employment potential, Brickendon is poor in terms of location, access, visibility and clustering potential.
- 4.9.7.3** In terms of primary education, the nearest school is at Bayford and this would need to expand to accommodate even a 10% growth. This would be subject to land ownership issues. In terms of secondary education, Brickendon falls within the Hertford and Ware school planning area where there is a deficit. Thus, growth in Brickendon needs to be considered in relation to growth in this area as a whole.
- 4.9.7.4** In terms of rural considerations, Brickendon scores ‘amber’ against agricultural land and environmental stewardship and ‘red’ against landscape character and the Green Belt, although it is not considered that Brickendon plays an important role in protecting the strategic gap between settlements. The landscape character is considered to be of good quality which could be strengthened. There is a small degree of historic ribbon development along much of Brickendon Lane which has reduced the remote feel of an otherwise heavily vegetated valley.
- 4.9.7.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets and noise, although it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites. However, one of the greatest areas of concern is the proximity of Brickendon to Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods and Broxbourne Woods SAC NNR SSSI.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.7.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently insufficient land available to meet even the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.

4.9.7.7 On balance, given the lack of education provision and potential impacts on Wildlife Sites of National importance these issues are considered to be ‘showstoppers’ precluding development in the area.

Area 28: Brickendon

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Brickendon. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 28	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Fails due to environmental impact, access to bus services, primary and secondary education and community facilities

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.8 Buckland (Sieve 1: Area 29)

4.9.8.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 29 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Access to Rail Services; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Historic Assets; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

- 4.9.8.2** Buckland scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Buckland has good accessibility to bus services but scores poorly in terms of community facilities, being served only by a church. In terms of education, both primary and secondary schooling is provided in surrounding towns and villages, although capacity is somewhat constrained. In terms of employment potential, Buckland is remote despite it being located on the A10 between Buntingford and Royston. The poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.
- 4.9.8.3** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of boundary limits to development as well as historic assets, and noise from the A10, although it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites. In terms of rural considerations, Buckland scores 'red' against landscape character and agricultural land, owing to its large, open and elevated plateau.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.8.4** There is currently insufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.8.5** On balance, it is considered that achieving a 10% growth to Buckland would be difficult given the landscape constraints. There are doubts as to the suitability of locating development in a location where there is a lack of community facilities, particularly in terms of primary and secondary education, as this level of growth will not facilitate the provision of the additional community facilities and services needed. Development would need to be of a scale that supported the creation of services and facilities to serve the locality.

Area 29: Buckland

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Buckland. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 29	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Landscape impacts, community facilities and primary and secondary education

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.9 Cole Green (Sieve 1: Area 30)

4.9.9.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 30 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Rail Services; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Bus Services; Primary Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.9.9.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Cole Green is essentially a small cluster of large properties and farm holdings located around an elongated village green. Despite its proximity to both Welwyn Garden City and Hertford via direct access to the A414, Cole Green does not have good access to either bus or rail services. There are some local businesses located on a diversified farm holding, a gardening nursery and scrap merchant which all benefit from their proximity to the main road. There is

clearly some potential for small-scale rural businesses in this location. A small scale of development is likely to be able to be accommodated within the existing road and waste water network. However, improvements would be needed to the passenger transport network to facilitate development in the village.

- 4.9.9.3** Apart from a public house there are no community facilities within Cole Green, nor the cluster of villages of which it is a part. Residents are required to travel to either Hertford or Welwyn Garden City to access services.
- 4.9.9.4** In terms of primary education, the nearest school is Hertingfordbury Cowper C of E VA Primary, located in neighbouring Birch Green, which has the potential to expand to accommodate a 10% growth of Cole Green. Further technical work will be needed to assess the capacity of the school in relation to growth within other nearby villages. In terms of secondary education, Cole Green lies within the Hertford and Ware School Planning Area which has an acknowledged deficit of places. The cumulative impact of development affecting the catchment of this school area will require new secondary school infrastructure and will warrant further consideration.
- 4.9.9.5** In terms of rural considerations, Cole Green scores ‘red’ against landscape character and ‘amber’ against agricultural land classification and environmental stewardship. The landscape in which Cole Green sits is considered good condition but of moderate character, suffering in part from the urbanising effects of the A414, and is considered in need of restoration. There is a variety of building design and architectural interest but few historic assets. The openness and amount of space between the few properties in Cole Green create a feeling of remoteness but is not typical of rural villages in this part of Hertfordshire. Cole Green should be considered a small hamlet rather than a village.
- 4.9.9.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, Cole Green is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3 and there are few natural features to help to contain development beyond the existing built-up area. Consideration will need to be given to the scale of development and its potential impact on nearby wildlife habitats. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.9.7** While an initial land availability assessment indicates that there is sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption, it should be acknowledged that the site is part of a much larger submission. Approximately 130 hectares of land under single ownership is available.

However information submitted in the Call for Sites exercise indicated that only small scale development sympathetic to the villages would be proposed.

- 4.9.9.8** In order to overcome the lack of passenger transport and community facilities a major development would be required. This level of development would have significant impacts on the Broxbourne Woods complex and Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods National Nature Reserve and on the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.
- 4.9.9.9** On balance, whilst it is considered that a 10% growth to Cole Green could be accommodated physically, this level of growth will not facilitate the provision of the additional community facilities and services needed. Given this lack of access to passenger transport and community facilities further development in the village would not be considered sustainable. Development would need to be of a scale that supports the provision of community facilities and passenger transport services in the location.

Area 30: Cole Green

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Cole Green. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 30	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Lack of community facilities, passenger transport, primary and secondary education

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.10 Colliers End (Sieve 1: Area 31)

- 4.9.10.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 31 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.9.10.2** Colliers End scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, whilst Colliers End has good accessibility to bus services, the village scores poorly in terms of community facilities. Although there is no primary school in the village itself, provision is made in neighbouring High Cross where there is capacity and expansion potential.
- 4.9.10.3** At the secondary tier, Colliers End is served by the Hertford and Ware school planning area where capacity issues and further technical work is required. In terms of employment potential, Colliers End is in a good location with access off the old A10. Whilst there is no direct rail provision, Ware station is 6.8km to the south with peak time bus journeys to Ware station likely to be achievable within 15 mins.
- 4.9.10.4** In terms of rural considerations, Colliers End scores ‘amber’ against landscape character, agricultural land and environmental stewardship. Colliers End is also located within 2km of Plashes Wood SSSI, and therefore the scale and cumulative effect of development has the potential to cause negative effects.
- 4.9.10.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development as well as historic assets and noise. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.10.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.10.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Colliers End would be a suitable location that could accommodate development within the built up area of the village, although the lack of community facilities is an issue. Many of the issues identified

are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that careful consideration needs to be given to the siting of development in respect of ensuring adequate boundary limits to growth.

Area 31: Colliers End

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Colliers End. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 31	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Environmental impacts, primary and secondary education

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.11 Cottored (Sieve 1: Area 32)

4.9.11.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 32 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Community Facilities; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

- 4.9.11.2** Cottered scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Cottered has good accessibility to bus services and a range of community facilities. Whilst there is no primary school in Cottered itself, primary education is provided in neighbouring Ardeley and Buntingford. There is existing capacity and potential for expansion.
- 4.9.11.3** At the secondary tier, Cottered is served by the Buntingford school planning area where capacity issues have been identified, although these may be resolved through school expansion. Further technical work is required. Although located on the A507 and with reasonably good access, its location in relation to larger settlements means there is little clustering opportunity and as such Cottered scores poorly in terms of employment potential. Poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.
- 4.9.11.4** In terms of rural considerations, Cottered scores 'red' against agricultural land and landscape character, where it is considered to be a tranquil and traditional landscape with few detractors.
- 4.9.11.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets and the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development as well as designated wildlife sites. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.11.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.11.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Cottered would be a suitable location that could accommodate development within the built up area of the village, although the limited range of community facilities is an issue. Many of the issues identified are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development.

Area 32: Cottered

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Cottered. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 32	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Lack of community facilities and issues with secondary education

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.12 Dane End (Sieve 1: Area 33)

4.9.12.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 33 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Rail Services; Boundary Limits; Environmental Stewardship.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Landscape Character; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.9.12.2 Dane End scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Dane End has some accessibility to bus services although probable on-going subsidy would be required to enhance service provision. Dane End has a good range of community facilities lacking only a Doctors Surgery.

- 4.9.12.3** In terms of primary education, there are capacity issues and the school has no potential for expansion. Furthermore, the number of pupils at the school is being reduced in line with the capacity of the building. At the secondary tier, Dane End is served by the Hertford and Ware school planning area where there are capacity issues and further technical work is required.
- 4.9.12.4** In terms of employment potential Dane End is largely inaccessible for employment uses. The poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.
- 4.9.12.5** In terms of rural considerations, Dane End scores 'amber' against landscape character and agricultural land and 'red' against environmental stewardship.
- 4.9.12.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of flood risk as well as the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development. Although the flood zone runs through the centre of the Area of Search, it is considered that any issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.12.7** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently insufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption. Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Dane End could accommodate some development. Whilst many of the issues identified are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development, issues regarding primary education are considered to be significant. Whilst the village is relatively isolated, it is considered to have a good range of community facilities.

Area 33: Dane End

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Dane End. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 33	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education and flood risk

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.13 Datchworth (Sieve 1: Area 34)

4.9.13.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 34 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Rail Services; Landscape Character; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Access to Bus Services; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.9.13.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Datchworth has relatively poor access to bus and rail services despite its location between two larger towns. The village itself has a good range of community facilities, lacking only a doctor and post office, although there is an intention to reinstate post office services following the refurbishment of the village store. Despite

being located reasonably close to the A1, Datchworth is only accessed by minor roads and would therefore not be considered suitable for large-scale employment uses.

- 4.9.13.3** In terms of primary education, Datchworth All Saints C of E Primary School is located on the junction of Hollybush Lane and Rectory Lane, at some distance from the residential areas of the village accessed via narrow lanes with no footpaths. There is no capacity at the school and growth in the village could impact on the wider catchment the school serves. The school also provides nursery care. In terms of secondary education, Datchworth falls within both Stevenage and the Hertford and Ware school planning areas, both of which have a forecast capacity deficit. Further technical work will be needed to assess the potential impact on school capacity at the secondary level as a result of cumulative development in the area.
- 4.9.13.4** In terms of rural considerations, Datchworth scores ‘red’ against landscape character and Green Belt, and ‘amber’ against, agricultural land classification and environmental stewardship. The village is divided into two parts, with the southern half of the village between Bramfield Road and Datchworth Green containing large residential properties and large land holdings. Extending northwards along Brookbridge Lane the addition of several large residential estates constructed in the late sixties and early seventies in typical meandering cul-de-sac form has resulted in an overly large residential village with an urban rather than rural feel. Despite this, access to Datchworth is gained via narrow, heavily vegetated lanes among rolling agricultural land, protecting the remoteness of the village particularly when approaching from the east. The landscape character is considered to be good quality with much of Datchworth straddling three distinct landscape character areas, all of which are considered good quality.
- 4.9.13.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, Datchworth is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3 and are therefore at little risk of fluvial flooding. However, it is acknowledged that there may be issues with localised flooding caused by inadequate foul sewer networks. Datchworth is one of a number of settlements between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage and therefore the cumulative impact of development in Datchworth and surrounding villages would need to be considered in terms of preventing encroachment into the countryside in this Green Belt location. Whilst this may not necessarily preclude development as sensitive design could be used to ensure that boundary features are built in and areas of sensitive landscape character and wildlife habitats are protected, a 10% growth to the Datchworth could only occur outside the existing built-up area of the village.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.13.6** An initial assessment of land availability indicates that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the planning assumption of a 10% growth in Datchworth. However, all of this land is located in one ownership to the

west of the village beyond the existing built-up area. One cause for concern is that of setting a precedence for further rounding off of the village should this site be developed.

- 4.9.13.7** Whilst Datchworth is located reasonably close to larger centres and a number of villages enabling a sharing of services, there is relatively poor access to passenger transport services and there are capacity issues in respect of the school. In addition, the cumulative impacts of the development of neighbouring villages on education capacity and countryside encroachment in the Green Belt will also need to be considered.

Area 34: Datchworth

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Datchworth. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 34	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education, passenger transport and landscape character

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.14 Furneux Pelham (Sieve 1: Area 35)

- 4.9.14.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 35 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Flood Risk; Landscape Character; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

- 4.9.14.2** Furneux Pelham scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Furneux Pelham has poor accessibility to bus services and a poor range of community facilities. In terms of primary education, although the school has no spare capacity this is not considered to be an issue for a limited amount of development in the village.
- 4.9.14.3** At the secondary tier, Furneux Pelham is served by the Bishop’s Stortford secondary school planning area. Issues are still to be determined following the outcome of the Bishop’s Stortford Schools Inquiry. In terms of employment potential, Furneux Pelham is poor in terms of access, visibility and clustering potential, with a low critical mass. The poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.
- 4.9.14.4** In terms of rural considerations, Furneux Pelham scores ‘amber’ against landscape character, agricultural land and environmental stewardship. In general terms the wider landscape is considered to be in need of improvement as well as conservation. Furneux Pelham is located within 2km of three SSSIs, and therefore the scale and cumulative effect of development has the potential to cause negative effects.
- 4.9.14.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets, the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development and flood risk. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.14.6** Sites have been proposed for residential use and are available immediately. An initial land availability assessment may be able to exceed the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.14.7** However, taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Furneux Pelham would not be a suitable location that could accommodate development, owing to the lack of community facilities, issues with education and poor access to bus services.

Area 35: Furneux Pelham

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Furneux Pelham. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 35	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education, passenger transport and community facilities

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.15 Great Amwell (Sieve 1: Area 36)

4.9.15.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 36 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.9.15.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Great Amwell has good access to rail and bus services via ongoing connections. The village itself has relatively few community facilities. However, it is expected that residents of Great Amwell use the facilities provided at the neighbouring larger settlements of Ware, Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets given their proximity. Great Amwell benefits from the presence of a number of

employment generating businesses in the village such as Van Hages Garden Centre, Byfield Nursery and a number of creative industries based in Charles House off Furlong Way. Proximity to the A414, A10 and rail connections from Stanstead Abbots are key advantages for employment uses.

- 4.9.15.3** In terms of primary education, St John the Baptist Church of England school is near to capacity in some year groups but has the potential to expand. There is significant pressure on school places in both neighbouring Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets and Hoddesdon. Previously the school in Great Amwell absorbed some of this pressure but indications from current GP registrations indicate that there will be increasing pressure on school places even without the addition of new homes. The cumulative impacts of development in nearby settlements may further prevent growth in Great Amwell and will therefore need further consideration. In terms of secondary education, Great Amwell falls within the Hertford and Ware school planning area, which has a forecast capacity deficit. Parental choice means that pupils travel into Hoddesdon secondary schools which also have a deficit in capacity. Further technical work will be needed to assess the potential impact on school capacity at the secondary level as a result of cumulative development in the area.
- 4.9.15.4** In terms of rural considerations, Great Amwell scores ‘amber’ against historic assets and noise impacts, and ‘red’ against agricultural land classification with much of the land around Great Amwell being considered high quality agricultural land. The village is separated into three distinct parts; the old village which is compact and accessed by narrow roads; the residential roads of Gypsy Lane and Hertford Road to the south-west which are characterised by large houses in individual plots; and the relatively new residential ribbon development and estate of Lower Road to the north-east. Ribbon development connects the three areas along the main roads. The south-western area is close to the A10, the A414 junction and the fast-moving traffic of the A1170. The north-eastern area is close to the railway line and consists of large modern houses. Both areas could therefore be considered to be less rural and village-like. The landscape character has already been weakened by the semi-urban nature of the different parts of the village and is therefore considered more able to accept development than a higher quality landscape.
- 4.9.15.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, land in the east of Great Amwell is at risk of flooding from the New River and River Lee Navigation. However, the greatest area of concern is the potential impact of development on the adjacent Amwell Quarry SSSI and Ramsar site and nearby Hertford Heath SSSI and Rye Meads Ramsar. The village as a whole also lies in the strategic gap separating Ware from Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets and Hoddesdon to the south.

Conclusions and Next Steps

4.9.15.6 An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently much more than sufficient land available to meet the 10% planning assumption growth. However, given the importance of this strategic gap, the potential impacts on Wildlife Sites of National and European importance and lack of education capacity these issues are considered to be ‘showstoppers’ precluding development in the area.

Area 36: Great Amwell

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Great Amwell. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 36	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Failed due to strategic gap, primary and secondary education, environmental impact, flood risk and community facilities

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.16 Hadham Ford (Sieve 1: Area 37)

4.9.16.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 37 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impact.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

- 4.9.16.2** In terms of the key considerations for villages, Hadham Ford’s location in proximity to the A120 means the village scores positively in terms of access to bus services and the highways network in general. However this brings its own problems. The A120 runs through the neighbouring historic village of Little Hadham leading to conflicts and delays where the high volume of through traffic associated with the A120 meets local traffic flow from the B180 at the Little Hadham traffic lights. Given its relative remote location and lack of access to rail services, Hadham Ford would not be ideal for employment uses apart from providing a hub for small-scale businesses, that could benefit from proximity to the A120. This lack of access to rail services could result in an over-dependency on private vehicles for transport needs, though this is an acknowledged common issue for most rural settlements.
- 4.9.16.3** Hadham Ford has evolved into a predominantly residential village, which apart from a primary school has a reasonable range of community services. However, Little Hadham Primary School, located in neighbouring Little Hadham serves both villages. Hadham Ford and Little Hadham appear to function as one. Indeed the Little Hadham Village Hall, which provides for a range of services (including healthcare and a post office), is located in Hadham Ford. When looking at the two settlements together, the range of community facilities is good.
- 4.9.16.4** In terms of primary education, Little Hadham Primary School has the potential capacity to expand up to one form of entry subject to land assembly issues. This expansion would just be able to accommodate a 10% growth within Hadham Ford but the cumulative impact of a 10% growth of neighbouring Little Hadham on school capacity will need to be considered. In terms of secondary education, Hadham Ford falls within the Bishop’s Stortford school planning area where the future of school capacity is subject to the outcome of the inquiry into the proposed relocation of two schools. Thus, growth in Hadham Ford needs to be considered in

relation to growth in this area as a whole. The location of the school on the A120 means that the potential impact of an increase in peak time journeys by private vehicle to the school would also need to be considered.

4.9.16.5 In terms of rural considerations, Hadham Ford scores ‘amber’ against agricultural land, and environmental stewardship, and ‘red’ against historic assets and landscape character. The valley landscape is considered to be in good condition with a strong character, which is well-defined and needs protecting. Despite the village being shaped along a main road and being in proximity to the A120, the road running through the village is relatively narrow.

4.9.16.6 In terms of more site-based considerations, much of Hadham Ford is at risk of flooding along the River Ash valley. Whilst the river valley limits the potential eastward expansion of Hadham Ford, there are few features to the north, west and south of the village to act as natural limits to development. The river valley, chalk grassland and surrounding agricultural land is an important habitat for bats among other species. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed. An assessment into the site-specific quality of agricultural land, particularly land subject to environmental stewardship along with an assessment into the potential impact on wildlife habitats would be needed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

4.9.16.7 An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently much more than sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption. The sites that are available are proposed for residential use and would be available immediately. One site requires a legal agreement with existing land owners to secure access but this has been secured in principle. The two sites proposed are within an area subject to an Entry Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme.

4.9.16.8 On balance it is considered at least a 10% growth to the village could be accommodated but the cumulative impact of development in nearby Little Hadham on primary education capacity will need further consideration.

Area 37: Hadham Ford

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Hadham Ford. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 37	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education and flood risk

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.17 Hertford Heath (Sieve 1: Area 38)

4.9.17.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 38 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.9.17.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Hertford Heath has relatively poor access to bus and rail services but a reasonable range of community facilities, lacking only a doctors and post office. However, given the proximity of the village to Hertford it is assumed that residents travel to Hertford for these services. Despite the proximity of Hertford Heath to the

A10, access to this main road is limited and indirect. There is little prospect of improvements to access to passenger transport from a 10% growth in the village, which limits the potential for employment generating uses.

- 4.9.17.3** In terms of primary education, Hertford Heath Primary School is at capacity in most year groups with no potential to expand. A new school would be needed in order to accommodate development in the village. In terms of secondary education, Hertford Heath falls within the Hertford and Ware school planning area, which has a forecast capacity deficit. The cumulative impact of development affecting the catchment of this school area will require new secondary school infrastructure and will warrant further consideration.
- 4.9.17.4** In terms of rural considerations, Hertford Heath scores ‘red’ against landscape character and ‘amber’ against historic assets, agricultural land classification, environmental stewardship and noise impacts. In some ways Hertford Heath has grown beyond a rural village, with large housing estates set in an open road network. Further south towards College Road the character becomes more organic with a richer variety of architecture and a more rural feel with fewer buildings around a large public open space. The landscape character has been weakened by the semi-urban nature of the northern part of the village which would be more able to accept development than the southern half of Hertford Heath.
- 4.9.17.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, Hertford Heath is not at risk of flooding, but the greatest area of concern is the potential impact of development on the adjacent Hertford Heath SSSI and Nature Reserve. The village is also in proximity to Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC, National Nature Reserve and SSSI. Hertford Heath lies in the strategic gap between the towns of Hertford and Hoddesdon.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.9.17.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently much more than sufficient land available to meet the 10% planning assumption growth. However, given the lack of education capacity, the importance of the strategic gap and the potential impacts on Wildlife Sites of National and European importance these issues are considered to be ‘showstoppers’ precluding development in the area.

Area 38: Hertford Heath

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Hertford Heath. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 38	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Failed due to strategic gap, primary and secondary education and environmental impact

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.18 Hertingfordbury (Sieve 1: Area 39)

4.9.18.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 39 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Strategic Gaps; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.9.18.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, despite its proximity to Hertford, Hertingfordbury does not have good access to either bus or rail services. However, it does benefit from two direct access points from the A414 making accessibility by motor vehicle very good. Given this access to the A414 the village would be a good location for employment uses.

Unfortunately due to the lack of passenger transport opportunities and local services such employment uses may be limited. A small scale of development is likely to be able to be accommodated within the existing road and waste water network. However, improvements would be needed to the passenger transport network to facilitate development in the village.

- 4.9.18.3** There is a relatively poor selection of facilities within Hertingfordbury. However, it should be acknowledged that given the proximity of the village to Hertford, and the wealth of facilities contained within the town, it is likely that Hertingfordbury residents travel into Hertford to access the majority of their needs.
- 4.9.18.4** In terms of primary education, Hertingfordbury is within proximity of two schools. Although current trends indicate a preference for Hertingfordbury Cowper C of E VA Primary, which is located in nearby Birch Green village. The nearest primary school is The Sele School, located along Thieves Lane north of the A414. Hertingfordbury Cowper has the potential to expand to accommodate a 10% growth of Hertingfordbury. Further technical work will be needed to assess the capacity of the school in relation to growth within other nearby villages. In terms of secondary education, Hertingfordbury lies within the Hertford and Ware School Planning Area which has an acknowledged deficit of places. The cumulative impact of development affecting the catchment of this school area will require new secondary school infrastructure and will warrant further consideration.
- 4.9.18.5** In terms of rural considerations, Hertingfordbury scores 'red' against historic assets, landscape character, and 'amber' against agricultural land classification. The landscape in which Hertingfordbury sits has been degraded through the urbanising effects of the A414 and southward expansion of Hertford, and is considered in need of restoration. The Conservation Area within Hertingfordbury offers an opportunity to maintain the rural nature of the village with its concentration of historic agricultural-style buildings. Narrow lanes also help to preserve the rural feel of the village, though to the north there is a clear transition from rural to urban as you approach the A414 roundabout.
- 4.9.18.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, Hertingfordbury contains some land within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There are possible boundary features in some directions which could be reinforced. Consideration will need to be given to the scale of development and its potential impact on nearby wildlife habitats and historic assets. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.18.7** While an initial land availability assessment indicates that there is no land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption this does not necessarily preclude development. Further investigations into land availability would be required.
- 4.9.18.8** On balance it is considered that a 10% growth to Hertingfordbury could be accommodated, but the cumulative impact of development in nearby villages will need to be considered. Growth of a greater scale would not be considered appropriate and would represent an extension to Hertford rather than a small-scale growth of the village.

Area 39: Hertingfordbury

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Hertingfordbury. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 39	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education, land availability, access to passenger transport and community facilities

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.19 High Cross (Sieve 1: Area 40)

- 4.9.19.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 40 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.9.19.2** High Cross scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, High Cross has good accessibility to bus services and a range of community facilities. The primary school also has capacity and expansion potential.
- 4.9.19.3** At the secondary tier, High Cross is served by the Hertford and Ware school planning area where capacity issues have been identified, and further technical work is required. In terms of employment potential, High Cross has an existing designated employment site and is in a good location with access off the old A10. Whilst there is no direct rail provision, Ware station is 4.6km to the south with peak time bus journeys to Ware station likely to be achievable within 15 minutes.
- 4.9.19.4** In terms of rural considerations, High Cross scores ‘amber’ against landscape character, agricultural land and environmental stewardship. High Cross is also located within 2km of Plashes Wood SSSI, and therefore the scale and cumulative effect of development has the potential to cause negative effects.
- 4.9.19.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets, noise and the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.19.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.19.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that High Cross would be a suitable location that could accommodate development. Whilst the limited range of community facilities is considered to be an issue, High Cross scores positively in terms of

primary education and access to bus services. Many of the issues identified are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development.

Area 40: High Cross

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for High Cross. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 40	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Secondary education and community facilities

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.20 High Wych (Sieve 1: Area 41)

4.9.20.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 41 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Green Belt; Boundary Limits.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Landscape Character; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools.

- 4.9.20.2** In terms of the key considerations for villages, there is a reasonable selection of facilities within the village. However, given the proximity of the village to neighbouring Sawbridgeworth town, it is not unreasonable to expect that residents use the services available in the town, rather than within the village itself. Access to bus and rail services are considered poor with little possibility of an increased service to the village.
- 4.9.20.3** Although access to and from the A1184 and subsequently the A414 junction to the north of Harlow is possible, the location would not be suitable for employment uses compared to the nearby range of employment land at Harlow. Such development would impact on the tranquillity of the village and would increase the volume of peak time traffic, particularly given the inaccessibility of the village to bus and rail services. Limited employment uses could be accommodated perhaps in the form of a rural hub for small businesses. A small scale of development is likely to be able to be accommodated within the existing road, passenger transport and waste water network.
- 4.9.20.4** In terms of primary education, the village benefits from the presence of High Wych Church of England Primary, which has some capacity to accommodate a 10% growth of the village. In terms of secondary education, there is an acknowledged deficit of secondary school places within the Bishop's Stortford school planning area. Leventhorpe School in Sawbridgeworth has the potential to expand.
- 4.9.20.5** In terms of rural considerations, the village is in the Green Belt and does not have clear boundary features that would help to contain development around the village. The biggest concern is that of coalescence with neighbouring Sawbridgeworth. The extent of ribbon development along the High Wych Road and around the Rivers Hospital to the south-west of Sawbridgeworth has resulted in very little distinction between the town and the village. The small gap that remains therefore has an increased role in protecting the rural character of the village.
- 4.9.20.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, while most of the village is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3, some parts of the village are subject to surface water flooding. Due to the transitional character of the landscape between urban and rural, some locations within the Area of Search are considered better quality landscape than others. However, this does not necessarily preclude development in other parts of the village, as sensitive design could be used to ensure that boundary features are built in and areas of sensitive landscape character and wildlife habitats, including agricultural land subject to Environmental Stewardship schemes, are not affected by development.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.9.20.7** While an initial land availability assessment may be able to exceed the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption, it should be noted that only one of the sites proposed is within the built-up area of the village. One of the sites lies to the south-east of the village and the larger site is part of a larger proposal for development to the north of Harlow.
- 4.9.20.8** On balance it is considered at least a 10% growth to the village could be accommodated but the cumulative impact of development in nearby Sawbridgeworth and Harlow will need further consideration.

Area 41: High Wych

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for High Wych. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 41	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Strategic gap, secondary education and access to passenger transport

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.21 Hunsdon (Sieve 1: Area 42)

4.9.21.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 42 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.9.21.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Hunsdon benefits from a good range of community facilities and relatively good access to bus and rail services. Hunsdon also benefits from its access to the A414 via Church Lane into Acorn Street. However, this route is largely unsuitable for heavy-goods vehicles due to its narrowing along Acorn Street, and therefore the village is unsuitable for some employment uses. A large increase in peak time traffic is also likely to impact on the tranquillity of the village. Limited employment uses such as a rural hub could perhaps be accommodated. A small scale of development is likely to be able to be accommodated within the existing road and passenger transport and waste water network.

4.9.21.3 In terms of primary education, Hunsdon benefits from the presence of Hunsdon JMI Primary School. However, the school is at capacity in most year groups and would therefore need expanding to accommodate new development. An assessment into the cumulative impact of a 10% growth of both Hunsdon and nearby Widford on school capacity will be needed. In terms of secondary education, the biggest issue for Hunsdon is the capacity of secondary schools. The nearest East Herts secondary schools are located in Hertford and Ware and have capacity issues already. There are secondary schools in nearby Harlow but trends indicate a preference for the Hertford and Ware schools. The cumulative impact of development affecting the catchment of these schools will require new secondary school infrastructure and will warrant further consideration.

4.9.21.4 In terms of rural considerations, Hunsdon scores ‘red’ against boundary limits. Hunsdon scores ‘amber’ against historic assets, landscape character, agricultural land classification and environmental stewardship. The landscape of open flat upland is considered to be in moderate condition which could be improved. However, this type of landscape is considered more able to accept new development.

4.9.21.5 In terms of more site-based considerations, Hunsdon is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3. However, some parts of the village may be subject to surface water flooding. The village also lacks clear boundary features that would help to contain development. The village is also within proximity of Hunsdon Meads SSSI so consideration will need to be given to the scale of development and its potential impact on nearby wildlife habitats, including agricultural land subject to Environmental Stewardship schemes. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.21.6** While an initial land availability assessment would be able to exceed the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption, it should be noted that the majority of these sites are outside the current development boundary of the village, albeit they all immediately adjoin it. Seven sites (totalling 32.6ha) were proposed as part of the Call for Sites exercise. One site alone covers 29ha and would require major infrastructure improvements to facilitate development. The remaining smaller sites would be available immediately and could be completed within two years. One site has recently received permission for 16 dwellings. In addition to the sites identified in the topic assessment the large proposed site, submitted as part of the Hunsdon Area/North of Harlow development, lies adjacent to the east of the village.
- 4.9.21.7** On balance it is considered that a 10% growth to the village could be accommodated but the cumulative impact of development in nearby villages will need further consideration.

Area 42: Hunsdon

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Hunsdon. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 42	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Environmental impact, primary and secondary education

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.22 Letty Green (Sieve 1: Area 43)

4.9.22.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 43 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Strategic Gaps; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.9.22.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Letty Green is essentially a residential village of large, individually designed houses in large plots. No longer concentrated around a village green, the majority of development stretches along Chapel Lane eastwards of the cross-road and St John’s Church of England Chapel. Despite its proximity to both Welwyn Garden City and Hertford via indirect access to the A414, Letty Green does not have good access to either bus nor rail services and therefore has limited

employment potential. A small scale of development is likely to be able to be accommodated within the existing road and waste water network. However, improvements would be needed to the passenger transport network to facilitate development in the village.

- 4.9.22.3** There are no community facilities within Letty Green, nor the cluster of villages of which it is a part. Residents are required to travel to either Hertford or Welwyn Garden City to access services.
- 4.9.22.4** In terms of primary education, the nearest school is Hertingfordbury Cowper C of E VA Primary, located in nearby Birch Green, which has the potential to expand to accommodate a 10% growth of Letty Green. Further technical work will be needed to assess the capacity of the school in relation to growth within other nearby villages. In terms of secondary education, Letty Green lies within the Hertford and Ware School Planning Area which has an acknowledged deficit of places. The cumulative impact of development affecting the catchment of this school area will require new secondary school infrastructure and will warrant further consideration.
- 4.9.22.5** In terms of rural considerations, Letty Green scores 'red' against landscape character and 'amber' against agricultural land classification. The landscape in which Letty Green sits is considered good condition but of moderate character, suffering in part from the urbanising effects of the A414, and is considered in need of restoration. There is a variety of building design and architectural interest but few historic assets. The degree of modern design and extent of ribbon development reduces the rural feel of the village.
- 4.9.22.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, Letty Green is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3 and there are few natural features to help to contain development beyond the existing built-up area. Consideration will need to be given to the scale of development and its potential impact on nearby wildlife habitats. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.22.7** While an initial land availability assessment indicates that there is sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption, it should be acknowledged that one of the sites is part of a much larger submission. Approximately 130 hectares of land under single ownership is available. However information submitted in the Call for Sites exercise indicated that only small scale development sympathetic to the villages would be proposed.

- 4.9.22.8** In order to overcome the lack of passenger transport and community facilities a major development would be required. This level of development would have significant impacts on the Broxbourne Woods complex and Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods National Nature Reserve and on the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.
- 4.9.22.9** On balance it is considered that a 10% growth to Letty Green could be accommodated physically. However, this level of growth will not facilitate the provision of the additional community facilities and services needed. Given the lack of access to passenger transport and community facilities further development in the village would not be considered sustainable.

Area 43: Letty Green

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Letty Green. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 43	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Environmental impact, primary and secondary education, community facilities and access to passenger transport

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.23 Little Hadham (Sieve 1: Area 44)

4.9.23.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 44 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Historic Assets; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/ Middle Schools.

4.9.23.2 In terms of the key considerations for villages, Little Hadham’s location on the A120 means the village scores positively in terms of access to bus services and the highways network in general. However this brings its own problems. The A120 runs through the historic village leading to conflicts and delays where the high volume of through traffic associated with the A120 meets local traffic flow at the Little Hadham traffic lights. Given its relative remote location and lack of access to rail services, Little Hadham would not be ideal for employment uses apart from providing a hub for small-scale businesses perhaps, that benefit from the passing A120 traffic. This lack of access to rail services could result in an over-dependency on private vehicles for transport needs, though this is an acknowledged common issue for most rural settlements.

4.9.23.3 Little Hadham has evolved into a predominantly residential village, which apart from a primary school has no community facilities. However, given the proximity of Little Hadham to neighbouring Hadham Ford, the two villages appear to function as one in some respects. Indeed the Little Hadham Village Hall, which provides for a range of services (including healthcare and a post office), is located in Hadham Ford. When looking at the two settlements together, the range of community facilities is good.

4.9.23.4 In terms of primary education, Little Hadham benefits from having a primary school that serves both Little Hadham and neighbouring Hadham Ford. Little Hadham Primary School has the potential capacity to expand up to one form of entry subject to land assembly issues. This expansion would just be able to accommodate a 10% growth within Little Hadham but the cumulative impact of a 10% growth of neighbouring Hadham Ford on school capacity will need to be considered. In terms of secondary education,

Little Hadham falls within the Bishop's Stortford school planning area where the future of school capacity is subject to the outcome of the inquiry into the proposed relocation of two schools. Thus, growth in Little Hadham needs to be considered in relation to growth in this area as a whole. The location of the school on the A120 means that the potential impact of an increase in peak time journeys by private vehicle to the school would also need to be considered.

- 4.9.23.5** In terms of rural considerations, Little Hadham scores 'amber' against agricultural land and noise impacts, and 'red' against landscape character. The presence of the A120 running through the village means that in terms of noise and character, the village is not as tranquil nor 'rural' as many of the district's villages. The valley landscape is considered to be in good condition with a strong character, which is well-defined and needs protecting to keep it as such.
- 4.9.23.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, much of Little Hadham is at risk of flooding, particularly east of Albury Road and Hadham Road. Whilst the river valley limits the potential eastward expansion of Little Hadham, there are few features to the north, west and south of the village to act as natural limits to development. The river valley, chalk grassland and surrounding agricultural land is an important habitat for bats among other species. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed. An assessment into the site-specific quality of agricultural land, particularly land subject to environmental stewardship along with an assessment into the potential impact on wildlife habitats would be needed.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.9.23.7** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently much more than sufficient land available to meet the 10% planning assumption growth. Of the three proposed sites, two are small sites which would be available immediately and, subject to access issues could be completed within a few years. There is one larger site proposed for a major new settlement scale development that would be phased over 15 years and would require major infrastructure including a bypass around the village. New sewerage networks, roads and community facilities would also need to be provided.
- 4.9.23.8** In terms of the cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration needs to be given to the cumulative impact of growth on education capacity.

Area 44: Little Hadham

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Little Hadham. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 44	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education, community facilities and flood risk

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.24 Much Hadham (Sieve 1: Area 45)

4.9.24.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 45 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets; Landscape Character.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impact.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/ Middle Schools.

4.9.24.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Much Hadham benefits from a reasonably good access to bus services and has a good range of community facilities. In terms of primary education, St Andrews Church of England Primary School is located in the village. However, the school is

full in most year groups and would need to expand to accommodate even 10% growth. There are also capacity issues at nearby primary schools. In terms of secondary education, Much Hadham falls within the Bishop's Stortford school planning area where the future of school capacity is subject to the outcome of the inquiry into the proposed relocation of two schools. Thus, growth in Much Hadham needs to be considered in relation to growth in this area as a whole.

- 4.9.24.3** Located approximately midway between the A120 and the A414 employment land here would be constrained by the lack of access to road, passenger transport networks, including rail services, so is likely to be limited to a rural hub for small-scale businesses. This lack of access to rail services could result in an over-dependency on private vehicles for transport needs, though this is an acknowledged common issue for most rural settlements.
- 4.9.24.4** In terms of rural considerations, Much Hadham scores 'amber' against agricultural land and 'red' against historic assets and landscape character. The B180 linking the A414 to the A120 through Much Hadham is a single carriageway which narrows significantly and with its meandering route maintains lower speeds and a rural character. The two valley landscapes within which Much Hadham sits are considered to be in good condition with a strong character, which is well-defined and needs protecting to keep it as such.
- 4.9.24.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are some natural landscape features that could assist in forming boundary limits to growth. Whilst most of the village is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3, some areas of the village are subject to surface water flooding. There are two Local Wildlife Sites nearby therefore consideration should be given to the possible impact of loss of habitats through development. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed. An assessment into the site-specific quality of agricultural land, particularly land subject to environmental stewardship along with an assessment into the potential impact on wildlife habitats would be needed.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.9.24.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% planning assumption growth. The sites proposed would be available immediately.
 - 4.9.24.7** In terms of the cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration needs to be given to the cumulative impact of growth in all areas within the Hadhams primary school planning area and the Bishop's Stortford secondary school planning area.
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Area 45: Much Hadham

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Much Hadham. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 45	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education and environmental impact

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.25 Puckeridge (Sieve 1: Area 46)

4.9.25.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 46 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Environmental Stewardship.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Green Belt; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.9.25.2 Puckeridge scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Puckeridge has almost the full range of community facilities, save for a post office, although this facility is provided in neighbouring Standon. Bus services are good in comparison to other villages but a green rating is dependent upon the location of development itself and/or the provision of enhanced services. There is also capacity in terms of primary education provision.

- 4.9.25.3** At the secondary tier, Puckeridge is served by three school planning areas: in the Hertford and Ware and the Buntingford secondary school planning areas capacity issues may be resolved through school expansion and further technical work is required. In the Bishop's Stortford secondary school planning area, issues are still to be determined following the outcome of the Bishop's Stortford Schools Inquiry. Puckeridge has some potential for employment land given its location on the A120 near the A10, but suffers from poor accessibility to rail services, although the poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.
- 4.9.25.4** In terms of rural considerations, Puckeridge scores 'amber' against strategic gaps and agricultural land and 'red' against landscape character and environmental stewardship. In terms of strategic gaps, subject to location, development could cause further merging with Standon to the south and risk 'closing the gap' with Braughing to the north.
- 4.9.25.5** There are issues in respect of historic assets (including a Schedule Monument to the north) and designated wildlife sites: Puckeridge lies within 2km of Plashes Wood SSSI.
- 4.9.25.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of flood risk and noise. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.25.7** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.25.8** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Puckeridge would be a suitable location that could accommodate development. However, careful consideration needs to be given to the scale and location of development, especially in respect of historic assets (e.g. The Scheduled Monument) and strategic gaps.
- 4.9.25.9** Notwithstanding this, it is considered that Puckeridge functions as one with neighbouring Standon and the two villages together should be considered as a single settlement (albeit with two distinct centres) for strategic planning purposes.

Area 46: Puckeridge

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Puckeridge. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 46	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Sieve 1 Rating Puckeridge and Area 48: Standon	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Secondary education, strategic gap, historic assets and environmental impact

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.26 Spellbrook (Sieve 1: Area 47)

4.9.26.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 47 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Minerals and Waste Designations.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/ Middle Schools.

- 4.9.26.2** In terms of key considerations for villages, Spellbrook has good access to rail and bus services due to its proximity to both Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth. The village itself has no community facilities apart from a pub and a primary school. However, it is expected that residents of Spellbrook travel into the two neighbouring towns or even to Little Hallingbury to the east in Uttlesford District to access services and facilities. Being located on the A1184 within easy reach of Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth, Spellbrook has good potential for employment land. Indeed there are two businesses of note located in the village. Access to the M11 and the nearby Stansted Airport is possible, though this has to be via Bishop's Stortford. It should be acknowledged that there are already significant issues with congestion at peak times on the A1184 and consequently through the two neighbouring towns.
- 4.9.26.3** In terms of primary education, Spellbrook Primary School is located on the southern most edge of the village. Accessed from the A1184, pedestrian access is limited. The school has the capacity available to accommodate a modest growth of the village, though there is no further potential for expansion. The school report identifies noise from Stansted Airport as an issue for the school. In terms of secondary education, Spellbrook falls within the Bishop's Stortford school planning area. There is a forecast deficit of provision in this area. However, the strategy to deal with this deficit is dependent upon the outcome of a planning inquiry into the proposed relocation of two schools. Further technical work will be needed to assess the potential impact on school capacity at both primary and secondary level as a result of cumulative development in the area.
- 4.9.26.4** In terms of rural considerations, Spellbrook scores 'red' against landscape character, agricultural land classification and noise impacts, and 'amber' against environmental stewardship. As Spellbrook is affected by noise from the Stansted Airport flightpaths the village is not considered tranquil. The landscape in which Spellbrook lies is considered high quality and in moderate condition which could be improved. Much of the gently undulating land is high quality agricultural grade, some of which is subject to entry level environmental stewardship schemes. There are a few historic buildings in the village of note, however, due to the increasing volume of traffic using the A1184, the main road through the village, the urbanising impact of the road has dominated the character of the village. This is exacerbated by the northward expansion of residential properties along the A1184.
- 4.9.26.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, parts of Spellbrook are at risk of flooding. To the east of the A1184, development of Spellbrook is contained by the River Stort and the railway line; however there are fewer natural features to the west, north and south of the village within which to contain development. Whilst these issues could be overcome through appropriate design and location, the greatest area of concern is the potential impact of development on the nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest along the River Stort and also on the rich agricultural land surrounding the

village. A 10% growth of the village may not yield many properties however, the cumulative impact of development within Spellbrook and neighbouring Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth, particularly in relation to increased volume of traffic on the A1184 will need further consideration. The village forms part of an important strategic gap in the Green Belt between Sawbridgeworth and Bishop's Stortford. Further expansion of the village could harm this gap, particularly if development were also to occur south of Bishop's Stortford and north of Sawbridgeworth.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.26.6** An initial assessment of land availability indicates that there is currently much more than sufficient land available to meet the planning assumption of a 10% growth in Spellbrook. Technical work would be required on a site-specific level to assess agricultural land quality and flood risk.
- 4.9.26.7** However, given the lack of community facilities and secondary education provision there is some doubt as to the suitability of locating further residential development in a location where increased vehicle movements are likely to have a detrimental impact on nearby agricultural and environmental assets. Further assessment on the cumulative impact of development within the wider area would also need to be considered along with the outcome of the Bishop's Stortford Schools Inquiry.

Area 47: Spellbrook

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Spellbrook. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 47	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education, strategic gap, highways impacts and noise impacts

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.27 Standon (Sieve 1: Area 48)

4.9.27.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 48 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.9.27.2 Standon scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Standon has a range of community facilities including a post office and local shop. Whilst it lacks allotments, playground, doctor’s surgery and a nursery and primary school, all these facilities are provided in neighbouring Puckeridge, where there is also capacity in terms of primary education provision. Bus services are good in comparison to other villages but a green rating is dependent upon the location of development itself and/or the provision of enhanced services.

4.9.27.3 At the secondary tier, Standon is served by the Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Ware and the Buntingford secondary school planning areas. Currently however, pupils attend Ware and Buntingford schools. All school planning areas have capacity issues but these may be resolved through school expansion and may be dependent upon the outcome of the Bishop's Schools Inquiry, and therefore further technical work is required. Standon has some potential for employment land given its location on the A120 near the A10, but suffers from poor accessibility to rail services, although the poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.

4.9.27.4 In terms of rural considerations, Standon scores ‘amber’ against strategic gaps and agricultural land and ‘red’ against landscape character and environmental stewardship. In terms of strategic gaps, subject to location, development could cause further merging with Puckeridge to the north.

4.9.27.5 There are issues in respect of historic assets (including a Schedule Monument to the north) and designated wildlife sites: Standon lies within 2km of Plashes Wood SSSI.

- 4.9.27.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of noise and establishing boundary limits to development. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.27.7** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.27.8** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Standon would be a suitable location that could accommodate development, especially since the 'missing' community facilities are all provided in neighbouring Puckeridge. Many of the issues identified are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that careful consideration needs to be given to the location of development especially in respect of strategic gaps.
- 4.9.27.9** Notwithstanding this, it is considered that Standon functions as one with neighbouring Puckeridge and the two villages together should be considered as a single settlement (albeit with two distinct centres) for strategic planning purposes.

Area 48: Standon

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Standon. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 48	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Sieve 1 Rating Standon and Area 46: Puckeridge	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Secondary education, strategic gap, community facilities, historic assets and environmental impact

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.28 Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets (Sieve 1: Area 49)

4.9.28.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 49 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps.
Amber	Topics: Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.9.28.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets benefit from very good access to bus and rail services. The two settlements combined have a very good range of community facilities and

a thriving range of businesses in designated and non-designated employment land. Access to the main road and rail network is very good and contributes to the area having further employment potential.

- 4.9.28.3** In terms of primary education, the local primary school, St Andrews Church of England Primary School is full and over-subscribed, with no capacity to expand on site. There is significant pressure on school places in both neighbouring Great Amwell and Hoddesdon. Previously the school in Great Amwell absorbed some of this pressure but indications from current GP registrations indicate that there will be increasing pressure on school places even without the addition of new homes. The cumulative impacts of development in nearby settlements will further prevent growth in Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets and would therefore need further consideration. In terms of secondary education, Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets fall within the Hertford and Ware school planning area, which also has a forecast capacity deficit. Parental choice means that some pupils travel into Hoddesdon secondary schools which also have a deficit in capacity. The County Council is preparing a strategy to deal with the existing deficit in this area. Further growth will exacerbate an existing problem. More technical work will be needed to assess the potential impact on school capacity at the secondary level as a result of cumulative development in the area.
- 4.9.28.4** In terms of rural considerations, Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets score 'amber' against historic assets, landscape character and agricultural land. The two settlements are divided by largely man-made flooded former mineral workings some of which have been restored as a Nature Reserve. More recently, any available land between the watercourses has been developed for residential purposes thus reducing the openness of the landscape, reducing the potential for the landscape to be improved.
- 4.9.28.5** In terms of site-specific considerations, much of Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets are at risk of flooding from the New River and the River Lee Navigation. However, the greatest area of concern is the potential impact of development on the adjacent Amwell Quarry SSSI and Ramsar site and nearby Hertford Heath SSSI and Rye Meads Ramsar. The two villages as a whole also lie in the strategic Green Belt gap separating Ware to the north from Hoddesdon to the south.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.28.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently much more than sufficient land available to meet the 10% planning assumption growth. However, given the importance of this strategic gap and the potential impacts on Wildlife Sites of National and European importance, together with the lack of education capacity, these issues are considered to be 'showstoppers' precluding development in the area. However, because the two settlements are currently classified as a town in the Local

Plan Second Review 2007, and there is suitable passenger transport and highways access, it is deemed appropriate to subject the Area of Search to further assessment.

Area 49: Stanstead Abbots

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Stanstead Abbots. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 49	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Environmental impact, primary and secondary education, strategic gap and flood risk

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.29 Stapleford (Sieve 1: Area 50)

4.9.29.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 50 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Environmental Stewardship.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Flood Risk; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.9.29.2** In terms of key considerations for villages, Stapleford has good access to rail and bus services due to its proximity to Hertford. The village itself has relatively few community facilities. However, it is expected that residents of Stapleford travel into Hertford to access services and facilities. Warrenwood Industrial Estate to the south of the village benefits from direct access off the A119 but is constrained by its location. Investment into the estate would make it suitable for a wider variety of uses. However, despite the A119 being a main connecting road between Hertford and Watton-at-Stone, Stapleford is unlikely to be able to support employment uses of more than a local scale.
- 4.9.29.3** In terms of primary education, Stapleford Primary School is located in the village and also provides early years care. However, the school is full in most year groups and due to it serving both Stapleford and neighbouring settlements a 10% growth in the village may impact on the wider school catchment. Primary schools in Hertford and Watton-At-Stone also have capacity issues. In terms of secondary education, Stapleford falls within the Hertford and Ware school planning area, which has a forecast capacity deficit. Further technical work will be needed to assess the potential impact on school capacity at the secondary level as a result of cumulative development in the area.
- 4.9.29.4** In terms of rural considerations, Stapleford scores ‘red’ against landscape character and environmental stewardship, and ‘amber’ against agricultural land classification and noise impacts. The landscape character is considered to be good quality with The High Road of Stapleford sitting on the western ridge of the river valley. The village is divided into two parts, with land along The High Road being distinct from the Clusterbolts estate off Church Lane divided by the river valley of the River Beane. The narrowness of Church Lane contributes to the remote character of the Clusterbolts estate despite it being a relatively modern homogenous residential estate. However, there is no narrowing of the A119 and with a wealth of road markings and urban traffic safety features the High Road no longer retains a village feel.
- 4.9.29.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, land to the east of the High Road/A119 is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is at risk of flooding from the River Beane. Stapleford is one of a number of settlements between Hertford and nearby Watton-At-Stone and therefore the cumulative impact of development in Stapleford and surrounding villages would need to be considered in terms of preventing encroachment into the countryside in this Green Belt location. There are also several Local Wildlife Sites in the village that will need to be considered. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.9.29.6** An initial assessment of land availability indicates that there is no land available in Stapleford to meet the planning assumption of a 10% growth.
- 4.9.29.7** On balance, given the lack of education provision and lack of community facilities, Stapleford is not considered a sustainable location in which to accommodate further residential development. Development would need to be of a sufficient scale to facilitate the provision of necessary community facilities. However, given its employment land and access to passenger transport networks it is considered appropriate to subject the Area of Search to further assessment.

Area 50: Stapleford

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Stapleford. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 50	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Community facilities, primary and secondary education and flood risk

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.30 Tewin (Sieve 1: Area 51)

4.9.30.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 51 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.9.30.2 Tewin scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Tewin has almost a full range of community facilities lacking only a doctor’s surgery. The primary school has capacity issues although there is potential to expand, subject to land ownership constraints. However, access to bus services is considered poor with probable on-going subsidy required to enhance service provision.

4.9.30.3 At the secondary tier, Tewin is served by the Hertford and Ware school planning area where there is a forecast deficit and capacity issues have been identified. Further technical work is required. Although the village is close to Welwyn Garden City there are no main roads from which to gain access and visibility and as such, Tewin scores poorly in terms of employment potential. There is also a lack of rail access with the nearest station at Welwyn North approximately 2.6km away (with no peak time bus serving the station).

4.9.30.4 In terms of rural considerations, Tewin scores ‘red’ against landscape character and ‘amber’ against Green Belt, strategic gaps, agricultural land and environmental stewardship. Whilst the village itself is inset from the Green Belt, it is not considered that a 10% planning assumption increase would harm the strategic gap, although this would be dependent upon development of neighbouring settlements. Given its location reasonably close to Welwyn Garden City any development to the south west of the village would harm the gap between the village and the larger town. Tewin is also located within 2km of Tewinbury SSSI, and therefore the scale and cumulative effect of development has the potential to cause negative effects.

4.9.30.5 In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets and the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

4.9.30.6 An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.

4.9.30.7 Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Tewin would be a suitable location that could accommodate development since many of the issues identified are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. However, there are issues in respect of the level of bus provision and careful consideration needs to be given to the scale of growth in respect of the Green Belt.

Area 51: Tewin

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Tewin. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 51	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Environmental impact, access to passenger transport network, primary and secondary education and strategic gap

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.31 Thundridge (Sieve 1: Area 52)

4.9.31.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 52 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.9.31.2** Thundridge scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Thundridge has good accessibility to bus services and a range of community facilities, including a village shop. However, there are issues in respect of primary education with a lack of capacity and no potential for expansion.
- 4.9.31.3** In terms of secondary schools, there are capacity issues in the Hertford and Ware school planning area. Further technical work is required. Thundridge has some potential for employment land with good accessibility to rail services (Ware station being just 3km to the south and accessible by bus within 15 minutes).
- 4.9.31.4** In terms of rural considerations, Thundridge scores ‘amber’ against strategic gaps, agricultural land and environmental stewardship and ‘red’ against landscape character and Green Belt. In terms of strategic gaps, development to the south of the village could cause coalescence towards Ware and development to the north would cause further merging of Wadesmill and Thundridge.
- 4.9.31.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of boundary limits to development, noise and historic assets, including registered Parks and Gardens. Thundridge is also within 2km of Downfield Pit SSSI.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.31.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.31.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Thundridge would be a suitable location that could accommodate development, although primary education is an issue. Many of the issues identified are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that careful consideration needs to be given to the scale and location of growth.

Indeed, notwithstanding the fact that development in Thundridge could lead to further ‘merging’ with Wadesmill, it is considered that these two villages function as one settlement for strategic planning purposes.

Area 52: Thundridge

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Thundridge. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 52 Thundridge	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Sieve 1 Rating Thundridge and Area 54: Wadesmill	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Environmental impact, primary and secondary education and strategic gap

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.32 Tonwell (Sieve 1: Area 53)

4.9.32.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 53 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Boundary Limits; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impacts; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.9.32.2** In terms of key considerations for villages, Tonwell has good access to rail and bus services due to its proximity to Ware. The village itself has relatively few community facilities. However, it is expected that residents of Tonwell travel into Ware or nearby Watton-At-Stone to access services and facilities. Despite being located on the A602 between Ware and Watton-At-Stone, with indirect access to the A10, Tonwell itself is effectively bypassed by the A602. For employment uses to be successful in this location additional access would be needed directly from the A602.
- 4.9.32.3** In terms of primary education, Tonwell St Mary's C of E Primary School is located in the village and serves Tonwell, Hertford and Ware. Nursery care is also provided. Because some children travel out of the village for primary education there remains capacity in the local school. This situation may need to change with the pressure on primary school places in nearby Hertford and Ware. In terms of secondary education, Tonwell falls within the Hertford and Ware school planning area, which has a forecast capacity deficit. Further technical work will be needed to assess the potential impact on school capacity at both primary and secondary level as a result of cumulative development in the area.
- 4.9.32.4** In terms of rural considerations, Tonwell scores 'red' against landscape character, agricultural land classification and environmental stewardship and 'amber' against noise impacts. The landscape in which Tonwell lies is considered high quality and in good condition, with much of the landscape being part of the Sacombe House Estate. Much of the gently undulating land is subject to Higher Level Stewardship on rich agricultural land. Whilst Tonwell is a predominantly residential housing estate constructed post-1970, with a variety of building designs in an open road network, the village retains a sense of remoteness due to its visual detachment from the main highway network.
- 4.9.32.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, Tonwell is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3 and therefore has little risk of flooding. There are few natural boundary features apart from the A602 to the west in which to contain development. Whilst there are no designated wildlife sites in the village, Tonwell is within proximity of Downfield Pit SSSI. However, Downfield Pit is designated for its geological importance and is therefore unlikely to be detrimentally affected by a 10% growth to Tonwell.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.9.32.6** An initial assessment of land availability indicates that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the planning assumption of a 10% growth in Tonwell. In order to protect valuable agricultural land around the village potential development land should be located within the existing built form and the boundary formed by the A602.
-

4.9.32.7 On balance, given the lack of community facilities there is some doubt as to the suitability of locating further residential development in a location lacking the majority of essential services. A 10% growth of Tonwell would not facilitate the provision of the additional community facilities and services needed.

Area 53: Tonwell

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Tonwell. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 53 Tonwell	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Community facilities, primary and secondary education and landscape character

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.33 Wadesmill (Sieve 1: Area 54)

4.9.33.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 54 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.9.33.2 Wadesmill scores positively against a number of topics, including access to bus services. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Wadesmill scores poorly in terms of community facilities, with only two pubs within

the Area of Search. However, a fuller range of community facilities is provided in neighbouring Thundridge. In respect of primary education there are issues with a lack of capacity and no potential for expansion.

- 4.9.33.3** In terms of secondary schools, there are capacity issue in the Hertford and Ware school planning area. Further technical work is required. Wadesmill has some potential for employment land with good accessibility to rail services (Ware station being just 3.6km to the south and accessible by bus within 15 minutes).
- 4.9.33.4** In terms of rural considerations, Wadesmill scores ‘amber’ against landscape character, strategic gaps, agricultural land and environmental stewardship and ‘red’ against Green Belt. In respect of strategic gaps, development to the south of the village could cause coalescence and further merging of Wadesmill and Thundridge.
- 4.9.33.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of flooding as well as boundary limits to development, noise and historic assets. Wadesmill is also within 2km of Downfield Pit SSSI.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.33.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.33.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Wadesmill would be a suitable location that could accommodate development. Whilst the lack of community facilities is an issue, many are provided in neighbouring Thundridge. The issues identified are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that careful consideration needs to be given to the location of development outside areas at risk of flooding. Indeed, notwithstanding the fact that development in Wadesmill could lead to further ‘merging’ with Thundridge, it is considered that these two villages function as one settlement for strategic planning purposes.
- 4.9.33.8** In terms of the cumulative impacts of development, particular consideration needs to be given to the cumulative impact of growth in all areas within the Hertford and Ware secondary school planning area and in respect of the impact on the SSSI.

Area 54: Wadesmill

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Wadesmill. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 54 Wadesmill	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Sieve 1 Rating Wadesmill and Area 52: Thundridge	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Environmental impact, community facilities, primary and secondary education and strategic gap

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.34 Walkern (Sieve 1: Area 55)

4.9.34.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 55 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Landscape Character.
Amber	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Green Belt; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.9.34.2 Walkern scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Walkern has a full range of community facilities. The 'amber' accessibility to bus services is perhaps outweighed by the

fact that Walkern is considered to have good access to rail services, albeit that Stevenage (5.8km to the west) and Watton-at-Stone (7.1km to the south) stations are outside the Area of Search.

- 4.9.34.3** In terms of education growth above a 10% increase could lead to capacity issues. There is no expansion potential at the primary tier and there are capacity issues at the secondary tier in both the Buntingford and Stevenage school planning areas. Walkern also scores poorly as a potential location for employment.
- 4.9.34.4** In terms of rural considerations, Walkern scores ‘amber’ against strategic gaps, agricultural land and environmental stewardship and ‘red’ against landscape character. Walkern is within 5km of Moor Hall Meadows SSSI and the southern part of the Area of Search (south of Stevenage Road) is within 2km of Benington High Wood SSSI. The scale and cumulative effect of development has the potential to cause negative effects.
- 4.9.34.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets as well as the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites. Flood risk is a prominent issue within the Area of Search, running parallel to the east of the High Street. However, it is considered that a 10% increase planning assumption could be accommodated on sites outside areas of flood risk, although sites to the west of the High Street may begin to cause coalescence issues with Stevenage.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.34.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.34.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Walkern would be a suitable location that could accommodate development. Whilst Walkern has the full range of community facilities, there are issues with primary education and access to buses with on-going subsidy likely to be required to enhance service provision. Many of the other issues identified are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development, save for flood risk which is site specific and emphasises the fact that careful consideration needs to be given to the scale and location of growth.

Area 55: Walkern

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Walkern. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 55 Walkern	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Strategic gap, primary and secondary education and flood risk

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.35 Waterford (Sieve 1: Area 56)

4.9.35.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 56 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Community Facilities.
Amber	Topics: Flood Risk; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Historic Assets; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.9.35.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Waterford has good access to rail and bus services due to its proximity to Hertford. The village itself has relatively few community facilities. However, it is expected that residents of Waterford travel into Hertford to access services and facilities. There are two landscaping/nursery businesses located just south of the village, taking advantage of the proximity to Hertford. Despite the A119 being a

main connecting road between Hertford and Watton-at-Stone the village is unlikely to be able to support employment uses of more than a local scale.

- 4.9.35.3** In terms of primary education, there is no school in the village and the three nearby primary schools in Stapleford and Hertford are full and have no capacity to expand. In terms of secondary education, Waterford falls within the Hertford and Ware school planning area, which has a forecast capacity deficit. Further technical work will be needed to assess the potential impact on school capacity at the secondary level as a result of cumulative development in the area.
- 4.9.35.4** In terms of rural considerations, Waterford scores ‘red’ against landscape character and ‘amber’ against agricultural land classification and noise impacts. The village is divided in four parts, with land south of St Michaels and All Angels Church along Golding Way being distinct from the High Road. In addition, the village extends eastwards of the River Beane along Vicarage Lane to the relatively modern housing estate off Barley Croft and southwards along Vicarage Lane to Waterford Common, which runs parallel to the High Road. Although the A119 is a main road, speed restrictions and a narrowing along the High Road through the village help to retain the rural feel of the village. East of the River Beane, Vicarage Lane is narrow and is bordered by dense hedgerows contributing to a sense of remoteness. The landscape character is considered to be good quality with much of Waterford being nestled in the river valley, which helps to contain development east and west of the High Road.
- 4.9.35.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, land to the east of the A119 is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is at risk of flooding from the River Beane. Waterford is one of a number of settlements between Hertford and nearby Watton-At-Stone and therefore the cumulative impact of development in Waterford and surrounding villages would need to be considered in terms of preventing encroachment into the countryside in this Green Belt location. One of the greatest areas of concern is the potential impact of development on the adjacent Waterford Heath and Waterford Marsh Local Nature Reserves and surrounding wildlife habitats.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 4.9.35.6** An initial assessment of land availability indicates that there is currently more than sufficient land available to meet the planning assumption of a 10% growth in Waterford. The land is located south of the existing built-up area of the village and could have the implication of reducing the gap between Waterford and the north-western reaches of Hertford, whilst at the same time reducing the segregation between the private Goldings Estate and the rest of the village.

4.9.35.7 On balance, given the lack of education provision and potential impacts on the adjacent Local Nature Reserve and wealth of Local Wildlife Sites, these issues are considered to be ‘showstoppers’ precluding development in the area.

Area 56: Waterford

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Waterford. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 56 Waterford	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Failed due to environmental impacts, strategic gaps, primary and secondary education, flood risk and community facilities

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.36 Watton-at-Stone (Sieve 1: Area 57)

4.9.36.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 57 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Historic Assets; Landscape Character.
Amber	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Flood Risk; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations.

- 4.9.36.2** Watton-at-Stone scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Watton-at-Stone has the full range of community facilities, capacity and potential for expansion in terms of primary education and good accessibility to bus services.
- 4.9.36.3** Watton-at-Stone has good accessibility to rail services with a station within the village. There is some employment potential especially given Watton-at-Stone's accessibility to rail services as well as the A602. However, in terms of secondary education capacity is an issue in the Hertford and Ware school planning area.
- 4.9.36.4** In terms of rural considerations, Watton-at-Stone scores 'amber' against agricultural land and environmental stewardship and 'red' against landscape character. The village itself is 'inset' from the Green Belt and could accommodate some development within its boundary without the need for Green Belt land. Located between Hertford and Stevenage, development of the village itself is unlikely to cause any harm to the strategic gap between the two towns, although the cumulative impact of development in a number of villages in the A602 corridor needs to be considered.
- 4.9.36.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets as well as the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development, noise and flood risk. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites. In terms of flood risk, there is an issue to the north-eastern side of the Area of Search. However, it is considered that a 10% increase planning assumption could be accommodated on sites outside areas of flood risk, although sites to the west of the Area of Search may have greater coalescence issues, although less issues in terms of landscape character.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.36.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there may be insufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.36.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Watton-at-Stone would be a suitable location that could accommodate development, especially given its full range of community facilities. Of the issues identified, many are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that careful consideration needs to be given to the scale and location of growth.

Area 57: Watton-at-Stone

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Watton-at-Stone. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 57 Watton-at-Stone	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Secondary education and flood risk

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.37 Westmill (Sieve 1: Area 58)

4.9.37.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 58 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Access to Rail Services; Historic Assets.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Secondary/Middle Schools; Access to Bus Services; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.9.37.2 Westmill scores positively against a number of topics. In terms of the key considerations for villages, Westmill has a range of community facilities although there is no primary school in the village itself, with pupils travelling to nearby Buntingford or Braughing. Access to bus services is limited, with no direct bus service into the village although services are provided outside the Area of Search along the A10 (0.7km to the east).

- 4.9.37.3** In terms of secondary education, provision is made in Buntingford where there are capacity issues. Located adjacent to the A10, the village has good access and is potentially a very visible location in terms of employment potential, although the village is somewhat removed from Buntingford town centre itself. Poor accessibility to rail services is not considered an issue in respect of a 10% growth.
- 4.9.37.4** In terms of rural considerations, Westmill scores ‘amber’ against landscape character, agricultural land and environmental stewardship. The east of the village lies within 5km of Moor Hall Meadows SSSI.
- 4.9.37.5** In terms of more site-based considerations, there are issues in respect of historic assets as well as noise and the need for defined boundaries to limit the impact of any development. However, it is considered that these issues could be successfully mitigated through the careful location and design of suitable sites.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.37.6** An initial assessment of land availability is that there is currently sufficient land available to meet the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption.
- 4.9.37.7** Taking into consideration the above assessment and evaluation, at the strategic scale and based on a planning assumption of 10% growth it is concluded that Westmill would be a suitable location that could accommodate development although the lack of community facilities and direct access to buses are issues. Notwithstanding this, Westmill is in close proximity to Buntingford. The issues identified are not considered to be ‘showstoppers’ that necessarily preclude development. Rather, they emphasise the fact that careful consideration needs to be given to the scale and location of growth.

Area 58: Westmill

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Westmill. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 58 Westmill	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Primary and secondary education and passenger transport

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.38 Widford (Sieve 1: Area 59)

4.9.38.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 59 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Historic Assets; Landscape Character.
Amber	Topics: Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gap; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.
Pending Outcome of Schools Inquiry	Topics: Secondary/ Middle Schools.

4.9.38.2 In terms of key considerations for villages, Widford benefits from relatively good access to bus and rail services. Widford also benefits from its access to the A414 via Hunsdon. However, this route is largely unsuitable for heavy-goods vehicles due to its narrowness in places, and therefore the

village is unsuitable for some employment uses. A large increase in peak time traffic is also likely to impact on the tranquillity of the village. Limited employment uses such as a rural hub could perhaps be accommodated. A small scale of development is likely to be able to be accommodated within the existing road and passenger transport and waste water network.

- 4.9.38.3** There is a reasonable selection of facilities within the village. However, it should be acknowledged that given the proximity of the village to Hunsdon, which has a wider range of facilities, it is likely that the two villages share certain facilities.
- 4.9.38.4** In terms of primary education, Widford benefits from the presence of Widford School which not only has capacity but also the potential to expand subject to highways issues. In terms of secondary education, the biggest issue for Widford is the capacity of secondary schools. There are secondary schools in nearby Harlow but trends indicate a preference for both the Hertford and Ware school planning area as well as Bishop's Stortford school planning area. The cumulative impact of development affecting the catchment of both these school planning areas will require new secondary school infrastructure and will warrant further consideration.
- 4.9.38.5** In terms of rural considerations, Widford scores 'red' against historic assets and landscape character and 'amber' against boundary limits, agricultural land classification and environmental stewardship. The landscape in which Widford sits is particularly distinctive and is considered to be of good condition that should be preserved and reinforced. Steep valley sides and undulating slopes constrain development potential.
- 4.9.38.6** In terms of more site-based considerations, Widford is beyond Flood Zones 2 and 3. However, some parts of the village may be subject to surface water flooding. In addition to the valley landscape, local roads could form limits to development in some directions. Consideration will need to be given to the scale of development and its potential impact on nearby wildlife habitats, including agricultural land subject to Environmental Stewardship schemes. However, at the strategic level, these issues are not considered to be 'showstoppers' that necessarily preclude development. Rather they emphasise the fact that development needs to be carefully located and designed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.9.38.7** While an initial land availability assessment may be able to exceed the 10% dwelling increase planning assumption, it should be noted that one of the two sites proposed is outside the current development boundary of the village, albeit it immediately adjoins it. Both sites would be available immediately and could be completed within two years with no major infrastructure or interventions required.

4.9.38.8 On balance it is considered that a 10% growth to the village could be accommodated but the cumulative impact of development in nearby villages needs further consideration.

Area 59: Widford

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for Widford. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 59 Widford	Sieve 1
Sieve 1 Figure	+ 10% dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Community facilities, primary and secondary education

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.9.39 Villages: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

- 4.9.39.1** The countryside of East Herts comprises the whole of the district outside of the towns. The landscape is rich and diverse reflecting a variety of natural features and thousands of years of human activity. It is an undulating, complex, and widely dispersed mix of fields, woodland, river valleys and settlements and a tremendous asset rightly valued by residents and visitors alike. It is a multi-functional 'green space' that provides an agricultural, wildlife, and leisure resource as well as giving identity to the district's settlements.
- 4.9.39.2** But it is also home to over one third of the district's residents housed in over one hundred villages of varying sizes. Planning for such rural communities is challenging because as their agricultural role has declined and their economic function has changed, many are now predominately residential, although many lack or have only a limited range of facilities.
- 4.9.39.3** As elsewhere in the country, East Herts has seen the closure of village shops and schools, centralisation of health care facilities, loss of bus routes, and, in common with other areas in the South East, large sections of the community unable to access the private housing market. Changes in agricultural practice have meant there are fewer jobs on the land and have consequently increased the need to travel to find work. Where employment sites have become redundant in villages, there has been a tendency for them to be redeveloped for residential purposes. This has led to further loss of employment opportunities.
- 4.9.39.4** Where growth has occurred, it has in recent years been focused on a few villages. However, their expansion has not necessarily been accompanied by a similar increase in shops, jobs and other services, thereby exacerbating their social and economic imbalance. Changes in the rural economy, the need for local affordable housing, and the need to reduce car journeys, by ensuring that opportunities for employment, shopping and other facilities (at an appropriate scale) are available locally, mean that limited development within the rural area is appropriate. However, this must be balanced with the need to protect the district's environmental assets.
- 4.9.39.5** Given the general lack of services and facilities, by some measures of sustainability, villages can be considered unsustainable as locations for development. However, this is a crude generalisation and many villages are vibrant communities with a full and active social calendar supporting vital local and rural enterprises. Development can contribute to this by bringing new life into these established societies helping to sustain existing services and potentially generating custom for new facilities.

Sieve 1 Evaluations

- 4.9.39.6** Sieve 1 assessed the 37 village 'Areas of Search' against the topic-based criteria assessments. The interim evaluations set out below are based on a planning assumption of 10% growth for each village. Generally, those villages where it was considered that the physical constraints (e.g. flood risk, wildlife) outweighed any other positive issues were rated as 'fail'. These villages have, therefore, not been carried forward to Sieve 2.
- 4.9.39.7** Whilst the Sieve 1 evaluations considered each village individually, in reality, villages often have inter-relationships with neighbouring villages or towns. Indeed, under the current Local Plan, the two villages of Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets are already considered as a single settlement, which also includes part of the parish of Great Amwell. In Sieve 1 there were two instances where it was concluded that two immediately adjacent villages could be treated as a single settlement for strategic planning purposes, namely, the villages of Standon and Puckeridge, and Thundridge and Wadesmill.
- 4.9.39.8** There may also be instances where settlements have strong inter-relationships because of their close proximity, despite the fact that they are not immediately adjacent to each other. As such, the concept of groups or 'clusters' of villages, that share a number of services requires further investigation. It is on this basis that the villages have been re-assessed in Sieve 2.

Sieve 2 Approach

- 4.9.39.9** The purpose of Sieve 2 is to further hone down the identification of villages suitable for development in strategic planning terms to ensure that the final evaluations are robust. Whilst it is not possible to evaluate each village in detail, it is appropriate to give further consideration to the three key village topic assessments that together help ensure that villages remain vibrant rural communities, namely: **Primary Schools, Bus Services, and Community Facilities**
- 4.9.39.10** The three assessments have been re-applied to the villages essentially as a 'double-checking' process. However, as set out above, Sieve 2 undertakes these assessments more from a cumulative perspective to try and provide a greater understanding of how villages function as a network of rural service centres.
- 4.9.39.11** It should be noted that the primary school and access to buses assessment criteria overlap with the community facilities criterion, in that they are considered to be key community facilities that villages should have in order to be considered sustainable. However, the community facilities assessment simply assessed whether the facility was present: it did not consider issues of capacity and potential for expansion and/or enhancement of service.

Sieve 2a: Primary Schools

4.9.39.12 Not every village has its own primary school with one school often serving a group of local villages. Thus, whilst development in one village may not affect the school in a particular school planning area, development in all the villages in the school planning area does have the potential to do so. In terms of primary schools a child should be schooled within 2 miles of his or her home.

4.9.39.13 As such, the cumulative impacts of development in more than one village in the same school planning area need to be considered. East Herts is covered by 16 primary school planning areas (PSPA). Of these, the following primary school planning areas are considered to have potential cumulative impacts arising from development and these impacts are set out in the Villages section of 'Appendix B: Key Documents and Feedback':

- The Hadhams PSPA - *Hadham Ford, Little Hadham, Much Hadham*
- Stevenage Southeast PSPA - *Aston, Benington, Datchworth*
- Ware Villages PSPA - *High Cross, Hunsdon, Thundridge, Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets, Wadesmill, Widford*
- Watton District South PSPA - *Birch Green, Cole Green, Hertingfordbury, Letty Green, Stapleford, Tewin, Tonwell, Waterford**

* Children in Westmill also served by the school in Braughing and children in Waterford by schools in Hertford

4.9.39.14 Based on this assessment, it is considered that if greater weight were to be given to the issue of primary schools alone, taking account of the cumulative impacts of 10% development, this would result in the following revised village evaluations. As can be seen, the cumulative effects would result in five villages being 'downgraded'.

Sieve 2a: Primary Schools Summary		
Village	Interim Village Assessment	Revised Village Assessment based on Primary Schools
Aston	Marginal Pass	Marginal Fail
Benington	Marginal Fail	Fail
Datchworth	Marginal Fail	Fail
Stapleford	Marginal Fail	Fail
Tonwell	Marginal Fail	Fail

Sieve 2b: Bus Services

- 4.9.39.15** The cumulative impact of village development on bus services also needs to be considered. For example, concentrating development in villages served by the same bus route could improve the viability of providing that service and therefore potentially lead to service improvements. In consequence, this could improve the sustainability of certain villages. The Villages section of 'Appendix B: Key Documents and Feedback' lists the villages served by each bus route in East Herts.
- 4.9.39.16** Discussions with Hertfordshire County Council's Passenger Transport Unit on the cumulative effect of 10% growth in villages on the same bus routes (akin to a 'string of pearls') have concluded that it could be possible for the following routes to benefit from enhanced service provision:
- Route 331 - *Buckland, Braughing, Colliers End, High Cross, Puckeridge, Standon, Thundridge, Wadesmill, Westmill*
 - Route 351 - *Hadham Ford, Hunsdon, Little Hadham, Much Hadham, St Margarets, Stanstead Abbots, Widford*
- 4.9.39.17** Improvements would include weekend and potentially some evening extensions to services. It was also concluded that services C3, L3 and 390 could have the potential for service enhancement. However, this would require a quantum of development above the initial planning assumption of 10% and as such, is outside the scope of this sieving process.
- 4.9.39.18** Based on this assessment, it is considered that if greater weight were to be given to the issue of bus services alone, taking account of the cumulative impacts of 10% development in each village along the bus route would result in the following revised village evaluations. As can be seen, the cumulative effects would result in fifteen villages being 'upgraded'. It should be noted, however, that this 'upgrade' is based on the assumption that all villages along the route will accommodate development in order for the route to meet a minimum service improvement threshold.

Sieve 2b: Bus Services Summary		
Village	Interim Village Assessment	Revised Village Assessment based on Bus Services
Braughing	Marginal Pass	Pass
Buckland	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass
Colliers End	Marginal Pass	Pass
Hadham Ford	Marginal Pass	Pass

Sieve 2b: Bus Services Summary		
Village	Interim Village Assessment	Revised Village Assessment based on Bus Services
High Cross	Marginal Pass	Pass
Hunsdon	Marginal Pass	Pass
Little Hadham	Marginal Pass	Pass
Much Hadham	Marginal Pass	Pass
Puckeridge	Marginal Pass	Pass
Standon	Marginal Pass	Pass
Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass
Thundridge	Marginal Pass	Pass
Wadesmill	Marginal Pass	Pass
Westmill	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass
Widford	Marginal Pass	Pass

Sieve 2c: Community Facilities

4.9.39.19 The issue of proximity is also applicable to community facilities in that facilities in one particular village may serve not only the residents of that village, but the residents of neighbouring villages as well. However, these existing 'spheres of influence' are not defined and can vary depending upon the particular type of community facility.

4.9.39.20 As such, in defining clusters of villages that are likely to 'share' facilities, a common sense approach has been taken that considers not only proximity but connectivity as well (i.e. direct road and bus links). Clusters may also be identified through cultural association e.g. villages within the same parish or a shared and common history. It is also considered that smaller or more remote villages may exhibit stronger cluster relationships, including with villages not identified through the District Plan process. It should also be noted that in many instances, villages in East Herts look directly to the market towns to provide the majority of services. As such, although a village may be in close proximity to another, it has stronger relationships to the town.

4.9.39.21 The following village clusters have been identified:

- A414 Cluster - *Birch Green, Cole Green, Letty Green*
- B180 Cluster - *Hunsdon, Widford*
- Little Hadham Cluster - *Hadham Ford, Little Hadham*
- Old A10 Cluster - *Colliers End, High Cross, Thundridge, Wadesmill*

4.9.39.22 The Villages section of 'Appendix B: Key Documents and Feedback' sets out the assessment of community facilities for the identified clusters of villages. It applies the same methodology used in the Interim Community Facilities Topic Assessment (Sieve 1) and considers 'those facilities within walking distance generally used on a daily basis'. Whilst it is acknowledged that many villages are fortunate to have a range of retail premises, for the purposes of this assessment the local / village shop is defined as one selling convenience products i.e. milk, bread and newspapers. The assessment refers to the type of community facility rather than the number. For example, if a village has two pubs, they will only be counted as one facility for the purposes of determining how many facilities are provided.

4.9.39.23 Based on this assessment, it is considered that if greater weight were to be given to the issue of community facilities alone, taking account of the clustering benefits would result in the following revised village evaluations. As can be seen, the cumulative effects would result in four villages being 'upgraded'.

Sieve 2c: Community Facilities Summary		
Village	Interim Village Assessment	Revised Village Assessment based on Community Facilities
Colliers End	Marginal Pass	Pass
Little Hadham	Marginal Pass	Pass
Wadesmill	Marginal Pass	Pass
Widford	Marginal Pass	Pass

Next Steps

4.9.39.24 In conclusion, the results of all three parts of Sieve 2 can be summarised for each village as follows:

Villages	Sieve 1 Assessment	Sieve 2 Revised Assessment	Comment	Carried Forward to Sieve 3?
Aston	Marginal Pass	Marginal Fail	Primary Schools	Yes
Bayford	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
Benington	Marginal Fail	Fail	Schools	No
Birch Green	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
Braughing	Marginal Pass	Pass	Buses	Yes
Brickendon	Fail	Fail	No change	No
Buckland	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass	Buses	Yes
Cole Green	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
Colliers End	Marginal Pass	Pass	Buses & Community Facilities	Yes
Cottered	Marginal Pass	Marginal Pass	No change	Yes
Dane End	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
Datchworth	Marginal Fail	Fail	Primary Schools	No
Furneux Pelham	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
Great Amwell	Fail	Fail	No change	No
Hadham Ford	Marginal Pass	Pass	Buses	Yes
Hertford Heath	Fail	Fail	No change	No
Hertingfordbury	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
High Cross	Marginal Pass	Pass	Buses	Yes

Villages	Sieve 1 Assessment	Sieve 2 Revised Assessment	Comment	Carried Forward to Sieve 3?
High Wych	Marginal Pass	Marginal Pass	No change	Yes
Hunsdon	Marginal Pass	Pass	Buses	Yes
Letty Green	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
Little Hadham	Marginal Pass	Pass	Buses & Community Facilities	Yes
Much Hadham	Marginal Pass	Pass	Buses	Yes
Puckeridge	Pass	Pass	As Standon & Puckeridge	Yes
Spellbrook	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
Standon	Marginal Pass	Pass	As Standon & Puckeridge	Yes
Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass	Buses	Yes
Stapleford	Marginal Fail	Fail	Primary Schools	No
Tewin	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	No change	Yes
Thundridge	Marginal Pass	Pass	As Thundridge & Wadesmill	Yes
Tonwell	Marginal Fail	Fail	No change	No
Wadesmill	Marginal Pass	Pass	As Thundridge & Wadesmill	Yes
Walkern	Marginal Pass	Marginal Pass	No change	Yes
Waterford	Fail	Fail	No change	No
Watton-at-Stone	Pass	Pass	No change	Yes
Westmill	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass	Buses	Yes

Villages	Sieve 1 Assessment	Sieve 2 Revised Assessment	Comment	Carried Forward to Sieve 3?
Widford	Marginal Pass	Pass	Buses & Community Facilities	Yes

4.9.39.25 Following Sieve 2, it is recommended that the immediately adjacent villages should be treated as a single settlement for strategic planning purposes, namely, the villages of Standon and Puckeridge and Thundridge and Wadesmill. It is also concluded that villages that ‘fail’ are not carried forward to the next stage (Sieve 3). These villages will be added to the four that were rated as ‘fail’ at Sieve 1 (Brickendon, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, Waterford) and will not be taken forward to Sieve 3. It should be noted that where a village has been ‘upgraded’ as a result of bus services, this conclusion is based on the assumption that all villages along the route will accommodate development in order for the route to reach a minimum service improvement threshold. If as a result of Sieve 3, particular village evaluations change, the consequential implications on the rating of other villages along that bus route need to be considered.

4.9.39.26 The next stage (Sieve 3) is to consider the potential strategic cumulative impacts arising from development as identified in the ‘areas of search’ assessments. Four of the topic assessment criteria (secondary schools, designated wildlife sites, Green Belt, and strategic gaps) are considered to generate potential strategic cumulative impacts and these will be tested against the villages:

Villages: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summaries the outcomes of *Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations* for the villages. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3. As shown below, 29 villages out of the original list of 37 will be carried forward to Sieve 3, with four failing at Sieve 1 and a further four failing at Sieve 2 as follows:

Sieve 2 Rating	Village	Carried forward to Sieve 3?
Pass	Braughing, Colliers End, Hadham Ford, High Cross, Hunsdon, Little Hadham, Much Hadham, Standon & Puckeridge (combined), Thundridge & Wadesmill (combined), Widford.	Yes
Marginal Pass	Buckland, Cottered, High Wych, Stanstead Abbots & St. Margarets, Walkern, Westmill.	Yes
Marginal Fail	Aston, Bayford, Birch Green, Cole Green, Dane End, Furneux Pelham, Hertingfordbury, Letty Green, Spellbrook, Tewin.	Yes
Fail	Sieve 1 Fail: Brickendon, Great Amwell, Hertford Heath, Waterford. Sieve 2 Fail: Benington, Datchworth, Stapleford, Tonwell	No

It is proposed to carry all those villages forward for further assessment. A further scenario has been considered, in terms of not providing for some small-scale development.

Villages	Scenario A	Scenario B
Scenario Description	10 % dwellings growth in the selected villages	No development
Sieve 2 rating	Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes	No

Main Considerations:

Scenario A: Further consideration will need to be given to a suitable policy framework, taking account of the role of Neighbourhood Planning within the strategic framework of the District Plan, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - see especially Paragraphs 16, 58, and 183-185.

Scenario B: Fails because it would not meet any of the housing needs of the villages and would not comply with the NPPF.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Sieve 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.10 Stevenage

This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to Stevenage. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.10.1 Areas of Search

4.10.1.1 The Area of Search is shown below.

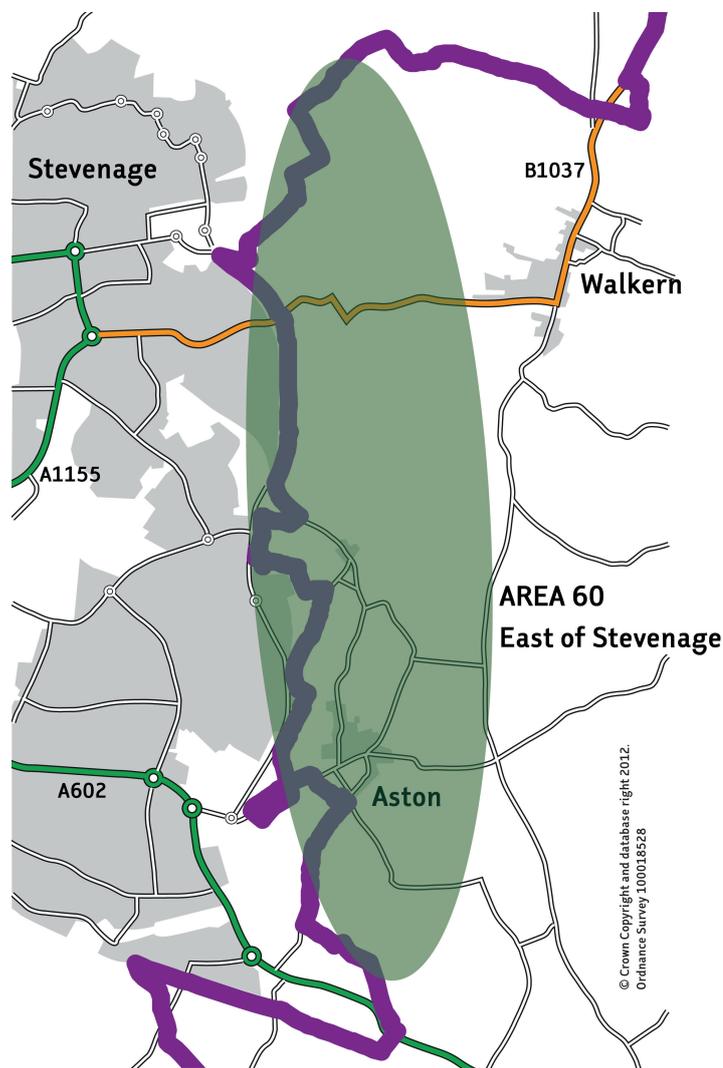


Figure 4.9 Stevenage Area of Search

4.10.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of the Area of Search for the East of Stevenage is as follows:

- **Area 60 - East of Stevenage:**
Indicative area to the east of town (approximate area in a broad strip between the town and the River Beane)

4.10.2 East of Stevenage (Sieve 1: Area 60)

4.10.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 60 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Employment Potential; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Boundary Limits.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Historic Assets; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Flood Risk; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.10.2.2 The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) records that there is a remarkable sense of remoteness in this location despite proximity to Stevenage. The LCA notes that the area is characterised by strongly undulating slopes, and the landscape around Aston has an ‘ancient’ character. Recognising these qualities, the adjacent Chells Manor development in the 1980s followed the ridgeline, accompanied by planting of a new tree belt to screen development from the valley. It is very difficult to see how similar landscaping work could mitigate the harm of further development, given that the character of the area relies on its openness: the Beane valley is nearly 3km across from the edge of Stevenage to Benington. New development would descend into the valley and severely erode the character of the area.

4.10.2.3 Another important consideration is in relation to infrastructure provision. There are infrastructure constraints, particularly in relation to highways and waste water infrastructure. These may prevent the short to medium term development of the area, although it seems likely that these could be addressed in the longer-term with developer funding and co-ordination with the relevant infrastructure providers. There is a lack of capacity in the town’s secondary schools. A strategic urban extension of this scale could potentially provide a new secondary school site, although given the minimum requirement of 6FE for new Secondary Schools this would result in over-provision unless combined with other development elsewhere.

4.10.2.4 Box Wood SSSI and other wildlife sites in the area, as well as any archaeological features could be preserved through a suitable site layout and Green Infrastructure Strategy.

4.10.2.5 Large-scale development of 5,000 dwellings would be expected to provide significant employment, in order to reflect the NPPF requirement to promote sustainable patterns of development. However, the employment topic

assessment notes the distance of this location from the A1(M), the railway station and the town centre, as well as the existing employment areas such as Gunnels Wood. Higher-level assessment of the long-term development options for Stevenage is required in this respect, in order to understand whether a strategic extension to the east could play a role in the functional development of the town.

- 4.10.2.6** Development of fewer than 5,000 dwellings in this location would have similar landscape impacts, but would not have the potential to realise sustainable patterns of development in relation to transport and employment provision. There are also significant doubts over whether a smaller-scale development would be able to fund the necessary infrastructure.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.10.2.7** Further consideration will need to be given to whether strategic employment and housing need could provide the ‘exceptional circumstances’ necessary for Green Belt Review in this location. In addition, it will be necessary to assess the potential for a new secondary school. These issues will be addressed in Sieve 2: Settlement Screening.

Area 60: East of Stevenage

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for East of Stevenage. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 60	Sieve 1
5,000 dwellings	Marginal Fail
Fewer than 5,000 dwellings	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	5,000
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Feasibility and financial viability of waste water networks and education facilities and the potential implications of development on sites of environmental and landscape importance.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.10.3 Stevenage: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)**East of Stevenage: History**

- 4.10.3.1** Stevenage was dedicated as England's first New Town in 1946. From 1946 until 1980, the planning and growth of Stevenage was overseen by a Development Corporation. The first masterplan was for a town of 60,000 people. It was to be made up of individual neighbourhoods around a pedestrianised town centre. Each neighbourhood would have its own shops, churches, pubs, schools and community centres. An area for industry was planned to the west so that it was away from homes and was well connected to the A1(M). Open space was an integral part of the masterplan. Over the years the town has expanded outwards with new neighbourhoods, an extended town centre and railway station and hospital.

Most recently, the town has extended into neighbouring North Herts with the development of Great Ashby. Now, Stevenage is the county's third largest town with a population of around 80,000 residents.

- 4.10.3.2** As a large town with comprehensive retail and employment provision, Stevenage has a significant relationship with East Herts. Its services not only act as a competitor to East Herts' towns but also as a resource for residents in terms of its jobs and retail offer. It has a large town centre and complex of retail and leisure facilities, providing a good range of comparison shopping, serving not only town residents but also those from the surrounding villages in Hertfordshire. The town's schools provide education for children from the town and surrounding villages. The Gunnels Wood employment area to the west of the town has excellent links with the A1(M) motorway and provides for a range of employers from local businesses to multi-national corporations.
- 4.10.3.3** On the negative side, Stevenage has areas of very high deprivation which has led to a poor perception of the town. One of the priorities set out in Stevenage Council's vision for the town is to foster greater ambitions in its residents and to encourage higher educational attainment. Part of this vision is also to provide a greater range of housing types, for those aspiring to better quality environments and to ensure employment opportunities in the town are achievable by local residents i.e. to secure a more self-contained Stevenage, more in line with the original New Town principles.

Aspirational Growth of Stevenage

- 4.10.3.4** The now withdrawn Stevenage Core Strategy was largely based on an aspirational approach towards growth in order to kick-start an ambitious regeneration project. The majority of this growth would occur to the north of the town in land within North Herts district and was subject to a proposed Stevenage North Action Plan (SNAP). Some development was also directed towards the west of the town, along with expansions to the Gunnels Wood employment area. When the Government announced its intended revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies, North Herts withdrew its support for SNAP and as such the Stevenage Core Strategy was found to be undeliverable. As such Stevenage Council is revising its Core Strategy and scaling back its ambitions for the town.
- 4.10.3.5** Land to the east of Stevenage has been considered in some of Stevenage Council's technical studies used in preparing its Core Strategy. The Education and Employment Study (2006) considered several growth scenarios, one of which included land to the east of the town (circa 2,200 homes) in addition to land to the north and west. The main issue now is that given North Herts Council's objection to development within its administrative boundary this is no longer a viable option. Many of the technical studies undertaken to support the Core Strategy were based

upon a scenario that included development to the north of the town. There is therefore a potential further delay to a revision of Stevenage's Core Strategy, due to the need to re-establish its own demographic needs and housing projection, based on different aspirations. Current indications suggest a scaling back of ambitions and aspirations, with future work focussing on meeting the town's existing needs alone.

Establishing the basis for assessing the East of Stevenage area

- 4.10.3.6** Regardless of this the Call for Sites exercise undertaken since 2008 has led to a number of submissions of land to the east of Stevenage. The East Herts Issues and Options Consultation identified the need to consider large-scale urban extensions to the towns surrounding East Herts administrative boundary. This option also included land to the east of Welwyn Garden City, north of Hoddesdon and north of Harlow. From an East Herts perspective land to the east of Stevenage needs to be given due consideration as part of a comprehensive process in order to ensure all alternative options are considered appropriately.
- 4.10.3.7** All these urban extension options have been assessed against 21 topics within Steps 3 and 4 of the preparation for the District Plan Part 1 – Strategy. These assessments indicate that due to the many infrastructure issues among others, land to the east of Stevenage would need to be developed for approximately 5,000 homes. Any less than this and the ability to make development in this location viable would be questionable. A smaller scale of development would not be able to afford the community benefits or infrastructure requirements that would be needed to support it. The potential benefits associated with development would not therefore be considered sufficient to outweigh the harm caused by the development. It suggests that it is a case of a major comprehensive development or nothing at all.
- 4.10.3.8** The East of Stevenage Area Assessment (Sieve 1) indicated that further consideration would need to be given to whether strategic employment and housing need could provide the 'exceptional circumstances' necessary for a Green Belt Review in this location. In addition, it will be necessary to assess the potential for a new secondary school. If it was determined through our scenario screening work that our own housing and economic needs could be provided for in other locations, there would be no need to develop to the east of Stevenage. The matter is more complicated if our own needs cannot be met without development in this location or indeed if Stevenage's own evidence indicated that they have strategic housing or economic needs that could not be provided for in any other location.
- 4.10.3.9** If Stevenage could prove that their needs warrant development to the east of the town, then the NPPF makes provision for this. Paragraph 179 makes it explicit that authorities will be expected to work together to meet development requirements that cannot wholly be met within their own

areas – for instance, because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles and policies of the NPPF. There are clear physical capacity issues even if Stevenage scaled back its aspirations for growth. However there would be conflicts with the NPPF if a major development circa 5,000 dwellings were to occur in this location. This Settlement Evaluation looks into some of the key issues where conflicts may occur, namely Green Belt and landscape issues, impacts on wildlife assets, economic, residential and educational needs.

Green Belt and Landscape Issues

- 4.10.3.10** As the withdrawn Stevenage Core Strategy focused its development needs to the north and west of the town, land to the east was not identified for development in the original plan period. However, the Core Strategy suggested that beyond 2021 the best opportunities to allow some scope for the continued growth of the built up area may lie in East Herts to 2031. As such, a Green Belt Review would be needed and Stevenage Council would need to work with East Herts Council to “create a coherent and connected Green Belt boundary”. Beyond these indications in the Core Strategy there has been no official support from Stevenage Council to extend to the east and there are no other mentions of an eastward expansion in the Core Strategy. The Planning Inspector expressed no view on this in his report, focusing instead only on the un-deliverability of the plan, due to its heavy reliance on land in North Herts.
- 4.10.3.11** East Herts has consistently been opposed to development to the east of the Stevenage on Green Belt land. The Green Belt in this location serves a clear and valuable purpose in preventing the urban sprawl of Stevenage into the countryside. It also has a clear role in preventing the coalescence of the town and the villages that lie in close proximity. Whilst Green Belt principles generally refer to preventing the coalescence of major settlements i.e. towns, there is a clear distinction between the new town and its surrounding villages despite the close functional relationship these villages often have to the town. This distinction is of strategic importance in this situation.
- 4.10.3.12** There is a clear boundary to development in the form of both man-made features such as Gresley Way (a peripheral estate road running around the east of the town) and the natural features of the Beane Valley, a wide river valley dotted with pocket woodlands and agricultural land. Should any development occur to the east of Gresley Way, the most obvious boundary limit to development would be breached leaving the river valley more vulnerable to further encroachment.
- 4.10.3.13** East of Gresley Way the landscape would be particularly challenging in development terms. There may be areas where a small amount of development could occur with less harm and fewer constraints, but as has been discussed, a small amount of development would not offer the same

opportunities to provide benefits that would outweigh the potential harm to development in this location. These principles are reiterated in the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review (1991-2011). At this stage there is no clear justification to release Green Belt land on these terms.

Wildlife and Biodiversity Issues

- 4.10.3.14** Box Wood, a Local Wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserve lies immediately adjacent to the built-up area of Stevenage. Also in close proximity is Benington High Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Appropriate Assessment accompanying the Stevenage Core Strategy indicated that there would be no demonstrable harm to the SSSI, but did not refer to the impact on the Local Wildlife Site, as this was beyond the scope of the Appropriate Assessment. This assessment was again undertaken on the basis of development occurring north and west of the town only. If development was proposed to the east of the town in proximity to the Benington High Wood SSSI, a more detailed assessment would be needed to determine the possible impacts of development. The Topic Assessment on Wildlife and Biodiversity undertaken in Step 3 rated the location as 'red' due to its proximity to the SSSI, as well as its possible impacts on Box Wood. Early comments by the Hertfordshire Biological Records Office suggested that development in this location would result in Box Wood being isolated from neighbouring wildlife habitats and would be degraded as a result.
- 4.10.3.15** In the last few years there have been several studies into the management of the River Beane. *Riverside Tales* by the World Wildlife Fund (2010) and *Rivers on the Edge* by the World Wildlife Fund (2009) highlight that historical over-abstraction of the River Beane has led to the perception of high water supply. The report suggests that this mis-conception has given the 'green light' to 15,000 new homes in Stevenage. New development of this level will inevitably lead to higher water demand from the River Beane. This catch 22 situation is highlighted as a major problem. The reports suggest that even if every new home were fitted with sustainable water measures, this would not address the issue of the high abstraction and the under-efficiency of the existing housing stock. Only alterations to licensing legislation and requirements for retro-fitting would possibly resolve these issues.
- 4.10.3.16** The Rye Meads Water Cycle Study identified a need for a new waste water treatment works along the River Beane and discusses three options, each with their individual benefits and disadvantages depending upon their location along the watercourse. However, the Study was undertaken with the assumption that Stevenage would receive major growth to the north of the town. Other options were not considered and therefore further technical work may be needed to assess the potential impacts on the river environment and waste water treatment system from different scales of development should this option be progressed.

- 4.10.3.17** Low water levels and water pollution both have devastating impacts on the river ecology. The River Beane has a chalkstream source and is particularly vulnerable to low water levels. Currently waste water and discharge from Stevenage is treated downstream at Rye Meads on the River Lea, passing through Watton-At-Stone trunk sewer, which is at capacity. Locating a new waste water treatment works closer to Stevenage along the River Beane could raise water levels within the River, as treated water would be pumped directly back to the river Beane rather than the River Lea. However, this does not necessarily mean the water quality levels remain high.
- 4.10.3.18** The potential cost of a new treatment works are prohibitively expensive and could only be justified and funded through development of a large scale. A small scale of development would possibly result in the need for a new treatment works, but would not be able to fund the new infrastructure. If Stevenage's aspirations have reduced and if there is no need for development in this location from an East Herts perspective, then further treatments works may be unnecessary. Close collaboration will be needed with the Environment Agency and Water companies to ensure that the future needs of Stevenage are met in terms of waste water treatment.

Employment issues

- 4.10.3.19** The Stevenage Employment Capacity Study 2006 indicates that even on the best case scenario there would be sufficient capacity within existing or planned estates to accommodate potential employment growth. This study and its forecasts were prepared before the recent economic downturn and as such would not reflect the latest data. It may be the case that planned development may no longer be viable or that investment proposals may not come to fruition. The previous studies indicated that the Pin Green Employment Area located to the north-east of the town (originally designed to counter-balance the Gunnels Wood Employment Area) was not a significant employment offer with several large vacant sites being in a less accessible location. Indeed since this 2006 study a large area of the employment land has been redeveloped for residential apartments. This suggests that land outside the Gunnels Wood area i.e. removed from the main road and rail connections serving the west of the town is not attractive to employers.
- 4.10.3.20** This is substantiated in the Hertfordshire Strategic Employment Sites Study 2011, which identifies the Gunnels Wood Employment Area as a strategic site against the criteria used for the study. A Masterplan adopted by Stevenage Council for the Gunnels Wood area seeks to address issues of design, congestion and declining quality in some parts. The proposed new Bioscience Campus at Stevenage is also endorsed as a major opportunity to increase the county's share of the Life Science employment sector. In addition to the Gunnels Wood area the Strategic Employment Sites Study identified the potential Knebworth Innovation Park as an

additional option for new employment land. This sites lies immediately adjacent to the A1(M) Junction 7, and although is removed from Gunnels Wood is a significant opportunity. Again, this site lies to the west of the town with existing motorway connections.

- 4.10.3.21** A proposal for development to the east of Stevenage is therefore not likely to attract interest from employers, making employment land in this location unviable. Development would therefore be largely residential, further reducing the balance of uses in the eastern side of the town, which is largely residential save for a few small retail parades. In terms of creating a sustainable community, with no employment offer in the east of the town existing and new residents will be left with no alternative but to traverse the town or commute out, increasing traffic levels on local roads.
- 4.10.3.22** In order to reflect the original New Town ambitions of having neighbourhoods with integrated retail parades and community facilities, an eastward expansion of the town would need to contain new retail and community facilities. There is only one supermarket in the east of the town in the Poplar's neighbourhood, with limited local stores in the north east of Stevenage. The Stevenage Retail Report (2009) indicated that the proposed growth to the north east and north of the town would result in the need for new convenience floorspace (circa 3,000m² gross) to meet the needs of new residents. Technical work would be necessary to assess the retail floorspace needs of a new neighbourhood circa 5,000 dwellings east of Gresley Way. This may impact on the viability of development in this location.

Education issues

- 4.10.3.23** In terms of education provision, the situation is made complicated by the large school planning areas in this location and the matter of parental choice. Currently parents in the East Herts villages choose to send their children to schools within East Herts, namely Buntingford rather than travel in to Stevenage. The Buntingford school planning area operates in a three-tier system (primary, middle and secondary), whereas Stevenage and other villages in the area operate in a two-tier system (primary and secondary). This confuses school planning a little, resulting in a slight dip in demand for the lower years of secondary level education as pupils remain in the middle schools before moving to the secondary school for the final few years. It also means there is less cohesion with schools within Stevenage.
- 4.10.3.24** The Stevenage Education Study 2006 identifies areas of underachievement and a poor reputation in a large number of schools in Stevenage. Plus 16 education levels are low and there are relatively fewer children going on to further education. Thus the gap between the skills and academic

standard of school leavers and the requirements of local employers are widening. This in turn results in the importing of labour from outside the town.

- 4.10.3.25** Stevenage was one of the first locations to be assessed under the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF). However, in 2011 the Coalition Government cancelled the programme resulting in many plans not coming to fruition. Two schools were subsequently improved through funding from the County Council. At present a lack of funding means that other schemes identified in the BSF programme are on hold.
- 4.10.3.26** The Stevenage Education Report 2006 used a number of scenarios to calculate demand for school provision over the planning period. Scenario 4 projected 2,120 homes to the east of the town, in addition to development to the north and west of the town. In terms of primary education provision, the report stated that this expansion would result in a need for the nearby village school at Aston to take pupils, along with two other schools in Stevenage. Alternatively, one new school would have to be built as part of the development. Secondary provision could be accommodated within existing schools. This gives a good indication of the possible needs arising from a development to the east of the town, albeit the report looked at development less than half the initial planning assumption of 5,000 homes. Further technical work would be needed to assess the potential demands arising from a development of 5,000 homes in this location should this option progress, particularly on secondary education. County Council comments indicate that a development of this scale would be expected to provide for its own needs. However, with parental choice this would inevitably have knock-on effects on neighbouring school planning areas, which would need to be considered.

Conclusion

- 4.10.3.27** Stevenage Council have indicated in their response to the East Herts Issues and Options consultation that land to the east of the town forms a viable and suitable option. However, without a revised Core Strategy, the current evidence would suggest that Stevenage has no strategic need to develop to the east of the town. Employment and economic needs would be better located to the west of the town. Primary and secondary education needs could be provided within existing schools. A revised demographic forecast based on providing for only existing needs rather than as a catalyst for major regeneration could be provided for within existing planned expansions to the west and north-west of the town. Development to the east of Gresley Way would have significant impacts on the landscape and environment and the vulnerable River Beane. On this basis the option of developing to the east of Stevenage is discounted as a realistic and reasonable alternative to the development strategy for East Herts and

there would be no need to revise the Green Belt boundary in this location. This option is therefore not being carried forward to Sieve 3 of the Stepped Approach.

East of Stevenage: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for East of Stevenage. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

East of Stevenage	Sieve 2
Scenario Description	Development east of the town
Sieve 2 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	No

Main Considerations:

Failed because the town is oriented towards the west, and also because of the impact on the Beane Valley identified in Sieve 1. The town centre, employment areas, the railway station, and the A1(M) are all located towards the west, and therefore a sustainable pattern of development to the east would be very difficult to achieve. Added to this, the Sieve 2 assessments indicates that there are a number of other preferable alternative locations within East Herts which could meet objectively assessed sub-regional development needs within the wider sub-regional context.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.11 Welwyn Garden City

4.11.1 This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to the East of Welwyn Garden City. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.11.1 Areas of Search

4.11.1.1 The Area of Search is shown below.

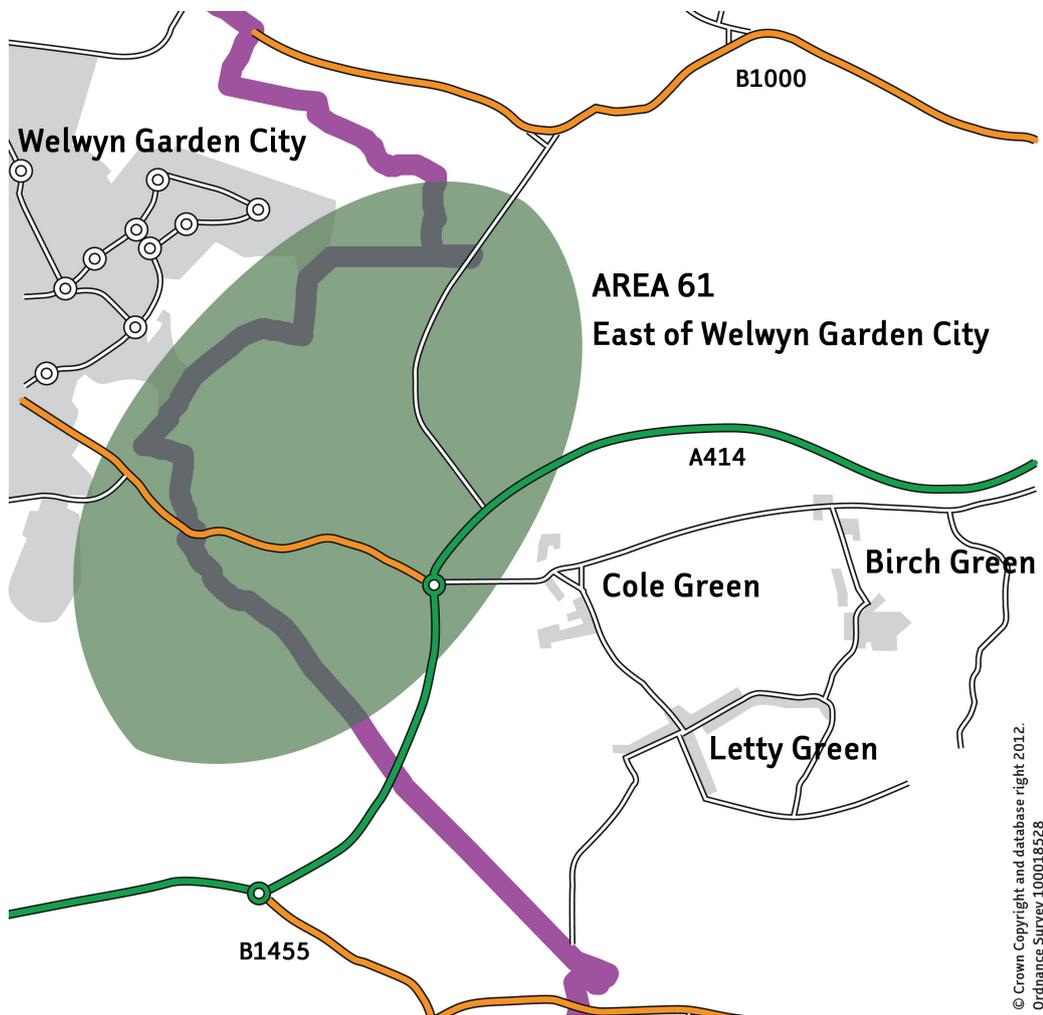


Figure 4.10 Welwyn Garden City Area of Search

4.11.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of the Area of Search for the East of Welwyn Garden City are as follows:

- **Area 61 - East of Welwyn Garden City:**
A414; Panshanger Lane; and the woodland boundary

4.11.2 East of Welwyn Garden City (Sieve 1: Area 61)

4.11.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 61 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.

4.11.2.2 The area is designated Green Belt, but there are clear boundary limits provided by the A414 and Panshanger Lane, and the distance of over 3km between the edge of this location and Hertford is sufficient to maintain a robust buffer against coalescence. Existing woodland would screen development here when viewed from most directions.

4.11.2.3 The area benefits from good access to the A414 and the motorway network. However, the area is distant from the railway station. The feasibility of a frequent bus service linking the area with the existing town centre, station, and employment areas should be given further consideration.

4.11.2.4 The designated wildlife sites and historic assets could be accommodated through sensitive layout and a Green Infrastructure strategy, although careful consideration would need to be given to impacts on particular species. Particular care would need to be exercised in relation to the ancient woodland at Birchall Wood/Henry Wood and the registered Historic Park at Panshanger on the other side of Panshanger Lane. Archaeological investigation would be needed in advance of construction. Flood risk for this area is relatively low.

4.11.2.5 The main infrastructure concern with development in this location relates to secondary schools. The existing schools in the town are at capacity with little apparent scope to expand, and the location would not yield sufficient pupils to accommodate a new 6FE Secondary School. However, the area is large enough to provide a range of other community facilities on-site, and would complement the adjacent leisure space at Moneyhole Lane Park. There are few issues with waste water infrastructure.

- 4.11.2.6** In terms of highways and access considerations, the location in close proximity to the A414 and A195 Black Fan Road weigh in favour of development at this location. A suitable buffer with the A414 could address traffic noise issues.
- 4.11.2.7** The landowners have indicated their desire to promote this area as part of a development combined with their adjacent landholdings in Welwyn Hatfield District, on the opposite side of the A195. The landowners have indicated that they wish to extract the available mineral deposits prior to development, and that this is likely to involve a 10-year timeframe before commencement.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.11.2.8** Taking into account the above assessment and evaluation, it is considered that East of Welwyn Garden City has considerable potential to deliver development. However, the major obstacle to development in this location relates to the provision of Secondary School places, and a suitable solution to this issue would need to be identified.
- 4.11.2.9** The suggestion that the site could accommodate 2,000 dwellings was derived by multiplying the total area within the A414/Panshanger Lane/woodland boundary (80 hectares) by an assumed density of 25 dwellings per hectare. The density assumption is considered reasonable, allowing for provision of some community infrastructure and taking account of the adjacent green space at Moneyhole Lane Park. If development is considered desirable at this location, it would not be considered reasonable to release only part of this location for long-term development given that existing physical features provide clear long-term Green Belt boundaries for a large-scale development.
- 4.11.2.10** Finally, it is very important to consider the wider context of the area in relation to Welwyn Garden City, and also in the context of the emerging strategy for Welwyn Hatfield District. These issues will be considered further in the next assessment.

Area 61: East of Welwyn Garden City

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for East of Welwyn Garden City. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 61	Sieve 1
2,000 dwellings	Marginal Pass
Fewer than 2,000 dwellings	N/A
Sieve 1 Figure	2,000
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations: Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council strategy; secondary school provision; feasibility of a sustainable transport strategy.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.11.3 Welwyn Garden City: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

- 4.11.3.1** Welwyn Garden City is the second of the Garden Cities, founded in 1920 and designated a New Town in 1948. The environment of the town is generally of a high quality, laid out along tree-lined boulevards with a number of attractive open spaces, including Sherrardspark Wood to the west, Stanborough Park to the south, and Moneyhole Lane Park to the east. To the north the town is bounded by the chalk stream of the River Mimram. Welwyn Garden City lies within Welwyn Hatfield Borough, which also includes Hatfield and a number of villages. Welwyn Garden City has low levels of deprivation compared with neighbouring Hatfield.
- 4.11.3.2** With a rapid rail connection to King's Cross, and easy access to the M25 via the A1(M), Welwyn Garden City is an important transport node. Junction 4 of the A1(M) is under pressure from the cumulative effects of traffic from the sub-region, including St. Albans, Stevenage, Hatfield and elsewhere. Strategic development such as an urban extension to Welwyn Garden City would further add to this pressure.

- 4.11.3.3** The town centre serves a wide catchment including parts of East Herts, notably Hertford, and has been designated as the Main Town Centre in the Borough. It contains the Borough's main cultural, community and civic facilities. The Howard Centre and John Lewis department store are the cornerstone of the thriving neo-Georgian town centre. The Broadwater Road West Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) identifies a 16 hectare area for mixed-use development east of the station. In addition, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is proposing to consult on a Town Centre North SPD in September 2012, which could provide additional town centre capacity.
- 4.11.3.4** The functional relationships of Welwyn Garden City with other places are strongest in a north-south direction, linking Welwyn Garden City with Hatfield to the south and Stevenage to the north. However, there are also very strong functional linkages on an east-west axis along the A414, both to St. Albans and to Hertford and Ware. This is evident in travel-to-work patterns, shopping and leisure trips, and housing market areas. To some extent the identified housing market areas which groups Hatfield and Welwyn Garden city together are a simplification of a more complex and inter-related network of functional relationships, due to Welwyn Garden Cities' location at the intersection of the A1(M) and the A414. Geographically, there is no doubt that although in East Herts, Area 61: East of Welwyn Garden City, if developed, would become part of Welwyn Garden City. In functional terms, separation along geographical lines is too simplistic.
- 4.11.3.5** The principal employment area within the town is at Shire Park east of the town centre. Hatfield Business Park is located west of the A1(M) at the former Hatfield Aerodrome site. Hatfield Business Park is the main employment location in central Hertfordshire, drawing workers from adjoining districts and especially from Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City.
- 4.11.3.6** The area between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City lies within an area which has been subject to considerable mineral extraction in recent years. Much of this land is or has been in the ownership of minerals extraction companies. The wetlands along the river Mimram including the Broad water are of relatively recent origin and in part owe their existence to minerals extraction. This area, including the extensive woodland is the centrepiece of a proposed 'Panshanger Country Park' between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford, based around the registered Historic Park of Panshanger. Potentially this Green Infrastructure network would integrate well with urban extensions west of Hertford and/or east of Welwyn Garden City.
- 4.11.3.7** A large area of land has been submitted to the south-east of Welwyn Garden City, approximately 80 hectares in East Herts District and another 170 hectares in Welwyn Hatfield Borough, not including the woodland blocks at Captain's Wood and Holwellpark Wood. The land stretches from

the Burnside waste collection point by the A414 in the south to Henry Wood in the north. The boundary between the two districts broadly lies along Birchall Lane (B195) and along the edge of Green Lane.

4.11.3.8 In submissions to both Councils, the landowners have proposed a single comprehensive development in the region of 4,000 dwellings, approximately 2,000 dwellings in each separate Local Planning Authority area. Whilst in theory the land within Welwyn Hatfield Borough could contain 4,250 dwellings (170 hectares multiplied by 25 dwellings per hectare), in practice this figure appears to have been substantially reduced to 2,000 dwellings to reflect land and the need for a district centre in addition to residential development.

4.11.3.9 Development east and south-east of Welwyn Garden City could in theory have a number of advantages:

- Sustainable location on the edge of a thriving town with good capacity for expansion of retail and employment, including proximity to Hatfield Business Park;
- Development up to the A414/Panshanger Lane would represent a 'rounding off' of Welwyn Garden City;
- Firm Green Belt boundaries along the A414 and Panshanger Lane;
- Panshanger Country Park as a key piece of strategic Green Infrastructure in the strategic gap between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford;
- The vast majority of the land is within single landownership, representing a good opportunity for comprehensive masterplanning and opportunities for high-quality design;

4.11.3.10 However, comprehensive development poses a number of challenges:

- the area within Welwyn Hatfield District south of Birchall Lane was until fairly recently used as landfill and is known to be contaminated land;
- the landowners have expressed an intention to extract the minerals from the site prior to development, and have stated that development may not commence for at least 10 years;

- Limited opportunities for direct integration with the town, apart from Black Fan Road/Birchall Lane and pedestrian routes into the outlying suburbs of the town;
- To mitigate pressure on the highways network and in particular the A414/A1(M) junction, development in this area would require a frequent bus service through the site linking with the town centre and railway station. Whilst Blackfan Road/Birchall Lane is an obvious bus route, the options for circular routes through the whole area are less clear.

4.11.3.11 Another major challenge is in relation to provision of secondary school capacity. There are three secondary schools within the town, Stanborough, Sir Frederick Osborn, and Monks Walk. Initial investigations suggest that all three schools are at or near capacity, although further investigation will be required in order to confirm the position. A new secondary school would require a 13-15 hectare site size, which would include playing fields. In order to justify a provision of a new secondary school in an urban extension, the urban extension would need to be in the region of 3000 to 5100 dwellings, deducting 750-1,275 dwellings to provide capacity to meet the existing shortfall with the town⁽¹²⁸⁾.

4.11.3.12 If Welwyn Hatfield Council were to bring forward development of its Area of Special Restraint at Panshanger Aerodrome this could potentially open up opportunities for links between the various parcels of development to the east of the town, perhaps providing a new bus route via Panshanger Lane back through the development to the south-east.

Next Steps

4.11.3.13 There appear to be four options for urban extensions east of Welwyn Garden City arising from this evaluation:

- a) Development south-east of Welwyn Garden City, in Welwyn Hatfield Borough only;
- b) Development east of Welwyn Garden City, in East Herts District only;
- c) Development in both Local Planning Authority areas as part of a comprehensively planned approach;
- d) No development east or south and east of Welwyn Garden City.

128 An explanation of the calculations is provided in the Secondary Schools Criteria in Chapter 2. The County Council's policy is to provide new secondary schools between 6 and 10 Forms of Entry (FE). Between 500 and 850 dwellings yield 1 FE. Therefore $500 \times 6 = 3,000$, $850 \times 6 = 5,100$. Within the Welwyn Garden City Secondary School Planning Area, demand exceeds capacity by 1.5FE. $500 \times 1.5 = 750$ dwellings, or $850 \times 1.5 \text{ FE} = 1,275$ dwellings.

4.11.3.14 Which of these options is pursued will depend in large measure on the willingness of the landowner, together with alternative options available to both East Herts and Welwyn Hatfield at other locations.

4.11.3.15 There are also some more detailed matters which will need further investigation:

- Nature and extent of the contaminated land problem south of Birchall lane;
- Options and requirements for new primary and secondary schools;
- Potential link across Birchall Lane if development eastern and south-eastern urban extensions go ahead;
- Possible District or Local Centre in either LPA area;
- Clarification in respect of Welwyn Hatfield's position in relation to the Panshanger Area of Special Restraint and links with a potential urban extension to the east of the town within East Herts.

4.11.3.16 Generally many of the planning issues are more complicated within Welwyn Hatfield Borough south of Birchall Lane than within the section north of Birchall Lane in East Herts. Therefore it is hoped that Welwyn Hatfield Council will provide a clear steer in respect of its overall strategy in the near future, and whether it anticipates development to the south-east having any role within that strategy. Further discussions between the two Councils will be necessary before a decision can be made in respect of development in either Local Planning Authority area.

Welwyn Garden City: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for Welwyn Garden City. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Welwyn Garden City	Sieve 2
Scenario Description	2,000 dwellings to the east of Welwyn Garden City within East Herts District
Sieve 2 Rating	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Welwyn Hatfield Borough's preferred strategy; fit with potential East Herts Council strategy; town centre expansion capacity; phasing; landowner intentions in respect of comprehensive development in Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts; potential delivery of a Neighbourhood Centre or a Local Centre and a secondary school; NPPF requirements including Duty to Co-operate and unmet needs of nearby Local Planning Authorities.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.12 Harlow

4.12.1 This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to the North of Harlow, including the use of sieve assessment and areas of search as strategic planning tools. Please refer to Section 4.3 for interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.12.1 Areas of Search

4.12.1.1 The Areas of Search are shown below.

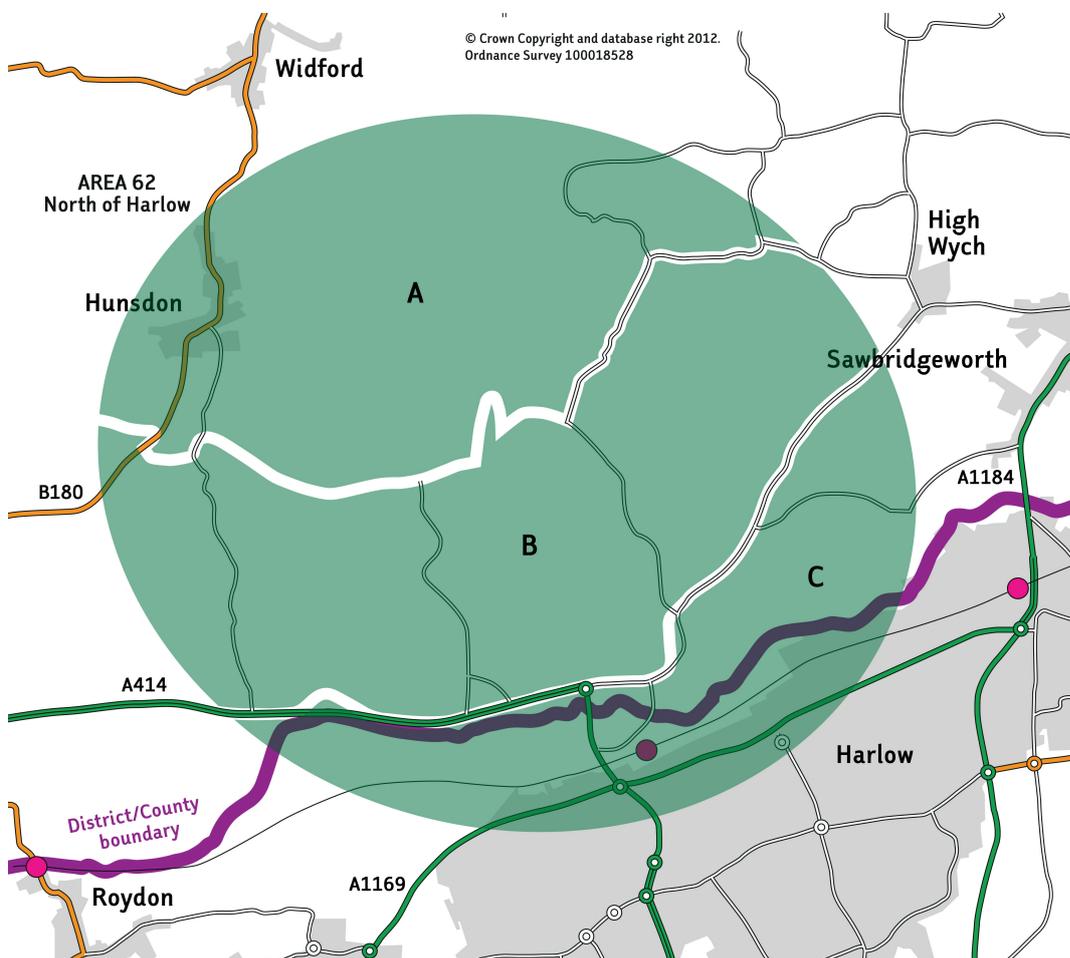


Figure 4.11 Harlow Areas of Search

4.12.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of the Areas of Search for North of Harlow are as follows:

- **Area 62 - North of Harlow (Sub-Area A):**
Hunsdon Plateau Landscape Character Area (north of line from Overhall Farm to Hunsdonbury)

- **Area 62 - North of Harlow (Sub-Area B):**
Stanstead & Pishiobury Parklands Landscape Character Area (south of line from Overhall Farm to Hunsdonbury)
- **Area 62 - North of Harlow (Sub-Area C):**
River Stort (south of Redricks Lane/A414)

4.12.2 North of Harlow (Sieve 1: Area 62)

4.12.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 62 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Area 62: Sub-Area A

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Designated Wildlife Sites; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Green Belt; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Noise Impacts.

4.12.2.2 Development of Sub-Area A would be dependent on the prior development of Sub-Area B to the south. If development in this area is to proceed, the total scale of development north of Harlow would be likely to exceed 10,000 dwellings.

4.12.2.3 In terms of delivery, this scale of development would enable a wide range of infrastructure to be funded by the development, including primary and secondary schools, bus routes, employment, leisure and recreation facilities and Green infrastructure. It may also enable additional sustainability features such as decentralised energy generation and water efficiency measures such as rainwater harvesting. Sub-Area A is in single land ownership, which enhances the prospects for delivery. However, there is uncertainty around the timing of delivery for this scale of project, and it may well be that development in this Sub-Area could not occur until well after 2031.

4.12.2.4 Development of this scale would be expected to generate a significant amount of additional traffic, and the A414 through Harlow is already congested. The feasibility and financial viability of an M11 link road across the Stort Valley to the M11 is uncertain, although cheaper alternatives such as the Gilden Way-M11 are currently under investigation by Essex County Council. Traffic congestion impacts on the villages could be

minimised through the internalisation of trips from the development within Harlow. Further consideration of traffic impacts is provided in relation to Sub-Area B below.

4.12.2.5 Although Sub-Area A lies beyond the existing Green Belt boundary, development in this area would be dependent on redrawing the Green Belt in the whole area, including the establishment of compensatory Green Belt to the north. There are no ‘hard’ boundary limits beyond the Stort valley, and so a redrawn inner Green Belt boundary would have to follow minor features. However, establishment of a long-term Green Belt boundary can be reinforced by landscaping and/or the creation of a perimeter road or other new hard physical boundary feature as part of the development. The high-voltage power lines crossing the area are unlikely to assist in the definition of potential boundary limits. Notwithstanding the design guidance issued by National Grid, these lines are likely to pose challenges to development in terms of the coherence of the urban form in Sub-Areas A and B.

Area 62: Sub-Area B

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.12.2.6 Development of Sub-Area B would not be dependent on Sub-Area A to the north. Without development to the north, Sub-Area B would be capable of accommodating several thousand dwellings, although probably substantially fewer than 10,000.

4.12.2.7 In terms of delivery, a large part of this land is in single land ownership, and access to Harlow across the Stort Valley (Sub-Area C) would therefore not be subject to separate land negotiations, although it would require expensive upgrades to the A414 bridge and one or more additional bridges. There is potential to expand the development onto separate landholdings to both east and west, although development in these locations would be dependent on the principle landowners in the central part of the Sub-Area. Sub-Area B is not dependent on Sub-Area A, although development to the north of the area would change the financial viability calculations and

the range of infrastructure that could be provided. Whether or not Sub-Areas A and B are considered as a single unit would therefore alter the feasibility assessment for the M11 link road.

- 4.12.2.8** Sub-Area B lies within the Green Belt, and therefore exceptional circumstances would need to be demonstrated for development to proceed in this location. Coalescence with Sawbridgeworth to the east could be avoided with a Green Belt buffer. Green Belt boundary limits and concerns about overhead power lines are broadly the same as for Sub-Area A. Eastwick and Gilston would be enclosed within any development in this Sub-Area, and although design could help to retain some of the character of these villages, they would inevitably lose their countryside setting.
- 4.12.2.9** The impact on the important natural and historic assets in Sub-Area B should be manageable by means of sensitive design to take account of setting and context, and ecological pathways. New wetlands, surface water retention and a sustainable drainage strategy could improve water quality on the Stort. As described by the Rye Meads Water Cycle Strategy, the impact of sewerage infrastructure upgrades on Hunsdon Meads SSSI would need to be handled carefully. The wider impacts of traffic on the European Sites will be assessed through a Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 4.12.2.10** Flood risk in this area is fairly low, but strategies for sustainable drainage and Green infrastructure would be needed in order to avoid and preserve the areas of flood risk along the brooks through the Sub-Area, and also to attenuate run-off into the Stort to reduce downstream flood risk. Further discussions with the Environment Agency will be necessary in terms of possible layout and design implications for downstream flooding.
- 4.12.2.11** Sub-Areas A, B, and C lie outside the 60 decibel noise contour for the Stansted Airport flightpath, and aircraft noise would therefore not be considered an environmental health issue. For this reason, development in this location could not be discounted on noise-related grounds when objectively assessed against national policy. If necessary, mitigation measures including layout and noise insulation could be introduced. Parts of Sub-Areas B and C are near the A414 dual carriageway, but speed limits in this area mean that road noise is not considered to be especially significant. ⁽¹²⁹⁾
- 4.12.2.12** Highways infrastructure is the major concern regarding the development of this Sub-Area. Concerns about feasibility and financial viability of the M11 link road have already been noted in relation to Sub-Area A. The employment potential of this area is dependent on the provision of

129 NPPF Paragraph 109 refers to the need to avoid unacceptable risks of noise pollution at new development. Paragraph 123 refers to 'avoiding significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development'. For further information on this, see the 'General Comments' on the noise topic assessment accompanying the Supporting Document.

appropriate highways infrastructure. There are also uncertainties about the impact of this scale of development on the A1184 through Sawbridgeworth, which is already congested. Further work will be necessary to assess these impacts.

Area 62: Sub-Area C

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Flood Risk; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Landscape Character; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.

4.12.2.13 Given the width of the Stort floodplain, development of this area without Sub-Area B would result in an isolated strip of development with little relationship to Harlow, but without the necessary scale to leverage finance for a level of infrastructure provision commensurate with sustainable patterns of development. In practical terms it is difficult to envisage development of Sub-Area C without development of Sub-Area B, and possibly Sub-Area A as well.

4.12.2.14 However, at the same time the nature of the Stort Valley makes it difficult to see how Sub-Area C could come forward as part of a larger development. A number of studies emphasise the importance of the Stort Valley for its landscape contribution to the setting of Harlow, and also as a piece of strategic Green infrastructure. The valley slopes around High Wych are acknowledged as an important part of the character of the valley, and development here would have a highly detrimental effect on the setting of the valley and of Harlow and High Wych. In their submission the promoters argue that this area is brownfield land and should therefore be prioritised for development. Whatever the past history and nominal classification of the land, it clearly has important landscape functions today which outweigh such considerations.

4.12.2.15 Further concerns about development in Sub-Area C relate to the erosion of the strategic gap between Sawbridgeworth and Harlow⁽¹³⁰⁾, and the extensive areas of Flood Zone 3 south of High Wych slopes, which means that the form of development would be limited to a narrow strip of land with little relation to the existing town.

130 This concern has been successfully articulated by East Herts Council at previous Local Plan examinations.

4.12.2.16 The only exception to the overall negative assessment given to Sub-Area C relates to the former Merck, Sharpe & Dohme research facility known as Terlings Park. This 6 hectare site consists of specialist industrial buildings and has been vacant for a number of years. It is currently designated in the Local Plan 2007 as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt. However, marketing has failed to establish a suitable new non-residential occupant for the site. Most of Terlings Park is at low risk of flooding, being located in Flood Zone 1, although a small section to the south-east corner is in Flood Zone 3. An application for circa 270 dwellings has been received on this site. In pre-application discussions, officers have accepted the principle of residential development in this location. However, the application still needs to be determined by the Council's Development Control committee. Without prejudice to the planning application process, this site could be carried forward to Sieve 3 for further consideration.

Conclusion and Next Steps

4.12.2.17 There are a number of unavoidable impacts, for example on landscape, wildlife, good quality agricultural land, and historic assets such as Hunsdon airfield. Whilst the layout of development could mitigate these impacts to some extent, there are likely to be some residual negative impacts. The NPPF requires that the overall net gains from the development must be considered. The balance of considerations may suggest that these impacts are outweighed by the overall benefits of the development. This balance will need further assessment in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.12.2.18 As will be clear from the overview of relevant studies above, consideration of growth options north of Harlow will also need to assess the wider strategic context, which will be carried out in subsequent steps. Consideration will also need to be given to the demand for this scale of development north of Harlow, and whether there is a realistic prospect of delivery, particularly in relation to the highways infrastructure issues identified.

4.12.2.19 In summary, Sub Area A could only come forward after 2031 as part of a very-large development, following development in Sub-Area B. There are considerable challenges to development in this area, and further work will be needed to consider whether these are manageable. It is too early to dismiss Sub-Area B at this early stage in the strategy selection process. The feasibility of a coherent strategy for the area will need to be tested in order to assess the impacts arising from development in this location, including transport modelling to assess the impact on the A1184 through Sawbridgeworth. Sub-Area C includes the Stort Valley and valley slopes, which is a very important piece of strategic Green infrastructure irrespective of whether development to the north goes ahead. Added to this, concerns about flood risk and also coalescence with Sawbridgeworth to the eastern end of this area suggest that this area is not suitable for development, either alone or as part of a larger development north of Harlow.

- 4.12.2.20** Given this evaluation, the impacts on the Stort Valley of a scenario in which development comes forward in Sub-Areas A and B but not Sub-Area C should be considered. It would be likely that development around Harlow Town station would be necessary in order to provide an effective link into Sub-Area B. The setting of valley around the A414 road bridge at the Eastwick roundabout has already changed the character of the valley at this point.
- 4.12.2.21** Potentially of greater concern is the impact of new road bridges on sensitive parts of the valley to the east and west of the existing A414 road bridge. If further work confirms that additional bridges are necessary, consideration will need to be given to the landscape impacts on the Stort Valley, and possible mitigation measures.
- 4.12.2.22** Two major factors need further consideration in order to understand whether Sub-Areas A and B should be considered together as part of a single large development location. Firstly, it is unclear what level of development would trigger the need for an A414/M11 link road. Transport modelling should provide some clarity in this regard. Secondly, there is also a need to consider the future form and function of Harlow in order to reach an informed judgement on what, if any, development should occur to the north.
- 4.12.2.23** In relation to the scale of growth, lower levels of development should also be considered. Sub-Area A is not relevant because substantially lower levels of growth would be unlikely to reach this area. In terms of Sub-Area B, the proposed A414-M11 link road could potentially be seen to influence the rating of this area. To date, technical studies have identified no trigger point or threshold at which the road would become necessary⁽¹³¹⁾. However, even if the road were not required at all, there remain sufficient concerns in relation to highways impact on the A1184 through Sawbridgeworth to justify the same overall rating for Sub-Area B at lower levels of development. In relation to Sub-Area C, the main reasons for the assessment rating are the landscape character impact on the Stort Valley, flood risk concerns, and also concerns about the resulting urban form, which as a stand-alone development would be separated from Harlow by the Stort. Therefore, with the exception of Terlings Park, even substantially lower levels of development at Sub-Area C would be inappropriate.

131 The Harlow Infrastructure Study (2010) does not specify a threshold trigger. The Harlow Options Appraisal (2010) suggests a figure of 4,000 dwellings north of Harlow by 2021, acknowledging disagreement about the requirement for the M11 northern spine road (see paragraph 4.9.2 of that study).

Area 62: North of Harlow

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for North of Harlow. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 62	Sub-Area A	Sub-Area B	Sub-Area C
10,000 dwellings	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	Fail
Fewer than 10,000 dwellings	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass (Terlings Park only)
Sieve 1 Figure	10,000 dwellings		270 dwellings
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail	Marginal Fail	Marginal Pass (Terlings Park only)
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes	Yes	Yes (Terlings Park only)

Main Considerations:

Sub-Area A: Feasibility and financial viability of M11 link road; joint assessment of Sub-Areas A and B; impact on layout of overhead high voltage power line; internalisation of road trips; impact on neighbouring East Herts settlements.

Sub-Area B: Feasibility and financial viability of M11 link road and River Stort road bridges; internalisation of road trips; impact on neighbouring East Herts settlements; joint assessment of Sub-Areas A and B; Harlow Council's strategy; NPPF requirement to consider 'unmet need' from nearby local planning authority areas

Sub-Area C: *Terlings Park:* feasibility of sustainable transport. *Rest of Sub-Area C:* failed due to flood risk, coalescence concerns, poor relationship to existing settlements (i.e. unsustainable pattern of development); and impact on the Stort Valley.

Notes: Areas 62: North of Harlow and 69: Hunsdon Area address different levels of development in a similar broad geographical location. There is overlap between the issues at both areas, but these are not necessarily repeated because both assessments will be considered together through the strategy selection process. Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.12.3 Harlow: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

- 4.12.3.1** Harlow is a New Town of around 80,000 residents, designed in the 1940s and largely built between the 1950s and 1970s. In its early years Harlow was celebrated as an example of good planning, based on core principles including high levels of self-containment including the provision of separate employment and residential areas, distinct neighbourhoods, a layout which reflects the underlying topography, and a network of green wedges including pockets of woodland, streams and roads. The chief masterplanner of Harlow, Frederick Gibberd, set a firm boundary to the north, formed by the railway line, motorway, and Stort Valley with the “Hertfordshire Hills” beyond. Pinnacles and Temple Fields industrial areas were located on the western and northern edges of the town in order to provide direct access to the railway line and the planned motorway. However, the Ministry of Transport at the time changed the originally proposed line of the M11 and routed it to the east of the town away from the employment areas: “As *Frederick Gibberd said despairingly, it is like asking a man to plan a seaside town only to learn, too late, that the sea has been shifted to the other side.*”⁽¹³²⁾ This also created complications for large-scale expansion of the town to the north, because of the location of Stort Valley and the railway line between the north and the M11, several kilometres to the east and currently accessible only via congested roads through the town to Junction 7.
- 4.12.3.2** As infrastructure and housing stock have aged, Harlow has struggled to live up to its early success. The high proportion of social housing, relative levels of deprivation in many wards, and the relatively low office and industrial rents are symptoms of stagnation. The skill levels of existing residents are generally well below the national and regional average. Harlow is the only settlement in the sub-region where there has been a net decline in the number of families with children in recent years⁽¹³³⁾. The most deprived wards are located in the centre and south of Harlow⁽¹³⁴⁾.
- 4.12.3.3** Regeneration activities to address Harlow’s problems are ongoing. Examples of recent and current schemes include the redevelopment of the town centre Water Gardens and the Harlow Gateway leisure complex, as well as projects to improve integration of the station with the town, and improvements to the Town Park area. Two sites, both located on the eastern side of Harlow, namely Templefields North – East and London Road, have recently been designated as an Enterprise Zone in an effort to attract investment. Until recently a Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) promoted

132 *Harlow: The Story of a New Town*, page 155

133 See the *Strategic Housing Market Assessment* (2010)

134 See *Harlow Options Appraisal* (2010), pages 21-26. Figure 8: Rank of Harlow IMD scores 2008 shows relative deprivation within the town. Option D is called ‘regeneration-led’ because of the RSS policy HA1, not because of any correlation with the areas shown in the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

regeneration initiatives within the town, although this closed on 25th March 2011 due to the withdrawal of public funding⁽¹³⁵⁾. Regeneration efforts are now principally the responsibility of Harlow Council.

4.12.3.4 The Harlow Options Appraisal (2010) includes detailed consideration of the implications of outwards growth of Harlow in each direction at different levels. The study used a criteria-based approach to assessment of 32 separate areas around the town, and acknowledging that the town is surrounded by Green Belt on all sides. The Harlow Options Appraisal was commissioned jointly by Harlow, East Herts, and Epping Forest Councils in order to comply with the East of England Plan. However, the document contains useful evidence which can be used to inform developing options within the context of the NPPF, provided that care is taken to separate findings which were determined by the East of England Plan from findings which can be verified independently. A summary of the study is contained in Appendix B: Key Documents and Feedback.

4.12.3.5 Various opportunities for Harlow can be identified, building on the town's strengths and addressing its weaknesses, including:

- Location in the M11 corridor, including 2 mainline railway stations, good access to London, Cambridge and Stansted Airport;
- Potential for clustering of high-tech businesses based on Harlow's prime location;
- Current major national and international businesses located within the town;
- Many residents of nearby districts including Epping Forest and East Herts work in Harlow, or visit for shopping or leisure purposes;
- Many first-time buyers from nearby settlements choose to relocate to Harlow, where housing is cheaper;
- Important function in the sub-regional settlement hierarchy.

4.12.3.6 However, whilst many other settlements in the M11 Corridor have grown substantially in recent years, development in Harlow has been relatively slow and small-scale. Recent development at New Hall to the east of Harlow has been granted planning permission, and Harlow Council anticipates that this development to the east will continue over the next twenty years. However, build rates at New Hall have been relatively low, and are not expected to exceed 50 dwellings per annum at each phase in the future, reflecting the landowner's vision for a particular type of aspirational housing, and more recently, the economic downturn. On current trajectories, Harlow Council estimates a total District build rate of around

135 Harlow Renaissance Ltd. was established at the end of 2006 to drive forward the regeneration and growth process in Harlow. The company was formed by Harlow Council, Essex County Council, the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and English Partnerships (which became the Homes and Communities Agency – HCA). Significant core funding came from the Department for Communities and Local Government to bring together national, regional and local government in a concerted effort to facilitate change in Harlow.

500 dwellings per annum until 2018/19, and around 300 per annum thereafter. Most of this development is expected to the east of the town within the administrative area of Harlow District⁽¹³⁶⁾.

- 4.12.3.7** Harlow Council has promoted a vision of Harlow in the future based on a step-change in delivery of development, as was explained in its latest consultation document: *“Although the East of England Plan has been withdrawn there are elements in the evidence base that remain valid and relevant to Harlow. One of these is the role that housing and jobs growth can have in delivering the regeneration of the town. To help achieve this, the East of England Plan sought the provision of 16,000 new homes and approximately 8,000 new jobs in the Harlow area. The Council believes that growth around this level will help provide the critical mass necessary to sustain regeneration and support infrastructure provision to help meet the needs and aspirations of the local community.”* [Harlow Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Document, Page 8].
- 4.12.3.8** In summary, Harlow Council’s position is that critical mass is essential in order to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment and rebalancing of the housing mix within the town to provide aspirational market housing. A skilled professional workforce would be attracted by high quality new housing and also by suitable professional jobs at new employment areas provided in urban extensions to the town. The scale of development would leverage massive private sector investment in new infrastructure and upgrades to existing infrastructure. It would entail a northwards shift in the town’s centre of gravity, towards the railway stations and the north. It would also facilitate rebranding of the town to attract investment and talent. For this reason, Harlow Council’s position is that growth is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition of regeneration. Further details of this position are contained in the Harlow Regeneration Strategy (2005) which is summarised in Appendix A. The Regeneration Strategy describes the preferred strategy as ‘transformational growth’.
- 4.12.3.9** The main identified obstacle to this scale of growth is the availability of land within Harlow Council’s administrative boundaries. Of the 16,000 dwellings proposed, 5,000 have either been completed or have planning permission (e.g. at New Hall). It is estimated that only 600 new dwellings can be provided within Harlow through the intensification of the existing urban area⁽¹³⁷⁾. Using a ‘to-find’ figure of 11,000 dwellings, the ‘suggested spatial approach’ to growth to 2031 was produced in compliance with Policy HA1 of the East of England Plan as follows:

136 Harlow Annual Monitoring Report (2011)

137 See the Harlow Options Appraisal (2010) page 42 and associated footnotes. Harlow’s SHLAA has not yet been published but this should provide a more up-to-date and accurate figure.

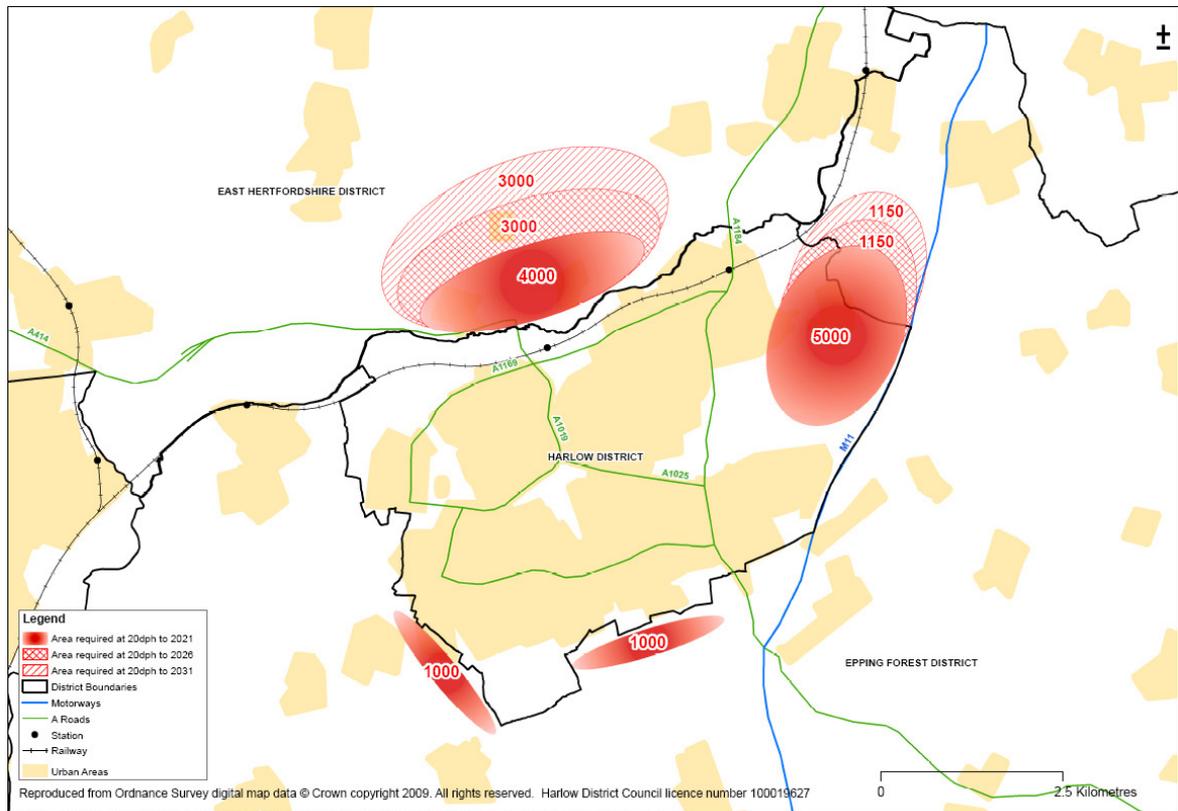


Figure 4.12 Consultants' Suggested Approach

4.12.3.10 East Herts, Harlow and Epping Forest Councils have now all consulted on this suggested approach and substantial feedback has been received from a wide range of stakeholders. The greatest number of comments was received from residents within East Herts District, including 2,279 standard responses objecting to development to the north of Harlow⁽¹³⁸⁾. These comments stated:

- *I do not agree with the consultants' suggested approach in respect of growth north of Harlow. It was constrained by policy HA1 of the East of England Plan which has since been revoked. The consultants' own work indicates that, without that constraint, Option C is the preferred approach. The consultants' approach is unsustainable and will do untold economic and environmental damage.*
- *There is no longer any need to distribute development in accordance with Policy HA1 of the East of England Plan as the Plan has been revoked by the new Government. I support a better not a bigger Harlow.*

138 A summary of the consultation responses is included in Appendix B of this document. Original feedback to East Herts Council's consultation are online at: <http://consult.eastherts.gov.uk>. Further analysis of the consultation responses was reported to East Herts Council Members on 7th July 2011 and is available at <http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=151&MId=1708&Ver=4>. As of 30th May 2012, Harlow Council has yet to publish the feedback to their Issues and Options consultation or any analysis of this.

- *The green fields north of Harlow are not suitable as a broad location to meet district wide housing requirements. The area should remain an essential part of (an extended) Green Belt.*
- *The towns and villages north of Harlow should be treated in the Local Development Framework no differently from other towns and villages of similar size and character in the district.*
- *I support limited housing to meet local needs in accordance with locally developed parish and town plans.*
- *I strongly object to major development north of Harlow.*

4.12.3.11 Objections were also received from Parish Councils in East Herts District, Sawbridgeworth Town Council, and Hertfordshire County Council. Support was received from Harlow Council, Essex County Council, and Harlow Renaissance. Detailed arguments for and against development north of Harlow have been submitted to East Herts Council. The approach to consultation feedback is explained in Section 1.8: Consultation above, and a summary is provided in Appendix B: Documents and Feedback.

4.12.3.12 Based on the evidence in the Harlow Options Appraisal, a realistic alternative development scenario is available within the administrative area of Harlow District to the east of the town. Harlow Council's Annual Monitoring Report shows potential future supply of over 5,000 dwellings on greenfield land within the district boundary to the east of the town as shown in Table 4.4 below:

Location	Identified Future Supply
New Hall Phase 1	188
New Hall Phase 2	750
New Hall Phase 3	1,500
North of Gilden Way	1,000
East Harlow (contingent)	2,000
Total	5,438

Table 4.4 Housing Land Supply East of Harlow

4.12.3.13 The M11 forms a clear eastern boundary limit to growth east of Harlow. As shown in Figure 4.12 above, the consultants' recommended spatial approach included 2300 dwellings between Harlow District boundary and the M11 (i.e. in Epping Forest District)⁽¹³⁹⁾. In total, it appears that the total

139 The Consultants' recommendations to the east of Harlow were not constrained by the directional requirements of Policy HA1 of the East of England Plan in the way that growth to the north was.

long-term capacity east of Harlow is in the region of 7500-8000 dwellings. An alternative scenario would be for growth to be concentrated in this area to the east.

4.12.3.14 There are substantial infrastructure challenges in terms of delivering a vision based on transformational growth to the north of Harlow. In brief, the main delivery issues are as follows:

- It is unclear at what level of development an **M11 Link Road** crossing the Stort Valley would be needed, and how it could be funded;
- a new **M11 junction**, which could put pressure on the national motorway network and how it could be funded;
- at least one and probably 2 or more new **bridges over the River Stort**, including widening of the existing bridge, in the Eastwick to Burnt Mills area;
- The redevelopment of Harlow Town railway station area to provide a much enhanced **transport hub** to link the existing town with new development to the north;
- The provision of a number of **frequent bus services** within the development to link with the transport hub at Harlow Town stations;
- The development would largely fund a wide range of **social infrastructure**, including secondary schools;
- Thames Water have informed East Herts Council that a **new trunk sewer** has been designed and is feasible given development planned within Harlow District;
- delivery of high levels of affordable housing within the new development;
- delivery of **sustainability features**, including Green Infrastructure, sustainable drainage, low carbon energy generation, sustainable waste treatment, and rainwater harvesting technology;
- possible provision of a **Gypsy and Traveller site** within the new development;
- the northwards **expansion of Harlow town centre** to ensure that growth to the north is integrated with Harlow, rather than becoming a competing satellite settlement which could undermine regeneration efforts.

4.12.3.15 Given the width of the Stort Valley, a minimum of 10,000 new dwellings would be required in order to ensure that development to the north could be successfully integrated with the town. This would facilitate the northwards expansion of the town centre, and the provision of new bridges to integrate both sides of the valley around the Stort as a central Green Infrastructure feature. Such a proposal would put Harlow Town station at the centre of the expanded town, rather than along the northern edge as at present.

- 4.12.3.16** Lower levels of development to the north would be unlikely to command sufficient financial leverage to deliver these objectives, and would be highly likely to result in an isolated strip of development with no coherent relationship to Harlow or to settlements in East Herts. This scenario would therefore be likely to result in a satellite settlement with a separate, competing centre to the north, or no proper centre and therefore lacking in the full mix of uses which would be expected of any major development proposals.
- 4.12.3.17** The Harlow Area Assessment (no. 62) in the previous section assessed a number of constraints to development north of Harlow.
- Sub Area C is not considered appropriate for development. Development of this area without development of Sub-Areas A and B would not contribute towards the critical mass of Harlow, and would be an isolated strip of development with no relation to existing settlements, separated from Harlow across the Stort Valley. Even with development of Sub-Areas A and B, this area is not considered appropriate for development due to flood risk and also the sensitivity of the Stort Valley and the High Wych slopes to the setting of Harlow. This only exception to this is in relation to Terlings Park, as explained in the Sieve 1 Assessment (Area 62: North of Harlow).
 - Sub-Areas A and B should be considered together because both sub-areas would be needed in order to achieve the critical mass of 10,000 dwellings. Key concerns arising from the topic assessments include highways particularly in relation to the A1184 through Sawbridgeworth, impact on the landscape, on the surrounding villages and on Sawbridgeworth. The high-voltage power lines crossing the area pose challenges for an integrated design framework linking Harlow with new development to the north. Sub-Areas A and B have been assigned a ‘marginal fail’ rating, which reflects concerns about the impact on the local area but also acknowledges that further assessment is necessary in the context of the NPPF and in relation to the emerging strategies of East Herts Council and other Local Planning Authorities.
- 4.12.3.18** Area of Search no. 69 assessed the implications of a new settlement north of Harlow, in the ‘Hunsdon Area’. This option is considered separately in Section 4.14.7. It should be noted that a satellite settlement would not contribute to Harlow Council’s aims for the regeneration of Harlow.

Next steps

- 4.12.3.19** The District Plan strategy considers the district-wide implications of growth at 69 areas of search. The next step is therefore to consider whether there are other areas of the District which are potentially better locations for development than North of Harlow. It will also be necessary to judge what

the overall level of development should be, in terms of the balance of development impacts tested against the agreed upper and lower limits derived from demographic work. This will need to consider the impact of development across administrative boundaries. A combination of the district-wide work and the local-area work contained in this chapter should suggest an appropriate level of development for each settlement. This will be the subject of *Chapter 5: Scenarios*.

4.12.3.20 *Chapter 6: Strategies* will then test the sustainability and deliverability of development north of Harlow and at other locations, taking account of growth scenarios within and beyond the town. This process may lead to adjustments to the findings of Chapter 5. Without careful planning there are clear risks to the quality of life and successful functioning of settlements including settlements in East Herts and Harlow itself. In the context of strategy development and testing, a number of specific further areas for investigation and assessment stand out:

- Possible links between regeneration and growth in particular how enhanced critical mass could catalyse renewal activity within Harlow and the feasibility of development to the north forming a coherent part of the existing town rather than a competing satellite settlement;
- alternative options for growth to the east of Harlow;
- risk assessment of the scale of development, including delivery mechanisms, infrastructure delivery, and environmental factors including mitigation and control measures;
- impact of development on the setting and character of the existing settlements;
- Green Infrastructure opportunities
- Impact on European designated habitats, in particular possible impacts on air quality in Epping Forest;
- key items of expensive infrastructure, including what will be required, at what point it would be required, how it could be delivered, and who would be responsible for delivering it. A central item will be the need to assess the connection with the M11, including an M11 link road/Northern spine road, or alternative options for a cheaper link via Gilden Way;
- a Green Belt review, to understand how a firm Green Belt boundary could be established, and where compensatory Green Belt should be located;

- funding arrangements, and whether there is a realistic prospect of the necessary capital and revenue finance to underpin the delivery of critical infrastructure;
- impact on the highways network, including the M11, Junctions 7 and 8 of the M11, the A1184 through Sawbridgeworth, the A414/A10, and minor roads within East Herts;
- impact on economic development, including the aspirations of settlements within East Herts, Harlow, and the wider area;
- phasing of development;
- requirements of the NPPF in relation to development north of Harlow, for example in relation to core planning principles (paragraph 17), strategic plan-making priorities (paragraphs 156-7), the duty to co-operate (paragraphs 178-181), Garden Cities (paragraph 52), sustainable patterns of development (paragraph 84), and the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14).

4.12.3.21 It is proposed to carry forward two alternative options north of Harlow to Sieve 3 for further assessment. Area 62: North of Harlow suggests that 10,000 dwellings should be tested as part of Harlow Council's vision of rebranding and 'transformational growth'. The New Settlement Evaluation suggests that a new settlement concept for a lower level of 5,000 dwellings should also be tested for Area 69: Hunsdon Area. It is acknowledged that many of the local constraints at 10,000 dwellings and at 5,000 dwellings are very similar, even through potentially both scenarios could contribute towards meeting the objectively assessed housing needs of East Herts. Further work is required to assess both scenarios, to assess the wider strategic implications as well as local impact, and compliance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.12.3.22 Prior to the present strategy selection process, East Herts Council has opposed development north of Harlow, objecting in particular to the imposition of growth through the Regional Plan. However, the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to demonstrate that they have objectively assessed the balance of considerations, including those which may be important to other Local Planning Authorities in the vicinity. Before the Council can adopt a strategy as policy, it must be subjected to extensive scrutiny by a Government-appointed planning inspector at Examination in Public. Even though Inspectors reports are no longer binding, Local Planning Authorities which disregard the findings of an Inspector's report are liable to be challenged through the courts. Given this context, East Herts Council's position is therefore to suspend judgement on the issue of development north of Harlow, pending the outcome of the objective strategy selection process.

Harlow: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for Harlow. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Harlow	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
Scenario Description	10,000 dwellings north of Harlow	No development north of Harlow	270 dwellings at Terlings Park
Sieve 2 Rating	Marginal Pass	Marginal Pass	Marginal Pass
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Main Considerations:

Scenario A: Further consideration will need to be given to the robustness of Harlow Council's strategy including assessment of strategic alternatives within Harlow; the potential fit with East Herts Council strategy; feasibility and financial viability of delivery of major items of infrastructure, as well as a range of other assessments relating to transport and habitats.

Scenario B: if suitable alternative locations can be identified elsewhere within the district, then this may be a reasonable option. However, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to be able to demonstrate at Examination in Public that they have seriously addressed various requirements including the Duty to Co-operate, and consideration of the unmet needs of adjoining authority areas. A Marginal Pass rating reflects the need to balance the range of factors in the context of the NPPF.

Scenario C: As Scenario B above; potential for sustainable mixed-use development.

Notes: The settlement evaluations for Harlow and New Settlements (specifically Hunsdon Area) address different levels of development in a similar broad geographical location. There is overlap between the issues at both areas, but these are not necessarily repeated because both assessments will be considered together through the strategy selection process. This twin-track approach has been adopted to meet NPPF requirements to test alternative options, in this case the 'transformational growth' and regeneration of Harlow against an option for a new settlement which would not form part of Harlow. The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning

Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.13 Hoddesdon

This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to the North of Hoddesdon. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.13.1 Areas of Search

4.13.1.1 The Area of Search is shown below.

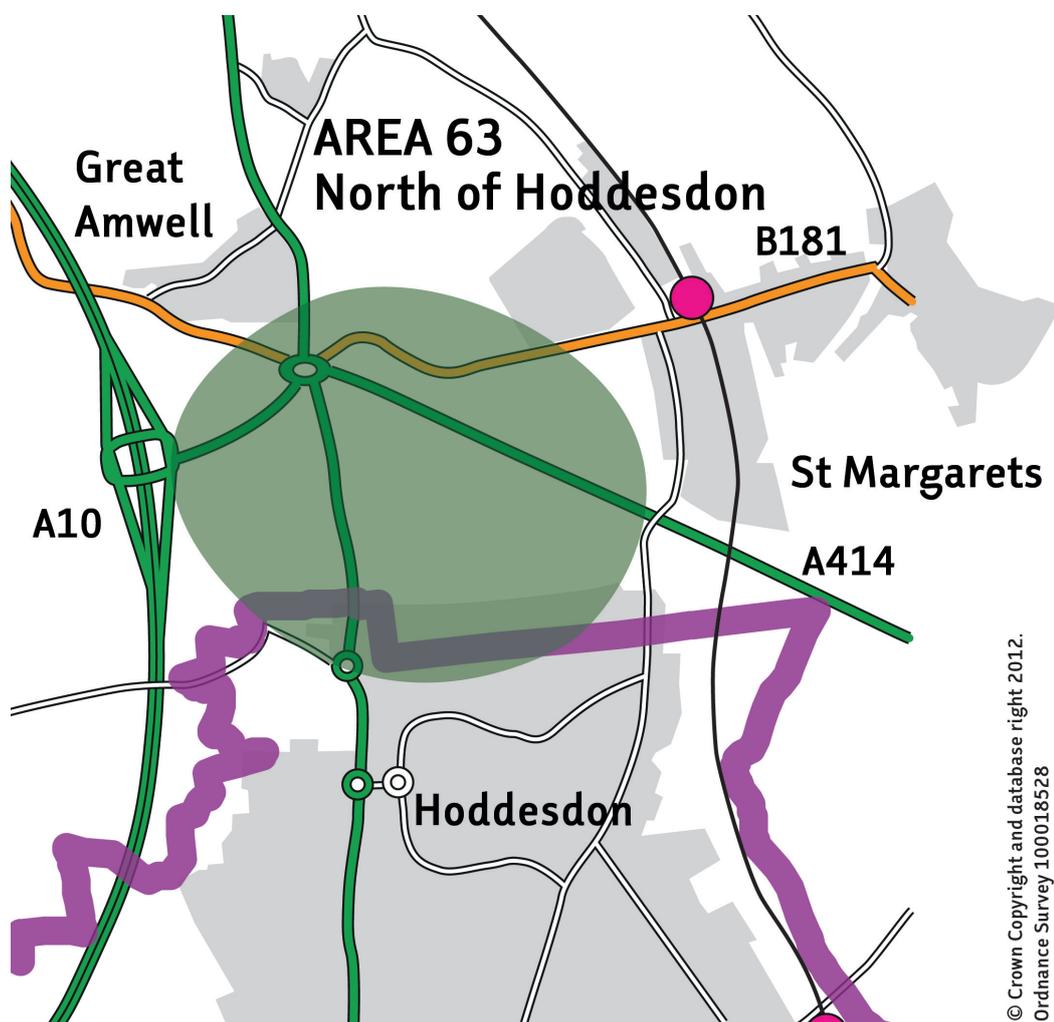


Figure 4.13 Hoddesdon Area of Search

4.13.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of the Area of Search for the North of Hoddesdon is as follows:

- **Area 63 - North of Hoddesdon:**
Bounded by A10 and A414

4.13.2 North of Hoddesdon (Sieve 1: Area 63)

4.13.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 63 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Secondary/Middle Schools; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.

4.13.2.2 The main concern in this area relates to the preservation of the strategic gap between Hoddesdon and Ware. This area has a particularly important Green Belt function. The distance from Hoddesdon to Great Amwell and St Margarets is less than 1km, and therefore development of whatever scale within the existing gap would result in unacceptable compromise in Green Belt functions, in particular in relation to the need to prevent towns from merging. In terms of visual intrusion, the strategic gap is part of the sense of place when leaving London and entering the distinctive mix of villages, small towns and countryside north of the capital. The 2007 Local Plan Inspector drew attention to the importance of retaining the Green Belt at proposed sites included within this area of search.

4.13.2.3 In addition to the site-specific issues, it is also necessary to consider whether there are wider strategic concerns sufficient to provide the ‘exceptional circumstances’ necessary to justify Green Belt release. The 69 Areas of Search Assessments have highlighted that there are a number of sequentially preferable locations within the district. Therefore any wider strategic housing needs would be directed to other locations in preference to North of Hoddesdon. Therefore Green Belt Review in this location is not merited, either based on the initial planning assumption of 1,500 dwellings or on a revised assumption of fewer than 1,500 dwellings. Development of any scale in this location should be resisted.

Conclusions and Next Steps

4.13.2.4 It is not considered necessary to undertake further assessment of this location as part of the strategic plan-making process.

4.13.2.5 The strategic gap should continue to play an essential part in the development strategy for East Herts.

Area 63: North of Hoddesdon

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for North of Hoddesdon. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 63	Sieve 1
1,500 dwellings	Fail
Fewer than 1,500 dwellings	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	No

Main Considerations: Failed due to intrusion into vital strategic gap between Hoddesdon/Broxbourne Borough and East Herts settlements.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.13.3 Hoddesdon: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

4.13.3.1 The Sieve 1 assessment for *Area 63: North of Hoddesdon* concluded that development of this important strategic gap between Hoddesdon and Ware should be maintained, and that development in this area is not acceptable. This concern was echoed by Broxbourne Council in its feedback to the East Herts Issues and Options consultation: *“Our respective councils should choose development locations which do not cause coalescence between settlements. This is particularly applicable to Hoddesdon and villages close to the border such as Amwell, Hertford Heath and St Margarets. Our Pre-Submission Core Strategy identifies land to the west of Hoddesdon as an Area of Search and indicates that a forthcoming Site Allocation DPD will determine which roads or landforms could form defensible new green belt boundaries.”*

4.13.3.2 Given the clarity in respect of the strategic gap issue and agreement between the two Councils, it is not proposed to undertake a more detailed evaluation of Hoddesdon in Sieve 2. It is considered that there is sufficient evidence to reject development in Area 63: North of Hoddesdon.

Next Steps

4.13.3.3 Further consideration of the important linkages between settlements in the Borough of Broxbourne and East Herts District on the wider strategy will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6. This is likely to include the following:

- Broxbourne Borough’s objectively assessed housing need;
- the economic geography of the sub-region;
- traffic impacts on the A10;
- impact on the European Site at Broxbourne Woods.

Hoddesdon: Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for Hoddesdon. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Hoddesdon	Sieve 2
Scenario Description	Development in the strategic gap north of Hoddesdon
Sieve 2 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	No

Main Considerations: Agreement between Broxbourne and East Herts Councils in respect of unacceptable intrusion into strategic gap at Area 63: North of Hoddesdon. Further consideration of Broxbourne/Hoddesdon to relate to wider strategic concerns including transport, economy, and environment. Also consider NPPF requirements including Duty to Co-operate, and unmet needs of nearby Local Planning Authorities.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

4.14 New Settlements

This section presents Sieves 1 and 2 in relation to New Settlements. Please refer to Section 4.3 for an explanation of these sieves and an interpretation of the 'Pass/Marginal Pass/Marginal Fail/Fail' rating system.

4.14.1 Areas of Search

4.14.1.1 The Areas of Search are shown below.

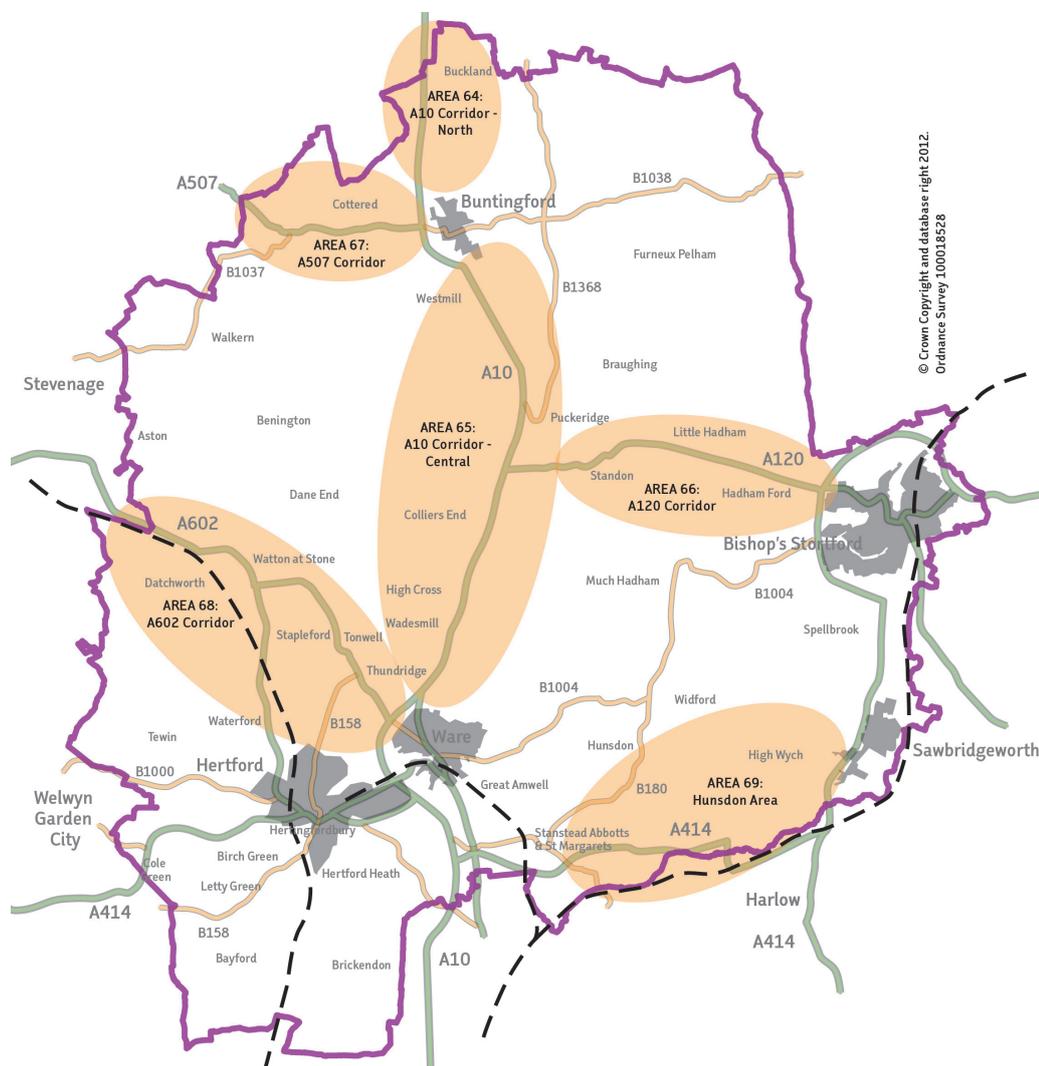


Figure 4.14 New Settlements Areas of Search

4.14.1.2 To enable an initial round of assessment to be undertaken, the Sieve 1 assessments are based on notional Areas of Search. The outer edges of the Areas of Search for the New Settlements are as follows:

- **Area 64 - A10 Corridor - North:**
Indicative area encompassing transport corridor

- **Area 65 - A10 Corridor - Central:**
Indicative area encompassing transport corridor
- **Area 66 - A120 Corridor:**
Indicative area encompassing transport corridor
- **Area 67 - A507 Corridor:**
Indicative area encompassing transport corridor
- **Area 68 - A602 Corridor:**
Indicative area encompassing transport corridor
- **Area 69 - Hunsdon Area:**
Indicative area encompassing whole area

4.14.2 A10 Corridor - North (Sieve 1: Area 64)

4.14.2.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 64 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Landscape Character; Boundary Limits; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Highways Infrastructure; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Community Facilities; Minerals and Waste Designations.

4.14.2.2 The infrastructure requirements and implications of developing a new settlement in this location are prohibitively difficult compared to other locations in the district. Given the distance from major settlements even a development of this scale would be unlikely to facilitate viable bus services and connecting roads are single carriageway only. Should the area be served by a new railway line then it would be more viable for a range of uses necessary for a sustainable community. However, it is not anticipated that new railway infrastructure would be forthcoming within the plan period. What would be more prohibitive are issues relating to waste water infrastructure and land assembly. There are currently no known sites large enough to accommodate a new settlement or large-scale development. This would impact on deliverability. There is no existing waste water infrastructure in the area and the River Rib would not have the capacity

to accommodate the discharge from a waste treatment works serving a settlement of this size. Major engineering works would be needed to connect to a suitable discharge point.

- 4.14.2.3** A new settlement would be expected to provide for its own needs in terms of community facilities and various design tools could enable such a new settlement to sit comfortably within a virgin landscape. The initial screening for new settlements indicated that the Area of Search would be reasonably well connected to Cambridge and London via the A10. However in terms of connections to nearby settlements, Buntingford and Royston (in North Herts), these are both small market towns with Royston benefiting from a rail connection and bypass. However, these towns are not higher order centres and therefore the ability to create and sustain passenger transport networks, sustainable access and shared services are reduced.
- 4.14.2.4** A new settlement would not fund a new rail connection of the required scale, nor adequate bus services given the distance of the corridor to existing services. Therefore, the new settlement would generate an over-reliance on private transport, particularly for those travelling beyond the new settlement. It would be expected that the majority of this traffic would occur on the A10 through the district. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) undertaken for the Core Strategy Issues and Options indicated that substantial increases of additional vehicle movements within the A10 corridor could have cumulative impacts on Wildlife Sites of European importance. There may also be an impact on Plashes Wood SSSI, which lays adjacent to the A10 and is one of the largest SSSIs in the district.
- 4.14.2.5** The majority of the land in this Area of Search is within Grade 2 Agricultural Land Classification, which is considered high quality versatile agricultural land, which not only has helped define the landscape but is an important part of the rural economy in this area. The landscape in this corridor is dominated by the river valleys of the River Rib and Quin tributaries, and their respective ridgelines. This may hinder the ability of a new settlement to fit within the landscape with a low visual impact.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.14.2.6** In order to assess the suitability of a new settlement in this Area of Search, further assessments would be needed into the possible impact on environmental and historic assets. Technical assessments would also be needed on the waste water and highway networks and impacts on European Wildlife Sites (Habitats Regulations Assessment). However, given the lack of available land, the insurmountable waste water issues and probable impacts on sites of European, National and Local sites of environmental importance, the A10 Corridor - North Area of Search would not be an ideal location for a new settlement. On balance, it is considered

that the prohibitive costs of providing the range of infrastructure required for a development of this scale would make this option unviable within the plan period.

Area 64: A10 Corridor - North

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the A10 Corridor - North. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 64	Sieve 1
5,000 dwellings	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Failed due to the lack of waste water infrastructure, the lack of rail infrastructure and the potential environmental implications of increasing vehicle movements along the A10.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.14.3 A10 Corridor - Central (Sieve 1: Area 65)

- 4.14.3.1** This section comprises an evaluation of Area 65 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Vehicular Access; Waste Water Impact; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Noise Impacts.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.

- 4.14.3.2** Because this Area of Search is so vast it would be possible to find a location within the area to locate a development of 5,000 dwellings where it would have the least harm on the various environmental and landscape assets and historical constraints. What would possibly be more prohibitive are issues relating to waste water infrastructure and land assembly. There are currently no known sites large enough to accommodate a new settlement or large-scale development. This would impact on deliverability. The waste water network would be limited by the capacity of the River Rib to accommodate the discharge from a treatment works serving a settlement of this size.
- 4.14.3.3** Despite these constraints, this part of the A10 would be better connected to existing towns and settlements, and being located on the main transport corridors through the district (A10 to A120) would have good access by road. However, the lack of rail infrastructure north of Ware is a major disadvantage both for employment potential and for enabling sustainable communities.
- 4.14.3.4** A development of this scale would be expected to provide for its own needs in terms of education and community facilities. In terms of making the most of potential inter-connections with other settlements to enable sharing and competition, the southern half of the Area of Search would be better than the northern half. Alternatively, the existing settlements of Puckeridge and Standon could be expanded into a larger settlement, thus building upon existing services. Such a new settlement would be centrally located within the district, which in itself may be beneficial; it wouldn't necessarily need to be clustered with other settlements as it would serve a wider hinterland, acting as a stepping stone between larger settlements.
- 4.14.3.5** The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) undertaken for the Core Strategy Issues and Options indicated that substantial increases of additional vehicle movements within the A10 corridor could have cumulative impacts on Wildlife Sites of European importance. Therefore in order to assess this further a specific assessment should be undertaken into the potential impacts of a new settlement in the A10 corridor. Plashes Wood, which lays adjacent to the A10 is one of the largest SSSIs in the district. A new settlement in proximity to Plashes Wood is likely to have detrimental

impacts on the environmental quality of the woodland, particularly through increased vehicle movements and intensification of visitor numbers and domestic activity.

- 4.14.3.6** It should also be acknowledged that the A10 has capacity issues, albeit further south in the district, particularly through neighbouring Broxbourne Borough. The potential implications on highway capacity and congestion will also need to be taken in the form of transport modelling.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.14.3.7** In order to assess the suitability of a new settlement in this Area of Search, further assessments would be needed into the possible impact on environmental and historic assets. Technical assessments would also be needed on the waste water and highway networks and impacts on European Wildlife Sites (Habitats Regulations Assessment). However, given the lack of available land, the insurmountable waste water issues and probable impacts on sites of European, National and Local sites of environmental importance, the A10 Corridor - Central Area of Search would not be an ideal location for a new settlement.

Area 65: A10 Corridor - Central

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the A10 Corridor - Central. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 65	Sieve 1
5,000 dwellings	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Failed due to the lack of waste water infrastructure, the lack of rail infrastructure and the potential environmental implications of increasing vehicle movements along the A10 on the Plashes Wood SSSI.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.14.4 A120 Corridor (Sieve 1: Area 66)

4.14.4.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 66 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Landscape Character.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities.

4.14.4.2 The infrastructure requirements and implications of developing a new settlement in this location are prohibitively difficult compared to other locations in the district. There would be significant costs and engineering work required to both the road network and to provide a suitable method of waste water treatment. If a new settlement were located in this corridor it is likely that it would be centrally located. Whether this would enable bus services to be viable from Bishop’s Stortford or through settlements between Hertford and Bishop’s Stortford would need further assessment. If a new settlement in this corridor was served by a new railway line then it would be more viable for a range of uses necessary for a sustainable community. However, it is not anticipated that new railway infrastructure would be forthcoming within the plan period.

4.14.4.3 The landscape is dotted with a large number of small settlements which could be detrimentally affected by the proximity of a new large settlement and the intensification that inevitably occurs. At the same time these villages and hamlets could benefit from a new range of community facilities that would be provided in a new large settlement.

4.14.4.4 A new settlement would be expected to provide for its own needs in terms of community facilities and various design tools could enable such a new settlement to sit comfortably within a landscape. However, the landscape in this corridor is comparatively hilly, with many river valleys and ridgelines. This may hinder the ability of a new settlement to fit within the landscape with a low visual impact. Much of the land within this Area of Search is high quality versatile agricultural land, with many Entry Level Environmental Stewardship Schemes in place.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.14.4.5** On balance, it is considered that the prohibitive costs of providing the range of infrastructure required for a development of this scale would make this option unviable within the plan period.

Area 66: A120 Corridor

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the A120 Corridor. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 66	Sieve 1
5,000 dwellings	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Failed due to the lack of waste water infrastructure, the lack of road and rail infrastructure, the physical constraints of the local geography and the need to protect areas of high quality agricultural land.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.14.5 A507 Corridor (Sieve 1: Area 67)

4.14.5.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 67 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Vehicular Access; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Landscape Character; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Boundary Limits; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Designated Wildlife Sites; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Community Facilities.

4.14.5.2 The infrastructure requirements and implications of developing a new settlement in this location are prohibitively difficult compared to other locations in the district. There is no existing waste water infrastructure in the area and connecting roads are single carriageway only. Given the distance from major settlements even a development of this scale would be unlikely to facilitate viable bus services. Should the area be served by a new railway line then it would be more viable for a range of uses necessary for a sustainable community. However, it is not anticipated that new railway infrastructure would be forthcoming within the plan period.

4.14.5.3 A new settlement would be expected to provide for its own needs in terms of community facilities and various design tools could enable such a new settlement to sit comfortably within a virgin landscape. However, much of the land within this Area of Search is high quality versatile agricultural land, which not only has helped define the landscape but is an important part of the rural economy in this area. Whilst this Area of Search would be well connected to Buntingford, on a strategic scale, the area is too remote from major settlements to benefit from shared services. In some ways it would be better to enlarge Buntingford than to create a new settlement to the west of the town.

Conclusion and Next Steps

4.14.5.4 On balance, it is considered that the prohibitive costs of providing the range of infrastructure required for a development of this scale would make this option unviable within the plan period.

Area 67: A507 Corridor

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the A507 Corridor. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 67	Sieve 1
5,000 dwellings	Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	0
Sieve 1 Rating	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	No

Main Considerations:

Failed due to the lack of waste water infrastructure, the lack of road and rail infrastructure, the physical constraints of the local geography and the need to protect areas of high quality agricultural land.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.14.6 A602 Corridor (Sieve 1: Area 68)

4.14.6.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 68 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Land Availability; Vehicular Access; Designated Wildlife Sites; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Environmental Stewardship.
Amber	Topics: Employment Potential; Highways Infrastructure; Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Agricultural Land Classification; Noise Impacts.
Green	Topics: Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities.

- 4.14.6.2** A new settlement in this Area of Search would have more potential than most of the new settlement options in terms of infrastructure provision. The area is potentially well-served in terms of road and rail access, subject to local improvements. However, the A602 is single carriageway and therefore would need to be assessed in terms of its capacity. Further technical work would be required to assess the impact of a new settlement on waste water networks. A new sewage treatment work north of Watton-At-Stone could provide capacity for Stevenage. However, whether this would serve a new settlement is unlikely, as the discharge from the new settlement would be downstream of this location and would impact on the waste water network served by Rye Meads Treatment Works. The costs of a new treatment works would be very expensive which may impact on the viability of a new settlement.
- 4.14.6.3** Watton-At-Stone is one of the district's biggest villages, mainly because of the benefits brought by the railway line. It would in many ways be logical to expand the village into a new settlement. This would however significantly change the character of Watton-At-Stone. The village itself has a good range of facilities and services that could be supported if a new settlement enveloped or was near to the village.
- 4.14.6.4** A new settlement would be expected to provide for its own needs in terms of community facilities and various design tools could enable such a new settlement to sit comfortably within a landscape. However, the landscape in this corridor is dominated by the river valleys of the River Beane and the River Rib (both chalk streams), and their respective ridgelines. This may hinder the ability of a new settlement to fit within the landscape with a low visual impact.
- 4.14.6.5** One of the greatest areas of concern relating to a new settlement in this Area of Search is the potential impact on the sensitive chalk river environment and the high number of Local Wildlife Sites and woodlands located in the corridor. Much of the agricultural land within this Area of Search is also subject to Entry and Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Schemes. Hertfordshire Biological Records Office comments cite the chalk streams as being of international importance. The potential impact of a development of this scale on water quality through abstraction and waste water treatment would need further technical work.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.14.6.6** On balance, it is considered that the potential impact of a new settlement on the environmental assets and chalk streams in the area may outweigh the possible benefit of locating new development in this corridor and therefore warrants further assessment.

Area 68: A602 Corridor

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the A602 Corridor. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 68	Sieve 1
5,000 dwellings	Marginal Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	5,000
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Feasibility and financial viability of new waste water infrastructure and the potential implications of development on vulnerable chalk river environments and areas of wildlife importance.

Note: Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.14.7 Hunsdon Area (Sieve 1: Area 69)

4.14.7.1 This section comprises an evaluation of Area 69 based on the conclusions of the Topic Assessments contained in Appendix A.

Red	Topics: Highways Infrastructure; Vehicular Access; Designated Wildlife Sites; Agricultural Land Classification.
Amber	Topics: Access to Bus Services; Access to Rail Services; Waste Water Impact; Flood Risk; Historic Assets; Landscape Character; Green Belt; Strategic Gaps; Minerals and Waste Designations; Environmental Stewardship.
Green	Topics: Land Availability; Employment Potential; Primary Schools; Secondary/Middle Schools; Boundary Limits; Community Facilities; Noise Impacts.

- 4.14.7.2** This assessment has been undertaken separately from the Area of Search Assessment on land to the north of Harlow. Whilst the area may be similar, the issues are different. The principle of a new settlement is that it should be largely self-sustaining. It should contain homes and all facilities and services associated with a stand-alone settlement. An urban extension need not be completely stand-alone; rather it can compliment an existing settlement. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that a new settlement in the Hunsdon area would be located beyond the outer Green Belt boundary, with a reasonable separation between the new settlement and Harlow. The existing physical and man-made barriers along the River Stort and A414 prevent adequate connections being made to the higher order centre of Harlow. Whilst it is unlikely that a new railway line extension spur would be forthcoming, a new settlement would be expected to provide suitable bus services to the nearest stations.
- 4.14.7.3** A new settlement in this Area of Search would have more potential than most of the new settlement options in terms of infrastructure provision. However, existing congestion issues at the A414 Eastwick and Amwell roundabouts need to be considered along with the possible need for an M11 Link Road to serve a new settlement in this location. Overcoming highways infrastructure issues will be very costly. Further technical work would be required to assess the impact of a new settlement on waste water networks. Indications are that a new trunk sewer would be needed, which would be very expensive. However, upgrades within Harlow may make the cost of this more viable. The cumulative impact of a new development on Rye Meads Waste Treatment Works would need to be assessed.
- 4.14.7.4** The landscape in this corridor is divided on a north-south axis in several locations by watercourses. Despite this, the landscape is gently undulating rather than creased with valleys and ridges. There is more scope to accommodate a new settlement towards the north of the Hunsdon Area of Search in landscape terms. There is a large amount of land available under different ownerships. However, this available land may not be in the most appropriate location should a new settlement be located within this area. Further assessments into land availability may need to be undertaken. Subject to the location of any new settlement, there may be implications in terms of coalescence of smaller existing settlements that would need to be considered.
- 4.14.7.5** One of the greatest areas of concern relating to a new settlement in this Area of Search is the potential impact on the nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest at Hunsdon Meads, Rye Meads and Amwell Quarry, a local nature reserve at Harlow Marsh and several Local Wildlife Sites. Much of the agricultural land within this Area of Search is also subject to Entry and Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Schemes. Hertfordshire Biological Records Office indicate that the Hunsdon area is an important habitat for bats and the wider area surrounding the Ramsar Sites and SSSIs will be important for birds. The majority of land is Grade 2 Agricultural

Classification. Further assessments would be needed to ensure the most versatile high quality agricultural land was avoided should development take place.

- 4.14.7.6** Whilst a new settlement would be expected to provide for its own needs in terms of community facilities, retail and employment, given the proximity of a new settlement in this area to both Harlow and the smaller towns of Ware, Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets and Sawbridgeworth, it would be expected that a new settlement would not be completely self-sufficient. The drawback to this is that a new settlement this close to Harlow would in effect draw investment away from Harlow, thus undermining the regeneration plans of Harlow. It could act as a new centre of gravity, resulting in a northward shift of activity and investment in the larger town, leaving existing southern areas of Harlow on the periphery.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 4.14.7.7** On balance, it is considered that the environmental concerns could outweigh the benefits of locating a new settlement in this corridor. Further assessments would be needed.

Area 69: Hunsdon Area

The table below summarises the outcomes of *Sieve 1: Area Assessments* for the Hunsdon Area. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

Area 69	Sieve 1
5,000 dwellings	Marginal Fail
Sieve 1 Figure	5,000
Sieve 1 Rating	Marginal Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 2?	Yes

Main Considerations:

Feasibility and financial viability of an M11 link road and rail connections and potential implications of development on sites of environmental importance along the Stort Valley.

Notes: Areas 62: North of Harlow and 69: Hunsdon Area address different levels of development in a similar broad geographical location. There is overlap between the issues at both areas, but these are not necessarily repeated because both assessments will be considered together through the strategy selection process. Sieve 1 is the first of five rounds of assessment. Therefore the Sieve 1 figure is interim at this stage, and may or may not become part of the final strategy, depending on the remaining four rounds of assessment.

4.14.8 New Settlements: Settlement Evaluation (Sieve 2)

- 4.14.8.1** There are many benefits of planning a new settlement instead of expanding existing towns and villages. New technology can be applied and be built-in to designs, enabling properties to be less dependent upon finite fuel resources. Ground-source heating, combined heat and power plants, biomass, solar energy, wind energy, grey water recycling and onsite waste water treatment schemes are all more viable when factored in at the design stage and at this scale. Lessons learned from previous new settlement planning examples can also be put into practice. Settlements can be designed with modern living standards and activities in mind rather than trying to accommodate modern expectations in historic urban settings. New infrastructure can be planned for and built alongside residential properties rather than retro-fitting in constrained sites. Local food sources

can also be planned in, with the added advantage that locally sourced food increases consumer awareness of the product and increased respect for the environment that provides it. But for all these benefits the decision to develop a new town is never an easy decision.

- 4.14.8.2** The NPPF and Localism Act both make provisions for new settlements but have a huge caveat: it must be something that the majority of the public support. Land assembly and the logistics of leadership and delivery is second to winning the support of the public for what is essentially a massive development project often on prime countryside. Nevertheless it is a decision that must be taken, whether now or in the future. Indications at this stage are that there are two options in planning for East Herts' housing needs: expand existing settlements or plan for a new urban extension or new settlement close to one of our neighbouring towns. If the former is the preferred option at this stage it is likely that the new settlement question will simply be deferred until the next plan period. In the mean time, the Council will still need to provide for the more immediate needs of the community. Indeed a District Plan which did not plan for the intervening housing needs on the basis of at least a fifteen-year land supply would not be found sound. If the latter is the preferred option, the planning stage of such a large enterprise takes a long time and would not result in any actual development on the ground until the later stages of the current plan period anyway.
- 4.14.8.3** In terms of delivery, the original Garden Cities were driven by private enterprises of passionate volunteers striving to fulfil the idealisms of Ebenezer Howard. By the time New Towns were being promoted new mechanisms for delivering a central government programme of housing such as Development Corporations were put in place. Today there are many more options available to ensure delivery, including the ability to borrow from the potential uplift in land value to finance development. There are a variety of options with regards to land ownership, land transfer, trusts and sharing of any profits, not to mention the negotiations between parties as to the responsibility of constructing non-profitable community facilities. The huge number of options inevitably causes many legal issues, all of which result in delays to the delivery of a scheme. As always one land ownership would make the delivery a lot easier. Such large scale developments carry a relatively high risk. The TCPA's report on *Garden Cities and Suburbs Today* (a Government backed report) suggests that local authorities should be prepared to act as co-developer with the private sector, and to allocate resources from its funding streams to underpin the project over the long term. As many local authorities are financially and resource constrained this may be a burden too far on top of an already unpopular proposal.
- 4.14.8.4** There has been a resurgence in popularity in the concept of new towns and garden cities and suburbs in recent years from politicians and their advisors. This resurgence is due to the increasing opposition to expanding

existing settlements to the detriment of their character and ability to function. Many studies advocate the many benefits of new settlement planning as already outlined. On a more local level however, there remains a high degree of opposition to the concept of covering more countryside in concrete. While many publicly agree with the need for more housing and services they are against having such development near to where they live. Part of the latest approach to managing these objections is by offering direct community benefits, essentially where local people most affected are offered an incentive to allow development. This can take several forms from financial contribution towards community facilities to discounts on Council Tax. The New Homes Bonus for example pays the local authority a contribution for facilitating development which can then be used to reduce the Council Tax burden on existing households. Community Infrastructure Levy is essentially a charge per new home built towards new or existing community facilities. Many of these payback schemes have been in place in some form for many years but are now seen as the easiest way to convince residents and local authorities to accept and enable new development.

- 4.14.8.5** The Government's localism ambitions are about giving local people power over their communities and reconnecting them with the planning process. The TCPA's report on *Garden Cities and Suburbs Today* states that "there must be much greater scope for input from the local community on planning proposals right from the beginning, while recognising that local champions and the spirit of collaboration are important in achieving a long-term goal. Despite much progress in this area, for comprehensively planned new communities there remains the common problem of how to engage a community which does not yet exist in consultations on proposed development." Despite there being no specific question in the consultation documents, the East Herts Issues and Options Consultation responses nonetheless revealed that there was a degree of public support for the principle of a new settlement in the right location. Section 4.2 of the Draft Supporting Document explains how these responses have resulted in the consideration of new settlements as part of the development strategy.
- 4.14.8.6** Paragraph 52 of the NPPF endorses this approach: "*The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities. Working with the support of their communities, local planning authorities should consider whether such opportunities provide the best way of achieving sustainable development. In doing so, they should consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining any such new development.*"
- 4.14.8.7** The most recent studies which have specific regard to new settlements with reference to Hertfordshire and East Herts are all pre-dating the notice to revoke regional spatial strategies. Despite this the fundamental principles set out in these studies are still relevant. The Regional Scale Settlement

Study 2009 identifies a demand and justification for a new settlement of a regional scale in the eastern region but discounts much of Hertfordshire. It draws upon the benefits of Stansted Airport and major infrastructure to the south, west and east of East Herts but categorically states that there are no suitable locations for a regional scale development of 20,000 new homes within East Herts. However, being written while the RSS was still in place, the study refers to the North of Harlow, praising the location as being suitable for 10,000 dwellings due to the excellent infrastructure around the town. For East Herts, this was the most significant suggestion from the study.

- 4.14.8.8** This option of constructing an urban extension to the north of Harlow is explored further in the Area 62: North of Harlow Evaluation which states: *“Given the width of the Stort Valley, a minimum of 10,000 new dwellings would be required in order to ensure that development to the north could be successfully integrated with the town. This would facilitate the northwards expansion of the town centre, and the provision of new bridges to integrate both sides of the valley around the Stort as a central Green Infrastructure feature. Such a proposal would put Harlow Town station at the centre of the expanded town, rather than along the northern edge as at present.”*
- 4.14.8.9** The evaluation discounts the option of a smaller quantum of development: *“Lower levels of development to the north would be unlikely to command sufficient financial leverage to deliver these objectives, and would be highly likely to result in an isolated strip of development with no coherent relationship to Harlow or to settlements in East Herts. This scenario would therefore be likely to result in a satellite settlement with a separate, competing centre to the north, or no proper centre and therefore lacking in the full mix of uses which would be expected of any major development proposals...It should be noted that a satellite settlement would not contribute to Harlow Council’s aims for the regeneration of Harlow.”*
- 4.14.8.10** However, whilst the regeneration needs of Harlow are a consideration, the needs of East Herts must primarily be addressed in the East Herts District Plan. The North of Harlow Evaluation does not make a judgement as to the principle or indeed the suitability of development in this location as this should only be done after the development strategy options for the entire district have been objectively assessed. Similarly it would be inappropriate to discount a new settlement as an alternative option until all scenarios have been assessed.
- 4.14.8.11** Of the five Areas of Search identified as having some merit for consideration for a new settlement, the A602 corridor and the Hunsdon Area were the two options recognised as having some potential. That these two options have some merit raises the need to assess the option of a new settlement in more detail.

- 4.14.8.12** As indicated above, a key issue surrounding new settlements is that of delivery, one aspect of which is whether there is sufficient land available for such a proposal. Investigations suggest that there are no land owners within the A602 Corridor with an expressed desire to release land for development within the plan period, effectively discounting this option from further consideration in the strategy.
- 4.14.8.13** The Hunsdon Area of Search however, has more than sufficient land available (as proposed in the Call for Sites exercise) with a number of landowners willing to support development of some form. There are some potential conflicts however as these landowners may have their own preferred approach and some negotiations may be needed to enable development. As already indicated a smaller quantum of development in the Hunsdon Area of Search, removed from Harlow, would result in a separate settlement that would not assist in the regeneration of Harlow. However, a new settlement in this location, if well planned and integrated with existing infrastructure may provide suitable facilities for both a new community and existing communities nearby. The vision of creating a self-contained community is not realistic in this location and indeed in this age. The Garden Cities and New Towns espoused the ideal of working in the town within which you reside. This is no longer a realistic expectation, nor achievable ideal and should therefore not be considered a reason not to explore the potential benefits of a new settlement in East Herts.
- 4.14.8.14** As such it is considered appropriate to carry forward an option of a new settlement in the Hunsdon Area of Search through to Sieve 3.

New Settlements : Sieve 2 Conclusions

The table below summarises the outcomes of Sieve 2: Settlement Evaluations for New Settlements. Explanation of the assessment methodology is provided in Section 4.3.

New Settlements	Scenario A	Scenario B
Scenario Description	5,000 dwellings at the Hunsdon Area	New settlement in the A602 Corridor
Sieve 2 Rating	Marginal Fail	Fail
Carried forward to Sieve 3?	Yes	No

Main Considerations:

Scenario A: Feasibility and viability of supporting infrastructure and potential implications on landscape and environmental assets. If suitable alternative growth locations cannot be identified elsewhere within the district, then large-scale development, whether as an urban extension north of Harlow or a free-standing new settlement, could be needed in order to comply with NPPF requirements to meet objectively assessed housing need, including unmet needs of adjoining areas.

Scenario B: Fails due to the lack of land availability affecting potential deliverability within the plan period. Given the balance of considerations, there are other locations elsewhere in the district which would be preferable within the twenty-year plan period.

Note: The Sieve 2 conclusions are interim findings. A further three Sieves will be undertaken in Chapters 5 and 6 to assess the impact of combinations of options in different locations within and beyond East Herts District, assessing compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and various other tasks as explained in the Stepped Approach (Section 1.7). The findings of the Sieve 2 are therefore part of an on-going assessment process, and will need to be considered alongside the findings of subsequent rounds of assessment before a strategy can be proposed.

