ABBOTS LANGLEY PARISH COUNCIL

ABBOTS LANGLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2025 TO 2041



Updated December 2026

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5

2. INTRODUCTION 8

National policy 10

Local Policy 11

Key stages on how the Plan has been prepared 13

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan 15

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES 16

Introduction 16

Issues for the Neighbourhood Plan Area 16

Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan 18

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives 19

4. AN INTRODUCTION TO ABBOTS LANGLEY PARISH 20

Geography 20

A brief history of the parish 21

The Parish of Abbots Langley today 23

5. SPATIAL STRATEGY 27

Local Factors affecting new development 27

Policy AL1: Spatial Strategy: Location and scale of development 29

6. HOUSING 32

Policy AL2: Housing mix 32

7. LOCAL CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND DESIGN 35

Policy AL3: Character of development 35

Policy AL4: Design of development 43

Policy AL5: Environmentally sustainable design 45

Policy AL6: Heritage assets 48

8. LOCAL ECONOMY 52

Policy AL7: Retaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Abbots Langley village centre and other local centres 52

Policy AL8: Supporting recreation and sustainable tourism 57

Policy AL9: A safe, attractive and welcoming village centre 59

9. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT 60

Policy AL10: Natural landscape and environment 60
Policy AL11: Green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity net gain 64
Policy AL12: Locally significant views 69
Policy AL13: Local Green Space 72

10. LEISURE AND COMMUNITY 77
Policy AL14: Provide, maintain and improve public facilities for the community 78
Policy AL15: Allotments and community growing spaces 80
Policy AL16: Protection of public houses 83
Policy AL17: Safeguard and expand existing health services 84
Policy AL18: Safeguard and expand existing education provision 86

11. TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT 88
Policy AL19: Sustainable travel 89
Policy AL20: Public parking 95

12. ASPIRATIONAL PROJECTS 97
Aspirational development sites 97

13. IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW 109

14. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION 110

15. POLICIES MAPS 111

16. COMMUNITY STATEMENTS (ASPIRATIONAL) AND LOCAL FACILITIES 118

17. NON-POLICY COMMUNITY ACTIONS 131

18. GLOSSARY 133

19. EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS 136

APPENDICES (STORED AS SEPARATE DOCUMENTS FOR SIZE PURPOSES)

APPENDIX A: PROFILE OF ABBOTS LANGLEY PARISH
APPENDIX B: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS ANALYSIS
APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC COMMENTS VIA ABBOTS LANGLEY COMMONPLACE WEB SITE
APPENDIX D: ABBOTS LANGLEY HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT
APPENDIX E: ABBOTS LANGLEY DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES
APPENDIX F: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS
APPENDIX G: LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS AND LOCAL GREEN SPACES
APPENDIX H: ABBOTS LANGLEY VILLAGE CENTRE MASTERPLAN
APPENDIX I: ASPIRATIONS FOR BEDMOND

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map showing the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Area, which aligns with the parish boundary 6
Figure 2: Cover of the ALNP leaflet 7
Figure 3: Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan Boundary 9
Figure 4: The UK Challenge of meeting its Carbon Emission Targets 11
Figure 5: Current Green Belt land in the Parish of Abbots Langley, 2024 12
Figure 6: Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan Commonplace website 16
Figure 7: Green Belt around Abbots Langley 20
Figure 8: Abbots Langley circa 1904 21
Figure 9: Adopted settlement boundaries within the Parish of Abbots Langley 31
Figure 10: Location of the fourteen main settlement areas in the Parish of Abbots Langley 37
Figure 11: Heritage assets and designations in the neighbourhood area 38
Figure 12: Character Areas in Abbots Langley Parish 42
Figure 13: Map showing the location of the Holy Well 50
Figure 14: Local Character Areas 62
Figure 15: Map of local green and blue infrastructure in the parish of Abbots Langley 68
Figure 16: Map of locally significant views in the Parish of Abbots Langley 71
Figure 17: Local Green Spaces (1 to 4) 74
Figure 18: Local Green Spaces (5-17) 74
Figure 19: Green and Blue Infrastructure Map from the AECOM Design Guidance and Code for Abbots Langley Parish 75
Figure 20: Designated 'Open Spaces' in the Parish of Abbots Langley 76
Figure 21: Plan of Leavesden Country Park and key of its many facilities 79
Figure 22: Designated allotments in the Parish of Abbots Langley 82
Figure 23: Public rights of way, bus stops and public car parks in the parish of Abbots Langley 91
Figure 24: Proposed strategic and local cycle routes for the Parish of Abbots Langley 92
Figure 25: Public car parks in the parish 96
Figure 26: Policies map - Parish-wide 112
Figure 27: Policies map - north of the Parish 113
Figure 28: Policies map - south west of the Parish 114
Figure 29: Policies map - south east of the Parish 115
Figure 30: Policies map - Abbots Langley village 116
Figure 31: Policies Map - Bedmond 117
Figure 32: Character areas map 119
Figure 33: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Bedmond 120
Figure 34: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Roman Gardens 121
Figure 35: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Abbotswood Park 122
Figure 36: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Leavesden 123
Figure 37: Local Catchment Map for Key facilities in Boundary Way 124
Figure 38: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities for Coates Way and Bucknalls Lane 125
Figure 39: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Hunton Bridge and Langleybury 126

TABLES

Table 1: Summary of local engagement activity 14
Table 2: Recommended housing mix for the Housing Market Area 33
Table 3: Adjusted modelled mix of housing by size and tenure – Three Rivers 33
Table 4: Summary of the Character Areas of Abbots Langley Parish 39
Table 5: Non-Policy Community Actions 131

ABBREVIATIONS

ALNP The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan
ALPC Abbots Langley Parish Council
CIL Community Infrastructure Levy
DMSH Discounted Market Sale Housing
LHNA Local Housing Need Assessment
NP Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF National Planning Policy Framework.
NSALG The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
OAN Objectively Assessed Need (for housing)
SHMA Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SuDS Sustainable Drainage Systems
TRDC Three Rivers District Council

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group: Cllr Sara Bedford, Cllr Elizabeth Burns , Cllr Jane Lay, Cllr Alex Michaels (until March 2018), Cllr Robin Powell, Cllr Owen Roe, Cllr Jon Tankard, Gwendolyn Ball, Anne-Marie Fanton (until September 2017), Tony Gott (until August 2016), Brenda Kersey, Bruce Prochnik, Jan Smith, Peter Warman (Chair).
Clerk to the Parish: Tim Perkins (until September 2021), Isabel Montesdeoca (from September 2021)
Neighbourhood Planning Consultant: Alison Eardley, https://www.yourfriendlyplanner.co.uk/
Special Projects Consultancy: AECOM

CLARIFICATION REGARDING THE SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

'In planning terms, Abbots Langley (the settlement) is defined within the Settlement Hierarchy of the Adopted Local Plan as a “Key Centre”. It is not defined as a “village”, which is a separate category of settlement. The Regulation 19 Local Plan (emerging) proposes to amend the Settlement Hierarchy and classifies Abbots Langley as a “Small Town/Large Suburban Settlement”. Any reference to the term “Village” within the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan should therefore be understood as reflecting the way in which the community identifies with and describes the settlement, rather than as a reference to its formal planning designation.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan ('ALNP') covers the period from 2025 to 2041. On 18 November 2014, Three Rivers District Council, the local planning authority, designated the area for the plan to be the whole of the civil parish of Abbots Langley (*Figure 1*). A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, comprising residents and Parish Councillors, has guided the preparation of the Plan. In consultation with the community, this Group established the vision for the future of Abbots Langley and how this vision can be realised through planning local land uses over the period of the plan.

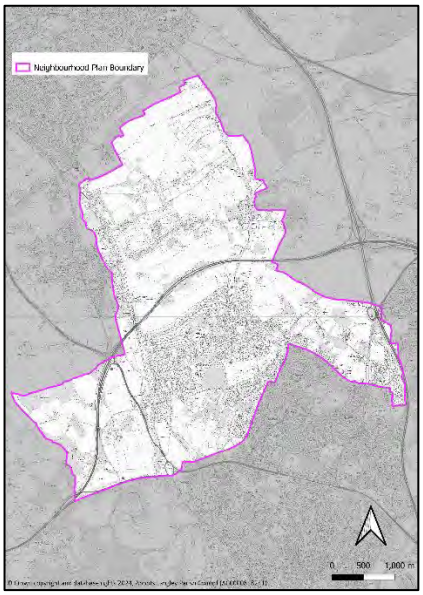
1.2. **Chapter Two** explains the planning context for the development of the ALNP and the key stages followed in its preparation.

1.3. **Chapter Three** explains the 2041 Vision for Abbots Langley with eight objectives to achieve this Vision Statement. These objectives are associated with:

1. Meeting local housing needs with the main focus on affordable housing.
2. Ensuring new development is good quality and sustainable.
3. Strengthening the local economy, including local retail and tourism appeal.
4. Protecting both the historic and environmental assets of the Parish, particularly its biodiversity, open spaces and Metropolitan Green Belt.
5. Ensuring the provision of sufficient school places, primary health facilities and mental health care services to match the needs of local residents.
6. Improving the provision of sustainable transport and assist in the transition away from the use of fossil fuel to electrically powered and hydrogen powered transport.
7. Exploring the potential for viable, locally based renewable energy projects.
8. Encouraging the production of local food including local farms, horticulture, community projects and private gardens/allotments.

1.4. **Chapter Four** describes the profile of the Parish with its varied communities. Abbots Langley is located in southwest Hertfordshire, in the northern part of the Three Rivers District. The area is situated between Watford, Hemel Hempstead, and St Albans. The Parish comprises the main village of Abbots Langley as well about thirteen other distinct communities within the boundary. The 2021 resident population is of the order of 22,000 living in about 8,800 dwellings (2021 Census).

Figure 1: Map showing the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Area, which aligns with the parish boundary



1.5. The process of producing the ALNP has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topics included in ALNP are matters found to be of importance to local residents, businesses and community groups. The ALNP Steering Group set up a Commonplace website in June 2015 as one of the processes to capture the views from local people about the area and how it should develop in the future. A leaflet explaining the work and how to access this website was distributed to every household in the Parish (*Figure 2*). There were a number of exhibitions and published articles to encourage public involvement in the ALNP.

1.6. There have been human settlements in the area for over 2,000 years. There are well-documented accounts of the physical and social changes that have occurred over the centuries. Significant changes have continued to take place in the last 20 years. These include the introduction of modern commercial industries such as Warner Bros. Studios, Imagination Technologies, RES (a renewal energy company) and other new businesses along the Gade Valley. Houses built in the Parish between 2000 and 2016 numbered 1,439 new dwellings, which is at least 50% of all new houses built in the Three Rivers District during this period. The Parish is less than a quarter of the land area of the District. As confirmed by the 2021 Census data, the Parish population has increased by 25% in the last 20 years, a significantly higher increase than in the surrounding areas.

1.7. Local residents believe that no major future new housing should be planned in the Parish until the capacity of its local public services associated with education, local health/social services and local transport networks are increased to meet adequately the current and any planned future demand. The local community places a high value on the area's designated open spaces and Metropolitan Green Belt land within the Parish. They do not want this land to be lost to development. However, there are undeveloped sites under consideration by the District Council for new housing in Abbots Langley that are located within designated Metropolitan Green Belt land. Also, development in the Parish must take into account the

impact of Climate Change, Brexit and the legacy of Covid-19 and make investments for the required adjustments in lifestyles and enhancing biodiversity.

1.8. **Chapter Five** provides the overview for the Spatial Strategy for the Parish and the location for any new development taking particular account of factors influenced by Climate Change. **Chapters Six to Eleven** explain the main policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. These chapters cover the key topics of housing, building design, preservation of buildings, stimulating the local economy, enhancing the natural environment, improving biodiversity, providing leisure facilities, fostering resilient communities, meeting healthcare needs, education provision, and providing sustainable local transport facilities.

1.9. **Chapter Twelve** suggests some Aspirational Projects of Interest to particular communities. **Chapter Thirteen** reviews the implementation process of the ALNP and the need for periodic reviews. **Chapter Fourteen** explains the possible investment priorities following from funds coming to the area as a result of levies placed on new development projects in the Parish. **Chapter Fifteen** shows the policies spatially on local area maps. **Chapter Seventeen** lists other Non-Policy Actions arising from the ALNP. A Glossary is provided in **Chapter Eighteen.** Background material for the ALNP is provided in a separate **Appendices Report** and in the assembled **Evidence Base**. The index for this material is provided in **Chapter Nineteen**.

1.10. **NOTE:** The informal Consultative Draft of ALNP was published in April 2021. This was followed by an informal six-month consultation programme with local residents and businesses. Two public exhibitions were held in the Abbots Langley Village and Bedmond in July and August 2021. The ALNP was revised in response to the feedback from the public.

1.11. This revised version was discussed and finalised by the Parish Councillors, the Parish Council being the Qualifying Body, in 2024.

1.12. The Three Rivers District Council published their Preferred Policy Options and Sites for Potential Allocation for their emerging Local Plan in Summer 2021 and held their Regulation 18 public consultation from 11 June to 20 August 2021. Due to the high number of public responses (20,000), the Council made amendments and consulted on the "Regulation Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation Part 4: Three Rivers' Preferred Local Plan Lower Housing Growth Option - Protecting More Green Belt Land" between September and October 2023.

Figure 2: Cover of the ALNP leaflet



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. This document is the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan (ALNP) for the parish of Abbots Langley. It represents one part of the Local Plan for the parish over the period 2025 to 2041, the other parts being the Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011, the Site Allocations Local Development document 2014, and the Three Rivers Development Management Plan 2013. Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) is in the process of developing a new Local Plan, which will set out a development strategy for the district up to 2041.

2.2. As the local planning authority, TRDC designated a Neighbourhood Area sharing its boundary with the Parish of Abbots Langley on 18 November 2014. A Steering Group, comprising local residents and councillors, has guided the process locally.

2.3. The Plan is being prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The Steering Group has prepared the Plan to establish a vision and framework for the future of Abbots Langley and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning land use and development change over the plan period 2025 to 2041, to align with the timescales of the new Local Plan.

2.4. The purpose of the ALNP is to structure development within the parish and provide guidance to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within the parish. The process of producing the ALNP has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to residents, businesses and community groups.

2.5. Each section of the ALNP covers a different topic. Under each heading, the policies themselves are presented in the blue boxes. Beneath each policy, the Purpose of the policy is presented followed by the Justification, which provides the necessary understanding of the policy and what it is seeking to achieve. It is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text and evidence documents that have been compiled to underpin the Neighbourhood Plan (see Chapter 19).

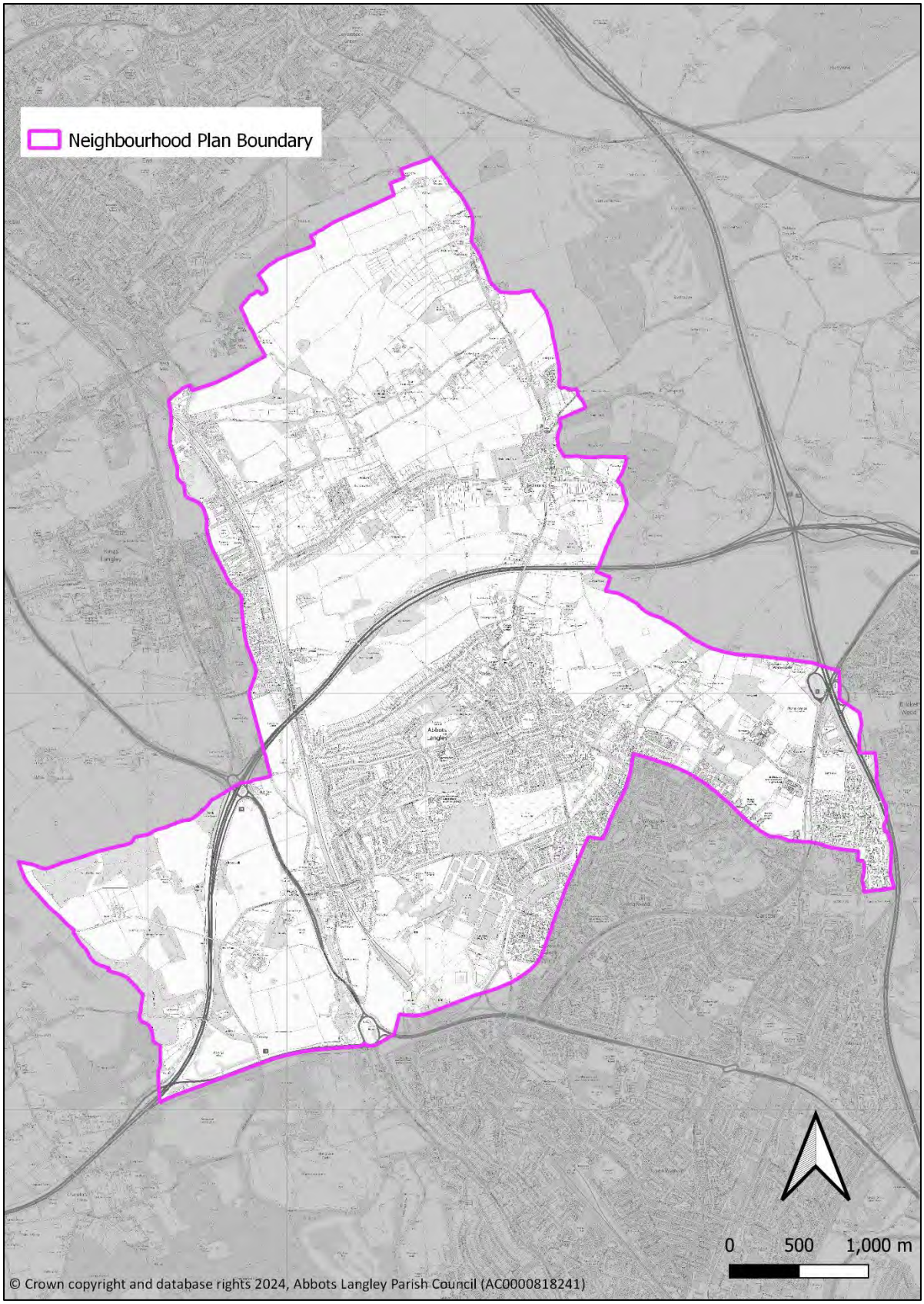
2.6. In addition to the policies, the Plan identifies a number of local needs and community aspirations that are not met through the planning system, but which are important to the well-being of the community. It is proposed that these projects will be met through community action supported by other organisations. The Plan also sets out the Community Infrastructure Priorities and a framework for monitoring and implementation.

2.7. *Figure 3* below shows the boundary of the ALNP designated area, which shares its boundary with the parish of Abbots Langley.

2.8. Throughout the document, examples of quotes taken from the comments received during the informal consultations are provided. Sources for these include the CommonPlace website, workshops and surveys.

2.9. The Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code is an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan, underpinning a number of the policies (see Appendix E).

Figure 3: Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan Boundary



National policy

2.10. The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.11. The NPPF was most recently updated in December 2024 and states:

"Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies. (para 29)

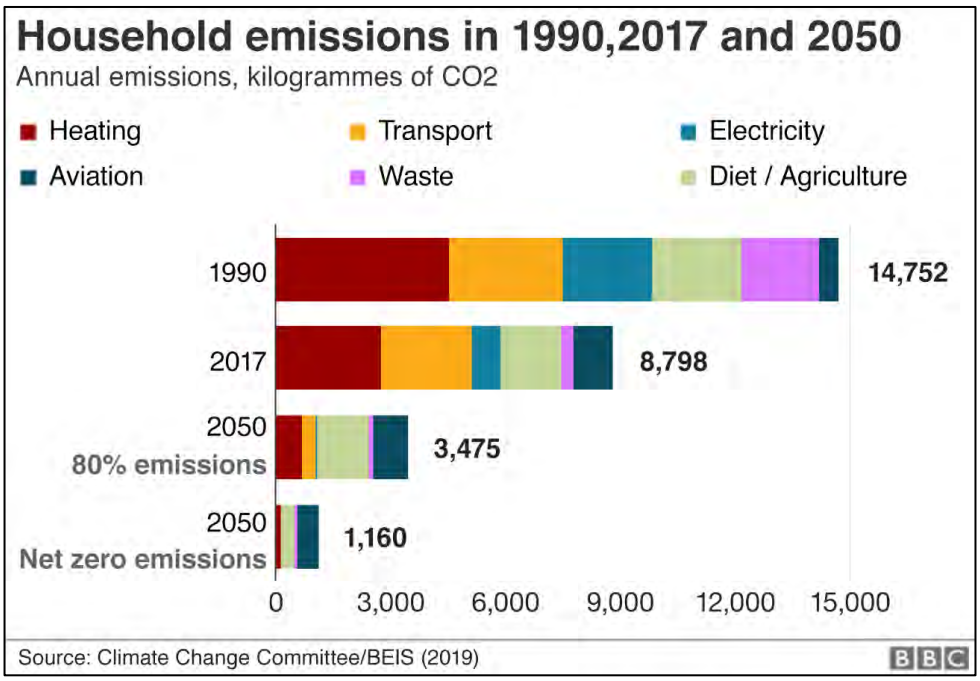
Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the Parish, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently". (para 30)

Climate Change and Emission Targets

2.12. In the UK Climate Change Act in 2008, MPs agreed that the UK should reduce 80% of its emission of greenhouse gases by 2050. In 2017, the government raised its target to "net zero" greenhouse gases by 2050. In 2021, the government announced its intention to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This means emissions from homes, transport, farming and industry will have to be avoided completely or - in the most difficult examples - offset by planting trees or sucking CO_2 out of the atmosphere. This latest target was recommended by the Government's Advisory Committee on Climate Change. Their report said, '*if other countries followed the UK, there was a 50-50 chance of staying below the recommended 1.5C temperature rise by 2100.' 'A 1.5C rise is considered the threshold for dangerous climate change.'*

2.13. Over 300 Local Authority Councils have followed the UK Government's June 2019 declaration of a Climate Emergency. Practical plans to meet the specified emissions target are under development; this includes local initiatives by Abbots Langley Parish Council, TRDC and Hertfordshire County Council. Policies and actions in this Neighbourhood Plan wish to comply with these new environmental standards. The challenges of reducing emissions are illustrated in *Figure 4*. Achieving such targets must be taken into account when considering the use of land in an area and energy use associated with any new infrastructure and built development.

Figure 4: The UK Challenge of meeting its Carbon Emission Targets



Local Policy

Adopted Local Plan

2.14. The Development Plan for Three Rivers comprises:

Three Rivers District Core Strategy 2011-2026, (adopted October 2011) and sets out key planning policies for the district.

Development Management Policies (adopted 2013)

Site Allocations Local Development Document (adopted 2014).

'Made' neighbourhood plans

Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016 (adopted 2007)

Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2011-2026 (adopted 2012)

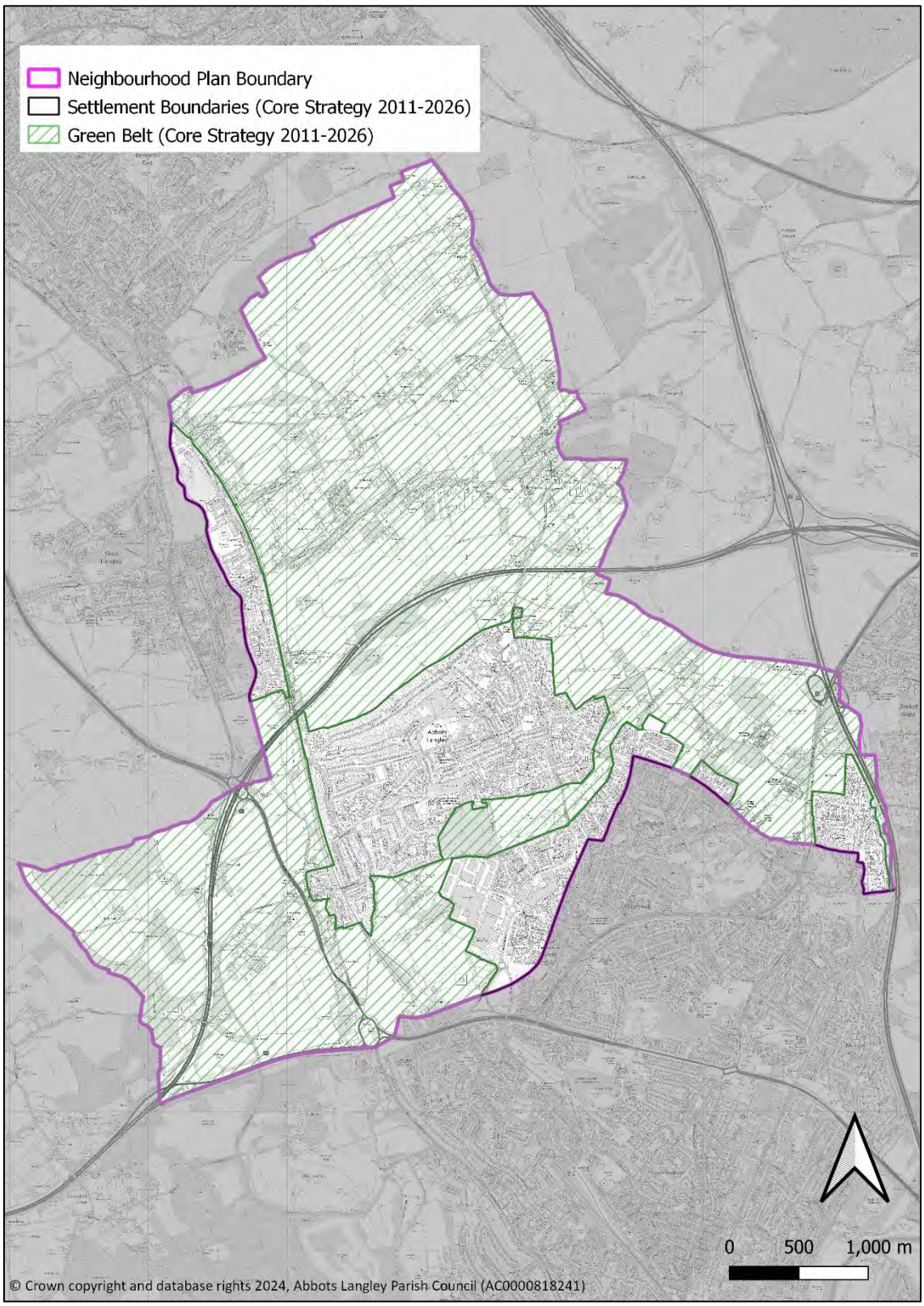
Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2011-2026 (adopted 2014)

2.15. The ALNP must conform to the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The Core Strategy (2011) seeks to deliver 4,500 new homes between 2001 and 2026 and provide an additional 2,378 jobs across the district. It states that approximately 60% of housing need will be delivered in the Key Centres as well as housing sites at the most sustainable locations on the edge of existing settlements in the Green Belt.

2.16. Four settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area are designated within the settlement hierarchy: Abbots Langley, Leavesden and Garston as Key Centres, and Bedmond as a Village. Settlements beyond these, such as Hunton Bridge, are not considered part of the formal settlement hierarchy.

2.17. As shown in *Figure 5,* most of the area lies in the Green Belt, including Bedmond village, which is washed over.

Figure 5: Current Green Belt land in the Parish of Abbots Langley, 2024



New Local Plan

2.18. A new Local Plan to 2041 is being prepared. The Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation Part 4: Three Rivers' Preferred Local Plan Lower Housing Growth Option - Protecting More Green Belt Land ran from 27 October to 10 December 2023. The new Local Plan seeks to deliver 4,852 new homes over the period to 2041. However, this projected housing figure is being reviewed again in light of a potential new National Government housing target for the District of 13,300 houses.

2.19. The latest Local Development Scheme (December 2024), suggests that the new Local Plan will be published for consultation at Regulation 19 in February/March 2026 although following the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting on 7 January 2025, Members have agreed that officers should aim to publish the Regulation 19 draft plan by 7 November 2025. Examination is scheduled for summer 2026 and adoption anticipated at the end of 2026. Work on the neighbourhood plan has been mindful of its emerging content.

2.20. **The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan is not seeking to allocate sites for housing, a position agreed with TRDC. An early review of the Neighbourhood Plan is anticipated following the adoption of the new Local Plan.**

Joint Strategic Plan

2.21. In Spring 2018, Three Rivers, Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans and Watford Councils gave formal endorsement to begin work on a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire. By working together, the South West Herts Councils will also be in a stronger position to deliver and better fund essential transport, health services and educational facilities that local people want to see alongside new homes and jobs.

2.22. Each Council will still be responsible for preparing its own Local Plan but the JSP will provide the platform to consider how the challenges of growth in the wider South West Hertfordshire area can be addressed in the longer term (i.e. to 2050).

Key stages on how the Plan has been prepared

2.23. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group comprised both individual members of the community and local councillors. The Group has developed the Neighbourhood Plan through extensive engagement with the community, summarised in *Table 1* below.

2.24. Meetings and liaison with TRDC have taken place on each of the topic areas covered by the Plan. In addition, regular updates have been provided by posting ALNP Bi-monthly Meeting Agendas and Bi-Monthly Progress Reports on the Parish Website since May 2016.

2.25. A Consultation Statement will be developed later in the process, to accompany the Submission Version (Regulation 16) Neighbourhood Plan as part of the ALNP submitted documentation; it will contain the full detail of what happened and how comments at various stages have been incorporated. A summary of the consultation received via the CommonPlace website is included in Appendix C. A fuller detail is provided in the Consultation Statement.

Table 1: Summary of local engagement activity

Date	Milestone	Key activity
2014	Parish Council decides to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan	Terms of Reference prepared Parish designated
2015	Hiatus in activity	
2016 to 2017	Initial community engagement to gather evidence on each topic Evidence base constructed	Steering Group established Contact made with TRDC for guidance and information NDP publicly launched Initial engagement including website, public exhibitions and presentations Database of business and community group created Database of public buildings compiled Parish Profile assembled
2017	Continued engagement and evidence collation	Leaflet to all households Information included in the My Abbots newsletter Public exhibitions Stakeholder meetings Surveys Aerial photos
2018	Key themes, vision and objectives identified	Commonplace feedback analysed to inform vision and objectives and topic areas AECOM commissioned to undertake Local Housing Needs Assessment
2019 to 2020	Informal draft Plan written	Informal engagement
2021	Public Consultation on the informal Draft Plan	AECOM commissioned to provide Building Design Guidelines and evaluation of valued features of each settlement in the parish. Focus Groups and exhibitions
2022	Village Centre Masterplan finalised	Village Centre masterplan prepared in consultation with the community SEA and HRA Screening prepared
2023 to 2026	Regulation 14 Consultation Regulation 16 consultation Examination Referendum	Regulation 14 Plan Plan finalised and submitted to TRDC Plan 'made'

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan

2.26. The ALNP has been screened to ascertain whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/ or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required. The screening document was subject to consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency for five weeks in early 2023.

2.27. The SEA and HRA Screening Determination Statement, published February 2023, has concluded that the ALNP is unlikely to have significant environmental impacts and does not require either a full SEA or HRA.

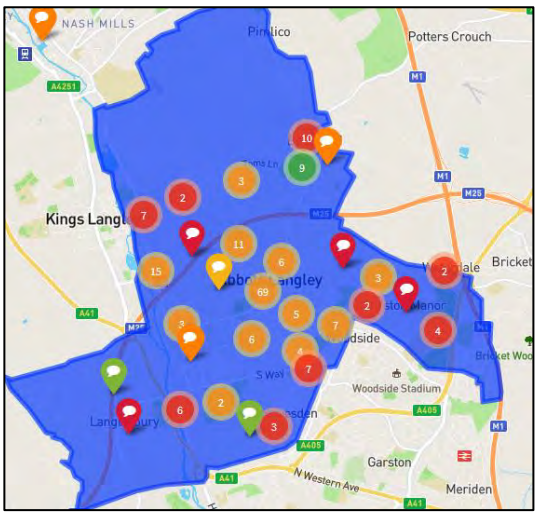
2.28. A copy of the Screening Determination letter and statement is available to view on the Parish Council website.

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

3.1. The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group set up a Commonplace website to capture views from local people about the area and how it should develop over the course of the next 15 to 20 years (*Figure 6*). Views were expressed during the period that the Neighbourhood Plan was under development and consultation. Overall, 297 comments had been received and 476 'reactions' (for instance where support is shown).

Figure 6: Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan Commonplace website



3.2. These comments were analysed by topic and shown on the Parish Council website in the section on the Neighbourhood Plan. These have been taken into account in developing planning objectives and policies. Relevant quotes from local residents have been used in this report to illustrate their views. A summary and analysis of all the comments is given in Appendix C and all the comments could be read on the Abbots Langley Commonplace website until it was closed in 2023.

Issues for the Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.3. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the communities of Abbots Langley. In summary these challenges are:

The majority of the parish lies within Green Belt. National planning policy now enables greater opportunities for Green Belt and Grey Belt developments, subject to criteria. The emerging Local Plan work indicates that changes to the Green Belt boundary would be required to accommodate the number of homes required across the strategic area. Proposed changes are particularly important in relation to Bedmond, which is currently washed over by Green Belt. There is strong support locally to retain the washed over status.

The parish has seen significant housing growth in recent years. A 25% increase in the parish population has occurred in the period 2001 to 2021. The strategic housing need for the district is set to increase, adding additional pressure for development. Any additional

housebuilding in the parish will need to be done in a way that protects the rural setting and historic character of the area and provides the additional facilities required, associated with healthcare and educational places. In addition, any new neighbourhoods will need to have measures incorporated to ensure their longevity, such as stewardship arrangements.

There is a high proportion of semi-detached properties, many of which are 2- to 3-bedrooms. Homes to attract growing families – including affordable homes – will be needed to continue to meet the needs of families attracted to the area and for local people. The design of new homes needs to be high quality, providing sufficient space for home-working and meeting sustainable environmental standards.

With larger retail centres nearby, it is important to retain the vibrancy of Abbots Langley village centre and ensure it continues to attract both residents and visitors. Equally, the role of the smaller, more local shopping areas in the parish needs to be sustained. Tourism is becoming increasingly important to the area and the impacts of this will need to be effectively managed.

Protecting the natural environment and its key features is of high importance. Equally the built heritage needs to be maintained.

Traffic congestion is fairly high at peak periods, exacerbated by the historic, originally narrow road layouts in the old parts of settlements, which are part of the valued local character in Abbots Langley. The ancient lanes, high levels of development locally, high car ownership, and HGV activity, added to the fact that the parish is situated between major transport routes and railway bridges, contribute to traffic congestion. Road safety has also been flagged as a major problem in some areas, which needs to be considered alongside the need to improve walking and cycling opportunities and infrastructure. The concentration of schools in the south-east part of the parish results in severe traffic congestion in this area, during the morning peak, disrupting other traffic movements on key routes in this area.

Maintaining and improving the range of community services and facilities is going to be important as the population continues to grow. A key priority for residents is access to healthcare and education. There is a need to safeguard the existing provision. Then expand provision to meet the increase in local population and provide a wider scope of health treatment services locally to reduce the dependence on hospitals.

There is also a need to ensure that provision of sports and recreational facilities aligns with anticipated future growth. These facilities can have a beneficial effect on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the community.

Out-of-area commuting to work is high in the parish, despite the presence of three multi-national companies. This could indicate a lack of starter units and low cost, flexible workspaces. Opportunities for home-working or working near home could be improved by the provision of local employment hubs with bookable desk-spaces. There is scope to expand the Warner Bros. site, which would enable greater numbers of jobs.

There is a lack of secondary school provision in the parish, although this largely sits outside the scope of the ALNP.

3.4. An analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats associated with the spatial planning and land use issues in the parish are given at the end of Appendix B.

Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

3.5. The following vision for Abbots Langley is proposed, which imagines what life in Abbots Langley will be like in 2041, having secured the policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan:

In 2041, Abbots Langley is a predominantly semi-rural parish, its main settlements surrounded by Green Belt. Abbots Langley Village itself is a thriving destination, capitalising on increasing numbers of visitors to the parish and providing a range of shopping and eating opportunities as well as leisure activities. The historic core remains, and new developments reflect the local character of the area to maintain the village feel with sufficient local facilities to meet the primary retail, healthcare, child education and leisure/sport activities for local residents. The Abbots Langley Village Centre has been improved following proposals in the Masterplan.

Visitors are attracted by the continued presence of the Warner Bros. Studios, which has been expanded to provide additional facilities and opportunities for local employment. Additionally, the regeneration along the Grand Union Canal has encouraged more canal traffic, and increased footfall in the village centre.

The development of smaller and more affordable properties, in-keeping with the local area, has enabled first time buyers and new families to move into the area, bringing renewed energy to the area and a perpetuation of local events and activities. Older people in the area have the opportunity to downsize to more manageable properties, freeing up homes for growing families. These families are attracted to the area because of the excellent schools, which have expanded to meet the local need and are more accessible with improved links east-west through the parish.

New homes have been designed sustainably to reduce their impact on the environment. Opportunities to enable people to work from home, should they wish, combined with the retention of a series of global businesses, has meant that fewer people are commuting out as jobs and training are available locally. Those that are commuting find it easier to get to Kings Langley station as the public transport, pedestrian and cycle access have been improved. Public transport services will be well maintained particularly local train services at Kings Langley Station.

The growing community's needs are well-met with an expanded medical centre as a District Health Hub, new playgrounds and leisure facilities and the ongoing resource offered by the Henderson Hub. The green spaces across the parish, well-linked by footpaths and cycle-paths, enable locals to enjoy the countryside on their doorstep. Equally these areas provide a haven for wildlife and native plants, increasing local biodiversity.

The parish has been able to install additional electric vehicle charging points at key locations and at new developments. A local car sharing scheme/ on-demand public transport /shared taxis services have reduced the need for multiple car-owning households and on-street residential parking pressures. This, in combination with the planting of trees and vegetation

along the main routes, has helped to reduce the air and noise pollution. Houses have been well insulated and implemented alternative heating systems with less dependence on fossil fuels.

The community is more balanced in the age groups living here.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.6. The Plan has the following eight objectives to achieve the Vision, which will be delivered in cooperation with relevant statutory and other agencies, including organisations in the commercial and not-for-profit sectors:

OBJECTIVE 1: Influencing new developments to be sustainably sited and to contribute to both the local housing needs of the parish while helping to deliver the district-wide housing requirement, including more affordable housing (of all types) as well as housing that addresses the needs of residents of all ages.

OBJECTIVE 2: Supporting new development that reflects the high-quality local context in terms of building style and materials and is sensitively designed to be attractive, to minimise flood risk, mitigate climate change, promote biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint.

OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthening, supporting and promoting local economic activity in all retail, industrial, commercial and professional activities and maximise opportunities for tourism including the regeneration of the Grand Union Canal.

OBJECTIVE 4: Conserving both historic and the environmental assets of the parish, preserving the green setting of the settlements and the individual green spaces within them, ensuring that they are linked to create wildlife corridors. Maintaining as much as possible, the five distinctive statutory purposes of Green Belt policies in the Parish.

OBJECTIVE 5: Encouraging the provision of local infrastructure and facilities including expanded primary health care facilities and sufficient school places to address the needs of existing and future residents.

OBJECTIVE 6: Improving sustainable transport and movement across the parish, in particular through electric vehicle modes, on-demand services and public transport, specifically ensuring there is a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists.

OBJECTIVE 7: Exploring the potential for viable renewable energy projects locally, serving and ideally owned by the local community.

OBJECTIVE 8: Encouraging the production of local food including local farms, horticulture, community projects and private gardens/allotments.

4. AN INTRODUCTION TO ABBOTS LANGLEY PARISH

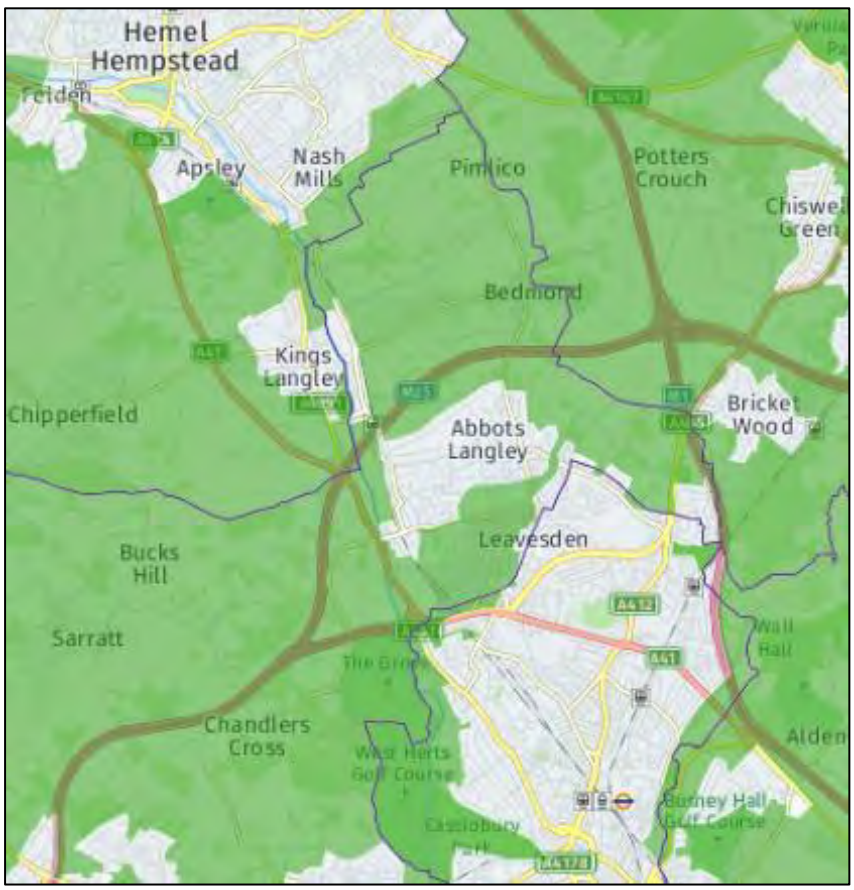
Geography

4.1. Abbots Langley is a parish in south-west Hertfordshire, in the northern part of the Three Rivers District. It is situated between Watford, Hemel Hempstead, and St Albans. The parish comprises the main village of Abbots Langley as well as a number of smaller settlements; in total there are about fourteen distinct communities within the parish boundary, which are home to approximately 22,000 residents.

4.2. Lying completely in the Metropolitan Green Belt (*Figure 7*) the northern part of the parish is in the Chilterns, where the ground reaches a height of 137 meters/449 feet in the north-east at Pimlico. The southern part is considerably lower. There is a general trend in the south and west down to the valley of the River Gade, which forms part of the western parish boundary. Abbots Langley was, as Domesday testifies, and still is a district of meadows and woods. The main village stands on high ground in the southern part of the parish.

4.3. The parish is crossed by the M25 through the centre and on a south-west axis. The M1 clips the south-eastern tip.

Figure 7: Green Belt around Abbots Langley



A brief history of the parish

4.4. The parish has a long history with evidence of human settlements from the upper Palaeolithic period onwards (10,000BC) in the Gade Valley. Flint tools from the Mesolithic period (8000-4000BC) have been found within the Parish. Celtic urns dating from the period between 10BC-AD30 are evidence of habitation by local tribes during that period. Tessellated paving and coins, dating between the period AD41-AD378, were found in the 1980s during the laying of foundations for houses near the station. These attest to Roman habitation.

4.5. The parish name itself can be traced back to at least 1045 when, it is recorded, a Saxon, Ethelwine the Black and his wife Wynfelda, gave 'Langelei' (denoting a long meadow or long lea) to the Abbot and the monks of the monastery of St Albans. The monastery played an important part in the affairs of Abbots Langley for several hundred years. The Parish Registers, which were started in the year 1538, as ordered by Henry VIII, are complete and very detailed. They reveal that the area was split into four manors: Abbots Langley, Langleybury, Chambersbury, and Hyde.

4.6. Abbots Langley has had a predominantly agricultural heritage comprising scattered farms during the 1700s and 1800s. However, the parish's close proximity to London led to a number of fine houses and estates being built as the area was considered to be a very attractive rural location but still within reach of London's high society. Many of the parish's historic assets remain today including Langley House (now converted to flats), the Abbots House (dating to the 1600s) and Hazelwood House (now Hunton Park Hotel).

Figure 8: Abbots Langley circa 1904



4.7. The advent of the industrial revolution made an impact on the parish, strengthened by the construction of the Grand Union Canal, which runs along the western boundary. It was at this time that the paper mills at Nash Mills, alongside the canal, were constructed, signalling a move away from agricultural work among locals and towards industry. By the 1830s, the railway had arrived, which meant that London was within very easy reach,

providing a catalyst for the future emerging role of the parish as a commuter village. The opening of Leavesden Hospital in 1870 facilitated another change as it imported a large number of patients and additional people moving to the area in supporting roles. The community, which had been concentrated largely around the main High Street, grew quickly during the late 1800s with the construction of new roads and terraced housing. In 1913, Ovaltine opened their factory in neighbouring King's Langley, providing work for locals.

4.8. The onset of World War II saw the demise of many of the historic buildings in the parish, including Manor House and Cecil Lodge. The Leavesden Aerodrome was established at this time to increase the supply of aircraft. After the war, the aerodrome was purchased by De Havilland, later acquired by Rolls-Royce, who used the site as a factory for producing engines for aeroplanes and later helicopters. From the 1970s, the aerodrome was also used by commercial small business aircraft, as the airfield was close to both the M1 and later the M25 motorways.

4.9. The M25 has had a significant impact on the parish, crossing east to southwest through the centre of the area. Enabling connectivity to nearby centres, it has crystallised the parish as a home for commuters, with the majority of local people working outside the parish boundaries. A knock-on effect of this has been the very high property prices.

4.10. By the early 1990s, Britain's manufacturing industry was in decline. Rolls-Royce sold their interests in the aerodrome site which meant that this large industrial area was disused. The nearby Ovaltine factory also ceased operating in 2002. Within this time, however, the former aerodrome site was purchased by Pinewood Studios who sought additional studio space. Rebranded "Leavesden Studios", the site has been used to film major films including James Bond, Star Wars: The Phantom Menace and Sleepy Hollow. In 2000, Heyday Films acquired the site on behalf of Warner Bros. The site was predominantly used to film the Harry Potter series of films, housing a permanent standing set during this time. By 2010, Warner Bros. completed its purchase of the site. They have invested in the region of £100 million to create a 'Hollywood' studio base in 'London.' The creation of the Warner Bros. Studio Tour London – 'The Making of Harry Potter' alongside additional sound stages has enabled approximately 300 new jobs in the local area and continues to expand. This investment has resulted in the Studio Tour becoming the biggest tourist attraction in Hertfordshire with a capacity of 6,000 visitors per day. Further expansion of the Film Studios is planned during the next five years.



Images show: Lych Gate at the Church of St Lawrence, Warner Bros. Studios, Leavesden and the green belt around the village

The Parish of Abbots Langley today

4.11. The 2021 Census revealed that there are 22,105 residents in the parish living in 8,855 dwellings. This has risen from 19,974 residents and 8,183 dwellings in 2011. The parish is a thriving community with many local facilities and amenities as described below:

4.12. **Primary Schools:** Bedmond Academy; Abbots Langley School; Breakspeare School (for special educational needs (SEN) pupils); Divine Saviour Catholic School; Tanners Wood; St Pauls C of E and High Elms Manor School (specialist school). Hertfordshire County Council has identified the need for a new primary school in the parish and has allocated a site on Woodside Road. No decision to build this new primary school has been made by 2026.

4.13. **Secondary Schools:** Breakspeare School (for special educational needs (SEN) pupils); Parmiter's School; Saint Michael's Catholic High School; and Garston Manor School (specialist for learning difficulties) and the Future Academies Watford (formerly Francis Combe Academy) straddling the parish boundary. With the exception of Breakspeare, the schools are concentrated in the south eastern part of the parish.

4.14. **Health:** There are no strategic health facilities within Three Rivers District. The nearest hospitals are at Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans. There are three GP practices in Abbots Langley (The Vine House Health Centre, the Sheepcote Medical Centre and Abbotswood Medical Centre) and a nearby Watford Practice (Coach House Surgery). Other specialist units include: the West Hertfordshire Therapy Unit (Outpatient Physiotherapy Department), located at Jacketts Field, Abbots Langley and Warren Court, on Woodside Road, which is a residential medium secure service for people who have difficulty in learning - including those who need care and treatment in a safe and secure environment.

4.15. **Community facilities:** These include the library, village halls (at Bedmond and in Abbots Langley), youth club/community centre, and two other halls for hire owned by the Parish Council (Tanners Wood Hall and Manor House Hall). The Henderson Hub, at the Henderson Memorial Hall, has been developed to be a focal point for the residents in Abbots Langley and surrounding areas. Local people can now access a fully refurbished, accessible space where they can experience a range of visual, literary and performing arts as well as its continued use as a village hall.

4.16. The Henderson Hub is managed by the community as a registered charity. It promotes and supports a wide range of arts related activities throughout the community. Abbots Langley has over 130 volunteer groups and charities that encourage a wide range of community-based activities (see ALNP Evidence Base for more details).

4.17. **Green Spaces**: Beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt itself, the communities within the parish benefit from many green spaces including: Tanners Wood, School Mead, Hazel Wood, The Dell, Leavesden Country Park, Horses Field and the Millennium Gardens. Within the built-up areas of the parish, there is a need to preserve these green spaces which are greatly valued by the community and, despite the pressures for development, should not be sacrificed.

4.18. There are 6.57ha of Public Rights of Way within the parish. The Parish Council has produced a twenty-eight-page booklet, detailing eight walks around the Parish.

4.19. Abbots Langley Parish Council operates four allotment sites: Manor House, Jacketts Field, Kingsfield (behind The Compasses Pub) and Primrose Hill. Allotments are an important community resource, used by local residents all year round to grow vegetables, soft fruits, and flowers. In 2021, all plots are in use. Additional provision of allotment space is likely to be required in future years with the possible addition of communal cultivation plots.

4.20. **Burial Grounds:** There are three cemeteries in the parish: Abbots Langley Churchyard, St Paul's Churchyard at Langleybury and East Lane Cemetery (North). Apparently, these are full and not open for new burials. Located in the Parish since 1959, the West Herts Crematorium serves five local District Authorities, including TRDC. In 2020 Dacorum District Council, in partnership with the West Herts Crematorium, provided a new cemetery just beyond the northern boundary of the parish.

4.21. **Sports facilities:** There are numerous playing fields for a variety of sports, including at Langleybury, Leavesden Country Park (including a multi-use games area), South Way, Horses Field, Primrose Hill, Manor House Grounds (including a multi-use games area and new skate/BMX area) and the Bedmond Playing Fields in Toms Lane, Bedmond (including a multi-use games area). The Three Rivers Playing Pitch Assessment Report (2019) reveals a shortfall in quality of football provision, notably in Bedmond, given the high demand for this activity. Parmiter's School sports facilities are used by local sport clubs at weekends. The Watford Woodside Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool and outdoor facilities, close to the southern boundary of the parish, is available to residents in Abbots Langley, under an agreement between the two District Councils.

4.22. **Play areas:** There are 13 designated play areas in the parish. In recent years these have been increased in number and upgraded with new equipment. New play areas have been created in Horses Field and Leavesden Park. A new skatepark for Abbots Langley village was built in the Manor House Gardens and opened in May 2019.

4.23. **Shopping:** There are numerous shops (including two post offices), public houses, and cafes / restaurants located in the various communities within the parish.

4.24. **Economic Activity**: Abbots Langley has a thriving large village centre, noted as a 'Key Centre' in the Three Rivers hierarchy of settlements. There are a few small industrial/business estates along the Gade Valley. Key employers in the parish and immediate environs include:

Warner Bros. Studios, Leavesden - a 160-acre production facility that has been the production site of many highly acclaimed Warner Bros. movies. It is also a tourist attraction and has attracted millions of visitors since the Harry Potter studio tour opened. The site's expansion in recent years has been major boost to local employment training in the area. Some of the biggest productions employ up to 750 people on construction, with an average shooting crew of 250. Plans for new production facilities propose a further 40% expansion of local employment resulting in nearly 6,000 on-site jobs and increasing film and TV productions to 613.8m per annum.

RES - one of the world's larger independent renewable energy companies with over 13 GW portfolios.

Imagination Technologies - a technology company, focusing on semiconductor and related intellectual property licensing. It markets PowerVR mobile graphics processors,

MIPS embedded microprocessors, and is known for its Pure consumer electronics division.



Images show: Manor House modernised play area, the Community-led Henderson Hub, Leavesden Country Park, Imagination Technology Campus, Future Academies Watford (formerly Francis Combe Academy) and Primrose Hill allotments

4.25. The key aspects of the profile of Abbots Langley parish, as they relate to the Neighbourhood Plan, are below, based on 2021 Census data (statistical detail is given in Appendix A) available at the parish level.

4.26. Compared to the district as a whole, Abbots Langley has a **high percentage of residents of working age (25 to 64 years)**, amounting to approximately 55% of the local population. This age group has grown considerably between since 2001.

4.27. In contrast, the **number of older adults, aged 65+ is significantly lower** than the district and region. This age group, however, is rising and given the numbers of adults in the lower age groups, is anticipated to rise further over the period of the Plan.

4.28. There is a **higher-than-average number of children and teenagers** in the parish, with the parish being an attractive place to live for older families. Whilst the number of younger working adults is generally high, this cohort has grown the least, possibly as a result of rising house prices and inability to rent locally.

4.29. Abbots Langley has **higher than UK average levels of car ownership**, with 1.5 cars per household compared to 1.2 at the national level. 47% the households in the parish have at least two cars and 12% have no car. This is not unexpected in a largely semi-rural area.

4.30. The nearest mainline railway stations serving the parish are at Watford Junction and Hemel Hempstead although there are intermediate stations at Kings Langley, Garston and Apsley. The parish is fairly **well served by bus links** to several major employment centres. However, the vast **majority of those in work use their car to travel to their place of employment**,

with 10% of people working from home. This proportion has increased considerably since the outbreak of Covid-19 and its associated measures.

4.31. Abbots Langley **predominantly comprises of two-to-three-bedroom homes,** mainly semi-detached (34% of stock) and 24% terraced and 24% detached. 72% of homes are owner-occupied while the percentage of **social and private rented properties available are about average** at 26%, mirroring Three Rivers District as a whole.

4.32. The **majority of workers travel 5-10km to work**, which has a reach to The Warner Bros. Studio, Hemel Hempstead and Watford. Approximately **20% of residents work at least 10km away from home**, London being 30km away. This suggests that Abbots Langley has a large out-of-area, commuting population.



The Church of Ascension (Tin Church) – Grade 2 listed (Photo credit: K Herrington)

5. SPATIAL STRATEGY

Local Factors affecting new development

5.1. Abbots Langley parish has been the recipient of a significant proportion of new housing developments within Three Rivers in recent years. As confirmed by the 2021 Census data, the Parish population has increased by 25% in the last 20 years, a significantly higher increase than in the surrounding areas. The number of dwellings rose from 8,183 homes to 8,855 homes, an increase of 8.2%.

5.2. This growth has created additional pressure on local services, amenities and infrastructure. It has also reduced substantially the remaining available brownfield land suitable for development. As the parish population continues to grow, it will be vital to ensure that the area is able to house its residents in a way that balances the needs of young people, families and the retired and enables access to key services and facilities.

5.3. When considering future development, the public consultation process revealed a strong desire to keep any new development within the settlement boundaries, to protect the Metropolitan Green Belt and green corridors and to prioritise brownfield sites, wherever possible.

5.4. Three Rivers District Council is currently preparing its new Local Plan. The Regulation 19 consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate for examination is planned for 2026 During the last ten years, new housing development along the western boundary of the parish, in the Gade Valley, has significantly increased the traffic movements along the two radial (north/south) routes (A4251, Hempstead Road and Lower Road/Railway Terrace/Station Road) with peak traffic congestion focusing on the M25 Junction 20 roundabout, where local traffic meets the regional traffic movements.

5.5. Also, the other north-south traffic movements between Hemel Hempstead and Watford via Abbots Langley pass along Bedmond Road/Tibbs Hill Road. This corridor is experiencing more traffic congestion during weekday peak traffic periods.

5.6. Local planning policies in the area to date have restricted development where it would generate additional traffic through the five narrow bridges under the West Coast mainline on the western boundary of the parish. To address the capacity restraints of the single lane railway bridges and the three north-south traffic routes across the parish will require significant investment, which private developers will be expected to fund. Such investments may require major housing developments of 2000+ units. This, in turn, would threaten the Green Belt areas within the parish.

5.7. The ALNP does not seek to allocate sites, rather it sets out a series of parameters to support the national and TRDC's proposed growth strategy, through:

promoting and encouraging sustainable new housing on previously developed (brownfield) sites within the settlement boundaries.

encouraging small-scale residential developments that are sympathetic to their surroundings.

ensuring that new developments include a mix of housing to meet the needs of local people, taking into account the current and projected demographic of the parish.

providing well-designed dwellings that are sympathetic to the character of the settlement.

ensuring that new development is well-connected to the existing 'movement' network, supporting the Walkable Neighbourhoods concept and provision of public transport and infrastructure to support less-polluting vehicles. The larger settlements in Abbots Langley are well suited to follow these planning principles in developing its local economy. The practical implementation of this concept is explained in more detail in the Abbots Langley Village Centre Masterplan prepared by AECOM (October 2022 - See Appendix H) and in the individual settlement maps showing nearby facilities in the other communities within the parish. (See Chapter 16)

ensuring that the overall quantum of development does not put an unacceptable strain on infrastructure capacity – while much of the infrastructure planning (e.g. schools, GPs) sits outside the scope of the ALNP, as it is the responsibility of other organisations, the ALNP seeks to ensure that all major development is carefully planned, with community involvement, to ensure that adequate facilities are provided.

ensuring that new developments will be functioning as they were designed, for many years to come, to be able to benefit both the new and existing communities within the parish.

5.8. Given the major expansion being considered in Watford, Dacorum and St Albans, the Parish Council expects the Local Planning Authorities to measure the expected impacts of these developments on the local health, education facilities and local transport networks and facilities within the Parish.

5.9. Other areas that are supported, but which fall outside the remit of the ANLP include:

national policies on food production to determine the long-term needs for food security, before removing productive land that could serve local requirements.

address noise and air pollution from the major movement corridors. Building more houses near motorways without addressing the existing concerns of pollution is not considering the health needs of the expanding population.

new housing locations should not restrict the future potential for redeveloping movement corridors (motorways and rail routes) say, as automated light rail solutions. These arguably have greater potential to provide practical mass movement services for freight and passengers rather than automated road vehicles.

5.10. The potential impact of development on climate change is an issue that has been at the forefront of the development of the Plan.

Policy AL1: Spatial Strategy: Location and scale of development

POLICY AL1: SPATIAL STRATEGY: LOCATION AND SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

A. Development proposals within the defined settlement policy boundary (as shown in the most recent development plan) will be supported where they comply with other development plan policies. Development proposals which make use of brownfield sites will be particularly supported.

B. Development proposals outside the defined settlement boundaries will only be supported where it meets the following criteria:

i. it is in accordance with national and Three Rivers development plan policies in respect of appropriate uses in the countryside and in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF in relation to development within the green belt and, where identified, grey belt; and

ii. it does not individually or cumulatively result in the physical or visual coalescence of the individual communities in the Parish, notably Bedmond and Abbots Langley, and retains their separate identities;

iii. it is of a scale and nature appropriate to the character and function of the area; and

iv. where appropriate, it brings redundant or vacant agricultural/farm or other rural buildings or buildings of heritage value back into viable use consistent with their conservation with an emphasis on reducing car movements and enhancing sustainable modes of transport.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 1; Core Strategy: PSP2, CP1, CP2, CP11; Development Management Policies: DM2; Site Allocations Local Development Document: SA1; NPPF (2024): 7, 8, 29, 61, 73, 82-84, 96, 98, 111, 124-126, 129, 130, 135, 142-160, 187

Purpose

5.11. Policy AL1 seeks to ensure that development within the parish is focussed to be within the defined settlement boundaries. This will help to ensure that new development takes place in the most sustainable locations, near to local services and amenities. It will also protect the valued Green Belt, green space, and green corridors within the parish against loss, avoiding sprawl and coalescence of the individual settlements.



5.12. In the context of the emerging Local Plan, it is considered that the settlement boundaries may evolve when the new Local Plan is adopted. While the current Local Plan remains in place, however, the identification of settlement boundaries in the ALNP will provide certainty to prospective developers, in the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan.

Justification

5.13. The majority of new development in the past within Three Rivers has been focussed on the Key Centres. Abbots Langley, as a key centre, has been the recipient of a significant proportion of this in recent decades. Whilst this has enabled greater numbers of people to move to the area and make a home here, inevitably it has created additional pressure on the local services, amenities and infrastructure. It has reduced substantially the remaining brownfield land that would be suitable for development. Finally, it has put pressure on green space, particularly in light of the fact that much of the parish is within the Green Belt.

5.14. Local engagement has indicated that protecting green space and, in particular, Green Belt is a high priority for residents. The adopted Core Strategy supports this as it seeks to protect Green Belt by focussing development within the existing urban settlements through development of previously developed land and appropriate infilling.



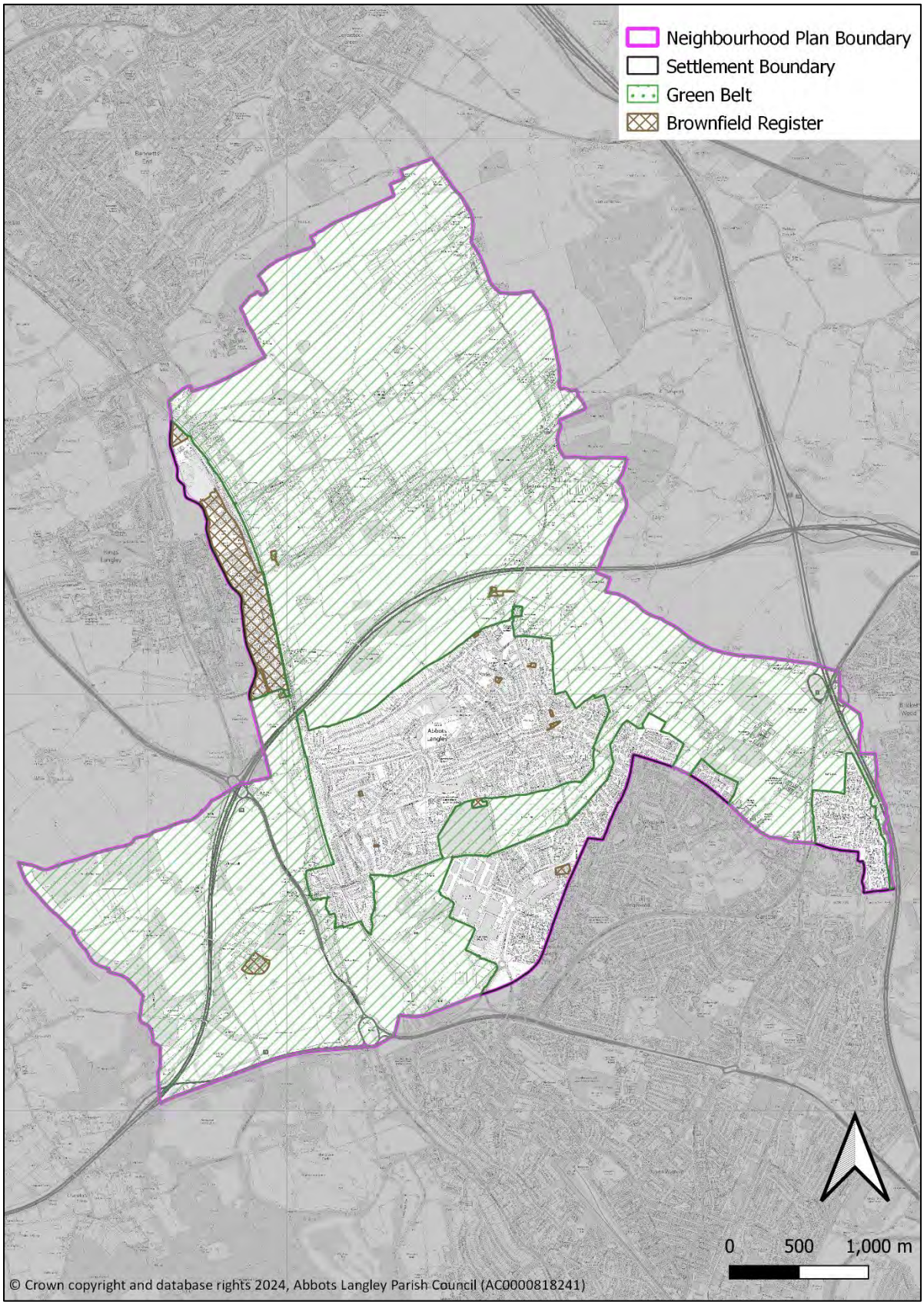
Images show: New housing recently built off Woodside Road - approved on appeal by a Government Planning Inspector despite objections from TRDC, as the site was previously Green Belt land; and latest local shopping centre associated with the new housing development (425 dwellings) in Leavesden (2016)

5.15. The ANLP proposes that priority is given to previously developed sites and in the most sustainable locations, which is within the settlement boundaries, where it can be conveniently located to access local services and facilities. This will also ensure that sprawl is avoided and coalescence between the various settlements. Furthermore, that development is well-designed to reflect the size and character of the settlements in terms of density and form. For greater detail see the 'Design Guidance and Code Abbots Langley Parish' by AECOM (November 2021), Appendix E.

5.16. It is noted that the NPPF has amended policy relating to Green Belt and, notably, the potential to identify areas of Grey Belt. It is anticipated that this will be considered further in the new Local Plan, which commits to a Green Belt Review.

5.17. The adopted settlement boundaries, brownfield sites and green belt are shown in *Figure 9*.

Figure 9: Adopted settlement boundaries within the Parish of Abbots Langley (designations as per adopted Core Strategy 2011-2026)



6. HOUSING

Policy AL2: Housing mix

POLICY AL2: HOUSING MIX

A. Other than in development designed to meet an identified specialist housing need, the mix of housing sizes, types, tenures, and affordability in proposed development should, in so far as is reasonably practicable and subject to viability, assist in meeting local needs using the most recently available and up to date housing needs assessment figures.

As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, development proposals for residential use should respond positively to all of the following principles:

i. the delivery of smaller (1-3 habitable rooms) and medium (5 habitable rooms) dwellings or as otherwise set out in the most up to date assessment of local housing needs.

ii. the provision of affordable housing which meets the requirements in the Three Rivers development plan. Affordable homes should be tenure-blind and well-integrated with market housing. The tenure of affordable units should meet the specific needs of the parish.

iii. proposals that enable greater affordability uplifts and prioritise local residents when it comes to allocating housing (such as the use of social rent or First Homes).

B. Residential development that is being built to meet the needs of older people (by virtue of its size and location) should demonstrate how it reflects the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles, and the guidance contained in the RTPI's "Dementia and town planning: Creating better environments for people living with dementia".

C. Development proposals for self- and custom build housing will be supported where they otherwise comply with development plan policies. Medium (5 habitable rooms) dwellings will be particularly supported.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 1; Core Strategy: CP1, CP3, CP4; NPPF (2024): 61-68, 71, 73, 82-84,156, 157

Purpose

6.1. It is important that any new residential development within the Neighbourhood Plan area addresses local housing need. Policy CP3 of the adopted Core Strategy (2011) states that *'The Council will* require *housing proposals to take into account the range of housing needs, in terms of size and type of dwellings as identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and subsequent updates. New development will also provide a range of house types and sizes to reflect the existing and future needs of the Three Rivers population and the characteristics of housing in the area'.*

6.2. Policy AL2 seeks to ensure that new housing units provided within the parish primarily meet the needs of the local population and that a balanced mix of housing is achieved.

"A mix of housing sizes is needed, to cater for first-time buyers, growing families and downsizers"

Justification

6.3. At a District level, the South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment was published in March 2024, on behalf of Dacorum, Hertsmere, St. Albans, Three Rivers and Watford Councils.

6.4. It recommends a mix as shown in *Table 2* across the broad authority areas, while *Table 3* shows the adjusted modelled mix for Three Rivers specifically.

Table 2: Recommended housing mix for the Housing Market Area (source: South West Herts Local Housing Needs Assessment Update, 2024)

	Market	Affordable home ownership	Affordable housing (rented)	
			General needs	Older persons
1-bedroom	5%	20%	20%	50%
2-bedrooms	20%	40%	30%	50%
3-bedrooms	45%	30%	35%	
4+-bedrooms	30%	10%	15%	

Table 3: Adjusted modelled mix of housing by size and tenure – Three Rivers (source: South West Herts Local Housing Needs Assessment Update, 2024)

	Market	Affordable home ownership	Affordable housing (rented)	
			General needs	Older persons
1-bedroom	4%	19%	20%	53%
2-bedrooms	21%	39%	32%	47%
3-bedrooms	42%	30%	35%	
4+-bedrooms	32%	13%	12%	

Source: Housing Market Model (with adjustments)

6.5. For affordable housing, the report suggests a greater proportional need for one- and two-bedroom properties. However, there remains a need for a balanced mix of dwellings of different sizes to come forward; with delivery of larger properties being important in meeting the needs of households with an acute housing need and releasing existing properties for other households.

6.6. For the parish itself, the Abbots Langley Housing Needs Assessment (2017) (Appendix D), whilst some years old, identified needs largely in line with the broader area:

smaller homes (1-3 habitable rooms) suited to both first-time buyers as well as those seeking to downsize and

dwellings suited to older groups within the community, which is a growing demographic; and

dwellings suited to the needs of younger families (5 habitable rooms).

6.7. Policy AL2 sets the expected housing mix for the parish, based on this premise of securing a greater number of low to median cost homes. The Abbots Langley HNA should be reviewed on semi-regular basis.

7. LOCAL CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND DESIGN

Policy AL3: Character of development

POLICY AL3: CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT

A. Development proposals should conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in which they are located (as shown on *Figure 11*), the Policies Map.

All new development should reflect the character of the Character Area in which they are located (as shown on *Figure 12)*, the Policies Map and as described in the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Codes, Appendix E. Developments should reflect the architectural variety found locally and use materials that are in keeping with those found in existing buildings in the immediate locality. This will help to avoid building design that is inappropriate to the Plan area. Innovation in design will be supported, where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form.

B. As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location development proposals should strive to:

- **i. make a positive contribution to the visual impact of the main highway approaches into the settlements, as shown on *Figure 12*. Improvements and enhancements should include, where appropriate, additional tree planting, the enhancement of roadside green spaces (for instance through planting and street trees), the reduction/consolidation of road signs and other street furniture and wider green infrastructure improvements that are identified as being necessary;**
- **ii. take into account and adhere to the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Codes and, where appropriate, the Conservation Area Appraisals; and**
- **iii. protect views and vistas along the Grand Union Canal and River Gade; and**
- **iv. incorporate soft landscaping, including large canopy trees with sufficient root protection areas to ensure growth to maturity, and other boundary treatments to provide active frontages; and**
- **v. promote the use of sustainable transport and active travel through adopting a Healthy Streets Approach to street design; and**
- **vi. be in accordance with the Three Rivers District Council parking policy; and**
- **vii. ensure traffic generation and parking does not adversely affect vehicular and pedestrian safety.**

C. Where development sites abut open countryside, development on the rural boundary edge should mitigate any detrimental visual impacts on the countryside. This should be achieved through:

- **i. the siting of lower density development at the rural boundary of the site in order to provide a gradual transition from the built form to open countryside;**
- **ii. the inclusion of meaningful and characteristic landscape buffers to help ensure an appropriate transition from built development to open countryside; and**
- **iii. a layout that clearly minimises the visual impact of buildings of a larger volume, form, scale, size or height relative to the surrounding context and larger than typical structures around it on both the open countryside and existing villagescape to avoid new development dominating its surroundings and to provide a visual transition between new development and existing.**

Conformity reference: NP objective: 2; Core Strategy: PSP2, PSP4 CP1, CP12; NPPF (2024): 73, 77, 84, 96, 109, 129, 130, 131-140, 187, 203

Purpose

7.1. This policy seeks to conserve and enhance the distinctive character and heritage of Abbots Langley so that its significance may be better understood, appreciated and reflected in new development. It is what makes the area distinctive and special. Given the existence of at least fourteen distinct communities/settlements across the parish, as shown in *Figure 10*, the application of this policy must be applied to the local character and heritage of each individual settlement.

> "The neighbourhood plan should recognise the local significance of things. Too often, planning decisions are taken in the light of a national standard measure, which taken out of the national context, can lead to insensitive and inappropriate decision-making. e.g., the locally significant BRE houses in Trowley Rise. They may not register highly in the national consciousness or have superiority over the nation's high-profile historic buildings, but they can rate very highly and compare very favourably in the minds of local people. Local significance should be given consideration: what it means to the community and what it means in the context of the neighbourhood"

Justification

7.2. Both the underlying geology and landscape, coupled with the activities of past generations of people and development, have created the features that give the parish its distinctive identity today.

7.3. From a landscape perspective, Abbots Langley Parish contains four different landscape character areas: Area 7: Sarratt Plateau; Area 8: Upper Gade Valley; Area 9: Bedmond Plateau; and Area 11: Lower Gade Valley. These have, over the centuries, supported an agricultural landscape, dotted with villages and woodland, including ancient woodland.

7.4. There is evidence of settlements in the parish dating back over 8,000 years. This has left a legacy of built heritage assets of all kinds and of national and local importance, including Grade I and II Listed Buildings and Archaeological Notification areas. There are two Conservation Areas: Abbots Langley, and Hunton Bridge, each with their own Conservation Area Appraisals. The heritage assets and designations are shown in *Figure 11.*

Figure 10: Location of the fourteen main settlement areas in the Parish of Abbots Langley

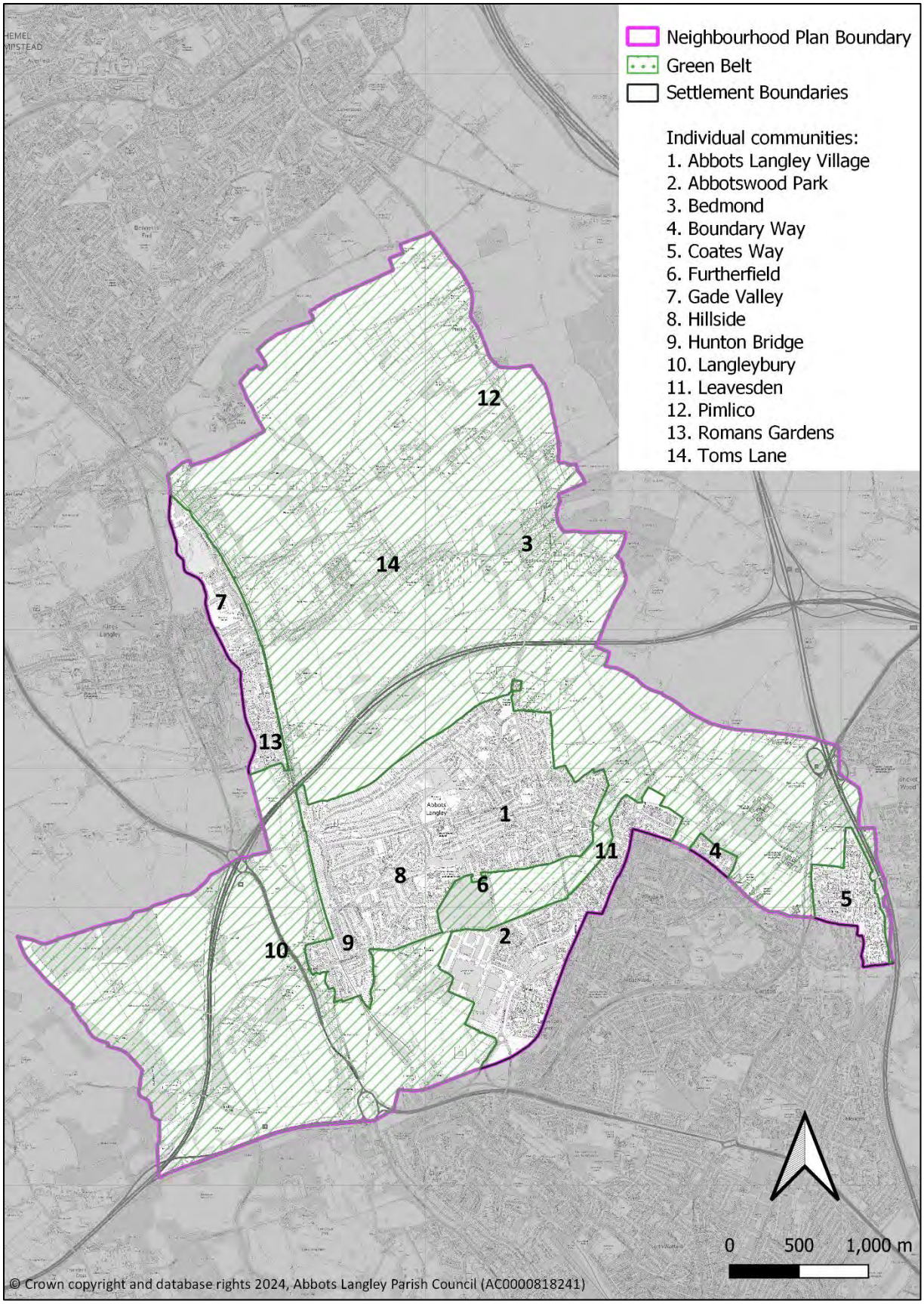
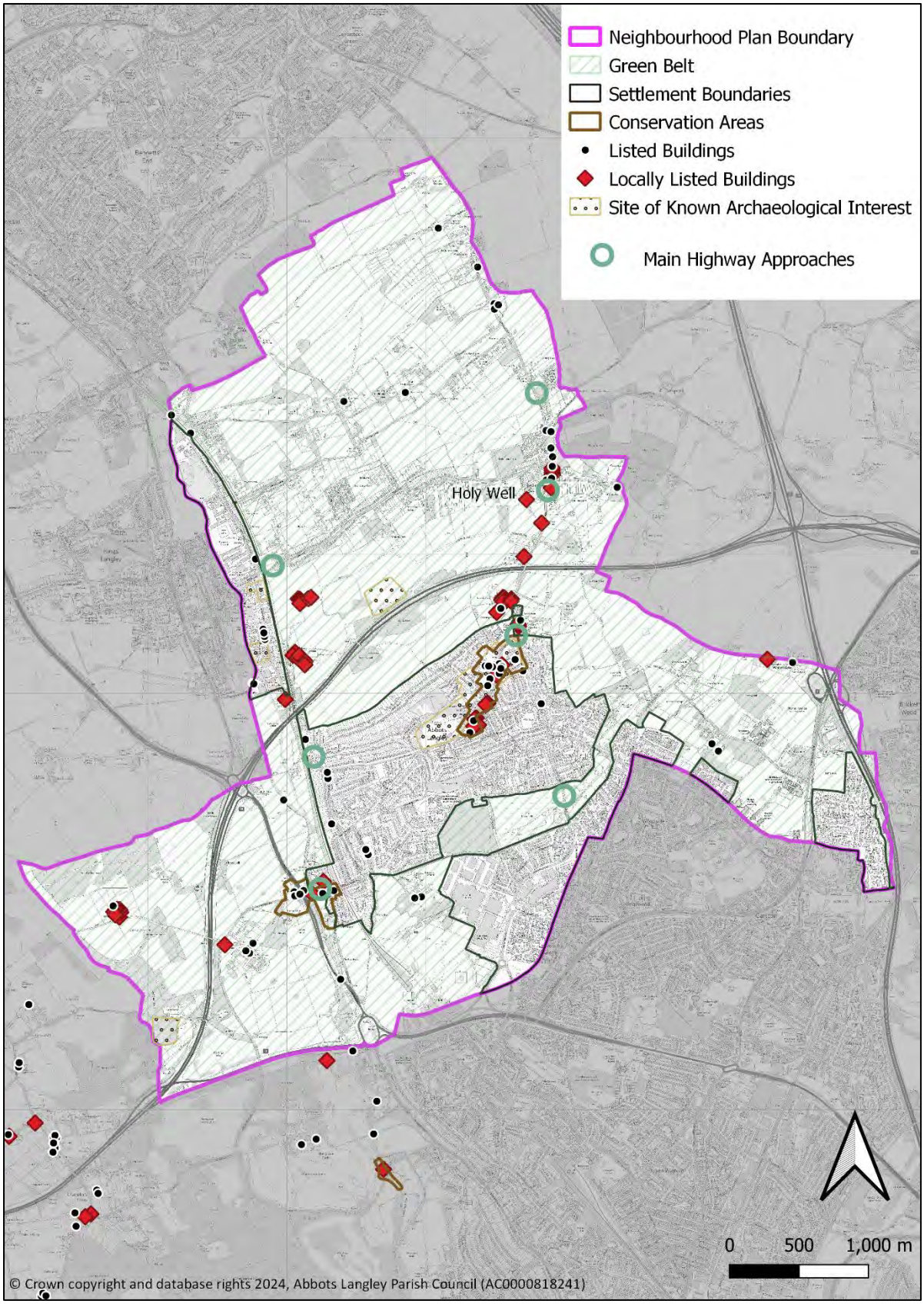


Figure 11: Heritage assets and designations in the neighbourhood area



7.5. To provide additional detail on local character, AECOM was commissioned to prepare, in consultation with the local community, a 'Design Guidance and Code' for Abbots Langley Parish. The document, published in November 2021, forms an integral part of the ALNP and can be found in Appendix E. The work identifies five Character Areas, which are considered to display characteristics unique to their boundaries. A summary of each is provided in *Table 4* and fuller descriptions are provided in the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code itself. The Guidance sets out detailed design considerations for each of the Character Areas, that should be taken into account within any development proposals. The Character Areas are shown in *Figure 12*.

Table 4: Summary of the Character Areas of Abbots Langley Parish

Character Area	Photograph
Pimlico and Bedmond: This area is focussed on Bedmond, Pimlico, and the eastern part of Toms Lane. A linear development runs along the three key roads of Bell Lane, Toms Lane and the High Street. The village itself is residential with a main General Store/Post Office and other local facilities, including a Village Hall, Sports Club and Primary School. Buildings tend to be detached or semi-detached, often set back from the road, offering space for off-street parking. Building heights rarely exceed 2-storeys, with hipped and pitched roofs. Materials include red bricks and clay tiles.	
Gade Valley: This area is focussed on the western part of Toms Lane, Roman Gardens, and Primrose Hill. The area is largely residential comprising detached and semi-detached homes. High hedges and low walls between properties are a common feature. While most older dwellings tend to be no more than 2-storeys in height, newer apartments are 3 to 4 floors.	

Abbots Langley Village: This area is focussed on Abbots Langley Village, and Hillside. The village is largely residential but is home to a large local centre with retail and other services. The layout of the roads comprises largely cul-de-sacs. Most of the dwellings date to the 1950s, which tend to be semi-detached. There are also plenty of detached and terraced homes. The majority of homes are 2-storey, but there are also bungalows and higher apartments (to 4 floors).	
Leavesden: This area is focussed on Leavesden, Abbotswood Park. Furtherfield, and Coates Way. The area is mostly residential estates, with educational facilities and shops. Warner Bros is located to the west, and Leavesden Country Park provides a much-valued open space and green corridor. Homes tend to be detached and semi-detached, with garden space at the front and back.	
Langleybury and Hunton Bridge: Langleybury is a very green part of the Parish adjacent to the small village of Hunton Bridge. There is a Conservation Area here. There is a good mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes, which tend to be no more than 2-storeys in height. Many are not too set back from the road. The cricket ground is a notable feature, as is the green walk/cycle way along the Grand Union Canal.	

7.6. The character across each of the five Character Areas ranges in style, age, size, and housing densities. For each area to maintain its character, a balance needs to be struck between the scale, bulk, density, and height of the built form and that of open green spaces and, where relevant, the countryside.

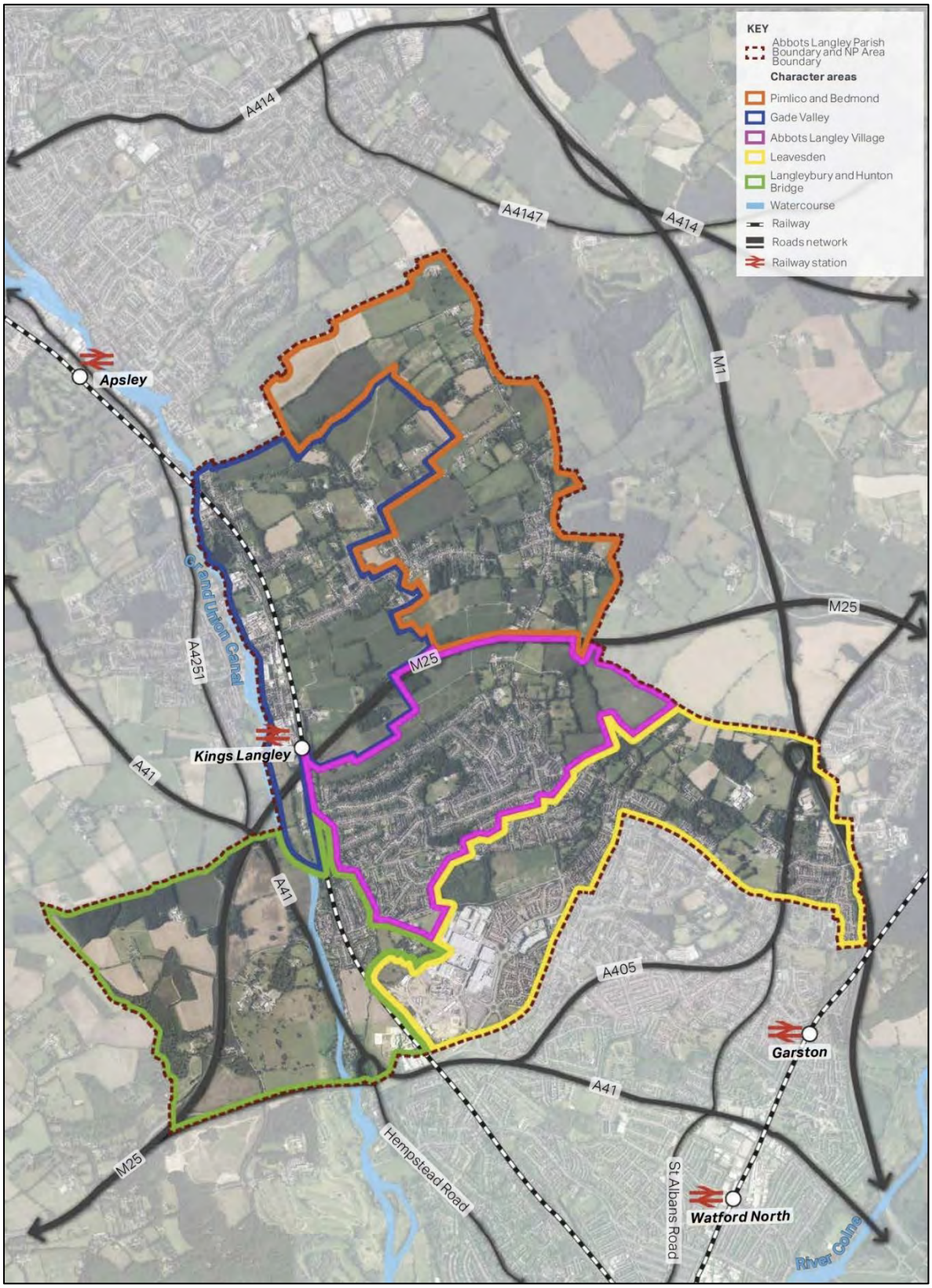
7.7. The Grand Union Canal contributes significantly to the character of the parish. Views and the vista along the Grand Union Canal and River Gade should be protected. Guidance for developments relating to the canal should be read in conjunction with Policy AL4 (Character of Development).

7.8. All development should be designed to a high quality and reinforce and enhance local character, heritage assets and the rural setting of the area. The density of development

should create a character that is appropriate to the site's context, including the landscape in which it is set, whilst making best use of the land available. Lower density housing should be located towards the outer edges of the settlement where it abuts open countryside, to maintain views from and into the individual settlements.

7.9. Development should have regard to both the character of the area in which it is set and to the character of the area overall.

Figure 12: Character Areas in Abbots Langley Parish (Source: Design Guidance and Code for Abbots Langley, AECOM)



Policy AL4: Design of development

POLICY AL4: DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design, which responds and integrates well with its surroundings, and meets the changing needs of the population of the neighbourhood area. In addition, they should minimise their impacts on the natural and historic environment. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have sought to address the following matters:

i. **take into account and adhere to the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Codes;**
ii. **being guided by the principles of 'Building for a Healthy Life' unless alternative principles would otherwise result in a higher quality of design. Development proposals are encouraged to achieve the commendation;**
iii. **building height should be considered in terms of how it relates to the surrounding context of the character area within which it is located. Development of three-storeys and above on or adjoining the boundary of sites adjacent to the settlement boundary abutting open countryside will not be supported unless site specific circumstances would result in an acceptable impact;**
iv. **the creation of variety through the use of a range of housing designs, provided that the predominant type of design reflects the character of the area;**
v. **dwellings designed to be suitable for older residents (aged 60 and over) are encouraged to reflect the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles. Bungalows are supported where these would complement the established street scene;**
vi. **to design layouts of safe and secure dwellings that meet the requirements of 'Secured by Design' and minimise the likelihood and fear of crime;**
vii. **provide adequate cycle storage and off-road parking for residents, visitors and service vehicles in accordance with the Three Rivers District Council Parking Standards;**
viii. **garages should be of a sufficient size to accommodate a modern car and be solely used for parking when included in any parking space standards calculation;**
ix. **development should provide Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) on site. Such development is encouraged to demonstrate the use of a wide range of creative SuDS solutions, for example through the provision of SuDS as part of green spaces, green roofs, permeable surfaces and rain gardens. SuDS provision must demonstrate how its design will enhance wildlife and biodiversity, as well as minimise the impacts of flooding. Development on brownfield sites must restrict their runoff to greenfield rates.**

Conformity reference: NP objective: 2; Core Strategy: CP1, CL2, CP12; Development Management Policies: DM1, DM8, DM9, DM10, DM13; NPPF (Dec 2024): 73, 77, 84, 96, 109, 129, 130, 131-140, 182, 187,203

Purpose

7.10. The purpose of this policy is to add a local dimension to strategic policy when it comes to the design of development, to ensure that it is in-keeping with the local context, adheres to quality and lifetime standards and considers specific issues raised as important by residents.

> "Abbots Langley suffers from surface water flooding. Solutions might include resisting the loss of front gardens to car parking, supporting the provision of permeable car parking areas, introduction of additional green verges where there is room/ on newly built roads"

Justification

7.11. Good quality housing design can improve social wellbeing and the quality of life by improving the built environment, reducing crime, improving public health, easing transport problems and providing supportive neighbourhoods. Housing standards should ensure high quality, sustainable housing that enables people to engage in healthy behaviours such as cooking meals, exercising and social interaction. An example of principles for healthy homes can be found in the Town and Country Planning Association's Healthy Homes Principles.

7.12. In October 2019, the National Design Guide was launched, forming part of the Government's collection of Planning Practice Guidance. It forms a material consideration in the decision-making process, particularly in the absence of local design guidance. The document sets out the ten characteristics necessary for creating a well-designed place, contributing to its physical character, sense of community and addressing environmental issues affecting climate. The National Design Code, published in July 2021, gives more detail.

7.13. The guide 'Building for a Healthy Life' (June 2020) is the Government-endorsed industry standard for the design of new housing developments. It can be used to assess the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods. The latest edition was written in partnership with Homes England, NHS England and NHS Improvement. Its criteria also link to other standards for housing design including the Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Standards and Secured by Design. It provides a framework that stakeholders should use for development along with other policies contained within this plan for the Parish to achieve the industry standard's commendation. When building standards and guides are updated, this Neighbourhood Plan should use the updated standards for good quality, well-designed homes and areas.

7.14. In terms of designing out crime, proposals should seek to design schemes to remove the opportunity for crime to take place through the built environment. The following should be considered for new developments to build out crime: providing spaces that connect with residents, which promote a sense of ownership; and maintaining places to a high quality, multifunctional to attract multiple users and feel welcoming.

7.15. There have been instances of flooding events, notably surface water flooding. Fundamentally these are issues for the Environment Agency and the Local Lead Flood Authority to address. However, new development should be designed to ensure that surface water drainage does not add to the existing site run-off or cause any adverse impact to neighbouring properties or the surrounding environment/wildlife habitat.

7.16. The Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code (Appendix E), produced by AECOM, includes locally tailored design guidelines for the Parish – some of which are relevant to the individual Character Areas, others which have a broader application. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. When these building standards and guides are updated or superseded, applicants should use the updated standards for good quality, well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.

7.17. With an ageing population projected, it will be important to ensure that homes meet the needs of older people. Specialist housing for older people (including care and residential homes) is being considered at the strategic level. At the local level, improved accessibility and adaptability standards should be a key consideration for new homes (both market and affordable). The "Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)" has developed a series of principles for good design of housing covering light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage. They have particular relevance to older persons' housing. The ten principles are:

- Space and flexibility
- Daylight in the home and in shared spaces
- Balconies and outdoor space
- Adaptability and 'care ready' design
- Positive use of circulation space
- Shared facilities and 'hubs'
- Plants, trees, and the natural environment
- Energy efficiency and sustainable design
- Storage for belongings and bicycles
- External shared surfaces and 'home zones'

7.18. Such dwellings may also be suitable for younger residents and are not intended to be restricted in use.

7.19. Housing should also be designed to support the needs of those living with disabilities. The Royal Town Planning Institute's guidance "Dementia and town planning: Creating better environments for people living with dementia" should inform planning applications.

Policy AL5: Environmentally sustainable design

POLICY AL5: ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

A. Development proposals should incorporate design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption and mitigate climate change and prevent overheating homes in summer. They should have regard to climate change mitigation at all stages of the construction process. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals should demonstrate how they have responded positively to the following matters:

- **i. non-residential developments should aim to meet the Buildings Research Establishments BREEAM building standard 'excellent', and residential dwellings should aim for an EPC rating of B or above;**
- **ii. siting, orientation and design of buildings to optimise passive solar gain and avoid over-heating**
- **iii. the use of low carbon sustainable design to prevent or mitigate all regulated emissions using a combination of on-site efficiency measures such as:**
  - **a. a "Fabric First" approach to building design, which involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems.**
  - **b. energy efficiency measures such as loft insulation and double glazing.**
  - **c. low energy heating and lighting systems.**
  - **d. on-site energy generation and storage.**
- **iv. Fit water efficiency measures in all new dwellings to enable occupiers to achieve usage of no more than 110 litres per person per day, as required for water-stressed areas.**

B. Alterations to existing buildings, including the sensitive retrofitting of historic buildings and heritage assets, should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with current sustainable design and construction standards including Historic England's Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency.

C. Proposals for individual and community scale energy, for instance from wind, hydroelectricity, solar photovoltaic panels, and anaerobic digestions will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- **i. the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape; and**
- **ii. the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents; and**
- **iii. the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.**

Conformity reference: NP objective: 2, 7; Core Strategy: CP1, CP12; Development Management Policies: DM4, DM5; NPPF (2024): 131-140, 161-167

Purpose

7.21. Changes to the environment are already having a tangible effect as global mean temperatures rise. The design of development has a major role to play in reducing these impacts from adverse to neutral, and then moving towards the government objective of net environmental gain. Every development should therefore strive to become self-sufficient in energy input and waste output. That may mean being prepared to go beyond the current regulatory minimum in applying best standards and practice.

7.22. This policy seeks to promote development that has been designed to anticipate and respond to the effects of environmental change (especially climate change, preservation of biodiversity and water management) on local quality of life.

> "…green roofs, use of recycled or environmentally-friendly materials in building, water conservation and recycling, require the planting of native plant species, better landscaping to maximise biodiversity"

Justification

7.23. On 12 June 2019 the Government voted to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a new target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. This is a demanding target, which will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities to businesses and local and national government. As part of this, the government has set an interim target to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.

7.24. Being '2050 ready' means that new development will be required to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions. Unlike Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are more limited in what they can dictate in terms of environmental standards, as they must confirm to the minimum requirements as set out by national policy and building regulations. The ALNP can, however, strongly encourage the design and layout of new development to maximise its potential to be as energy efficient as possible and to encourage the use of renewable energy.

7.25. The Future Homes Standard anticipated to be introduced from 2025 will require CO_2 emissions produced by new homes to be 75-80% lower than those built to current standards. Homes will need to be 'zero carbon ready'. Fossil fuel heating (such as gas boilers) will be banned in new homes, with an expected shift to reliance on heat pumps and heat networks.

7.26. Hertfordshire County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, as a response to the need to act locally and in the context of climate change impacts being observed at the local level: dry riverbeds, reduced water supply, intense weather events, localised flooding and loss of habitats and species. The Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy describes nine ambitions for the county council in enabling and inspiring a sustainable county and these have informed the ALNP.

7.27. The Code for Sustainable Homes was withdrawn by the Government in 2015. This has been replaced by new national technical standards which include new additional optional Building Regulations regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard (this is in

addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations). In addition, the BREEAM is a widely recognised, accredited, independent method for assessing environmental performance of non-residential buildings. Until superseded by nationally prescribed standards, the BREEAM standards for non-residential and multi-residential buildings by nationally recognised certification bodies may also be accepted. For domestic dwellings, and on the advice of Hertfordshire County Council, it is considered that new home developments should aim for an EPC rating of B or above, as currently no standard is set.

7.28. There is an opportunity to improve and promote sustainability in the Parish by:

following basic passive environmental design in a fabric first approach (maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before using mechanical or electrical building services systems).

integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings.

reducing water consumption through grey water systems; and

community energy schemes.

7.29. Policy AL5 seeks to encourage the most energy efficient development possible. Even small improvements on small developments become cumulative.

7.30. It should be noted that TRDC have been exploring options through Local Plan policy to go above and beyond building regulations requirements. Should this take place, these higher requirements should be enforced.

Policy AL6: Heritage assets

POLICY AL6: HERITAGE ASSETS

Designated heritage assets:

A. Development proposals affecting designated heritage assets, either directly or indirectly, should conserve or enhance the significance of the asset and those elements of the setting that contribute to the significance. This could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with specific focus on the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area. These details should be explained in a Heritage Statement.

B. In addition, development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on above and below ground archaeological deposits. Where a scheme has a potential impact on archaeological remains (below or above the ground) a Heritage Statement or similar should be prepared to address how archaeological deposits will be safeguarded.

Conservation Areas:

C. Development proposals in the Abbots Langley Conservation Area and Hunton Bridge Conservation Area should ensure that alterations and new developments contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the historic environment. Development within these areas and their settings should:

- **i. be guided by the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal; and**
- **ii. be designed to a high quality and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Areas and their settings; and**
- **iii. retain those buildings and other features, including trees and hedges, which make a significant contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Areas; and**
- **iv. protect open spaces and vistas important to the character or appearance and setting of the Conservation Areas; and**
- **v. where appropriate, make provision for the enhancement measures.**

Non-designated heritage assets:

D. The Holy Well in Bedmond is identified as a non-designated heritage asset.

Proposals affecting the non-designated heritage assets, including those on the Abbots Langley Local List, will be determined based on national planning policy.

E. A proactive stance will be taken to any heritage assets that may be at risk. This will include working with property owners to find a use that will enable them to be put back into optimum viable use.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 2; Core Strategy: PSP4, CP1, CP12; Development Management Policies: DM3; NPPF (2024): 135, 202, 203, 205-221

Purpose

7.31. This policy recognises the important contribution that heritage assets – designated and non-designated – make to the local character and distinctiveness of Abbots Langley, both individually and collectively. The policy identifies non-designated heritage assets; those which are not currently listed (either nationally or locally), so that the impact on them and their setting is considered as part of any relevant development proposals (see Appendix F).

"those with spiritual, historic and cultural significance in Abbots Langley, for instance St Lawrence Church, parade of shops between Henderson Hall and the Abbots House, buildings opposite St Lawrence churchyard"

"historic buildings are an important part of the historical and cultural fabric of the (Abbots Langley) village centre and should be given significance and protection in the Neighbourhood Plan. These buildings are part of our local identity, history and culture, and should be recognised as such"

Justification

7.32. The Neighbourhood Plan area has 74 listed buildings and scheduled monuments of which one is Grade I listed: the Church of St Lawrence the Martyr, dedicated in 1154. This Norman structure replaced an earlier Saxon Church on this site.

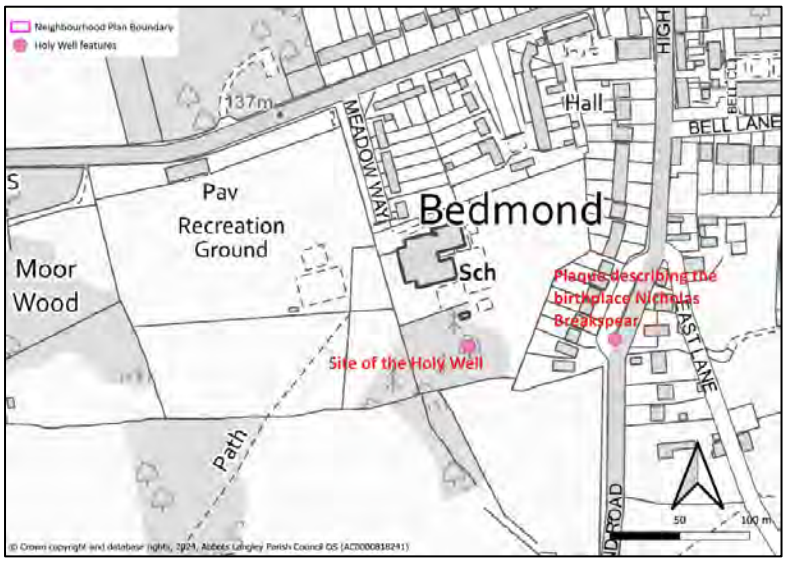
7.33. There are also two Conservation Areas : Abbots Langley Conservation Area and Hunton Bridge Conservation Area. The Conservation Area appraisals for these areas are now over 10 years old, with Hunton Bridge's dating from 2008. The 1990 Act requires local authorities to review their areas and publish proposals for their conservation and enhancement "from time to time". This is generally considered to be every 5 years, and an action will be to update the appraisals to ensure they provide a robust evidence base for the policies and proposals in this neighbourhood plan, as well as forthcoming local plan development. In the meantime, the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code provides information about these areas in relation to design and management.

7.34. In addition to these nationally recognised heritage assets, there are other non-listed buildings which are of local historical importance and contribute greatly to the history and character of the parish. Some of these are included in the Local List maintained by Three Rivers District Council, but not all, and the Neighbourhood Plan engagement process revealed that local people were keen to acknowledge those local buildings and other heritage assets considered to be important to the local community because of historical significance. The National Planning Practice Guidance supports the identification of such non-designated heritage assets through the neighbourhood planning process (Paragraph 018-039).

7.35. The Heritage Gateway provides a list of assets in the Parish that have been identified and collated by Historic England based on county-wide historic environment records. The record should be consulted by prospective developers.

7.36. One further asset, the Holy Well in Bedmond (*Figure 13)*, is considered to be significant from a local heritage perspective and should be a non-designated heritage asset. Further detail about the asset and why it is considered to be significant from a heritage angle is shown in Appendix F.

Figure 13: Map showing the location of the Holy Well



7.37. In parallel with this policy, an associated action will be for the community to consider any additional assets that should be identified as non-designated heritage asset. It is proposed that these assets are considered by TRDC for inclusion on of the Abbots Langley Local List. However, the inclusion of any building or structure on such a register is not necessary for the application of this policy.





Images show: Church of St Lawrence the Martyr - Grade 1 Listed; and a commemorating stone of the birthplace of Pope Adrian IV in Bedmond, the only Pope born in England (Photo credit: G Ball)

Local Heritage at Risk

7.38. Historic England produces an annual Register of Heritage at Risk. Outside of London it does not include Grade II listings, apart from churches. On the Langleybury Estate, now part of the nearby Grove Hotel grounds, are proposals to restore fully the Grade Two listed building, Langleybury House, built in 1720. This is on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register. There are proposals also to replace the derelict Langleybury Secondary School that closed in 1996.



Langleybury House, Langleybury, Abbots Langley

8. LOCAL ECONOMY

Policy AL7: Retaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Abbots Langley village centre and other local centres

POLICY AL7: RETAINING AND ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF ABBOTS LANGLEY VILLAGE CENTRE AND OTHER LOCAL CENTRES

Abbots Langley Village Centre

A. Recognising there is a need to maintain the economic health, vitality and viability of the Village Centre, as defined on the Policies Maps, in balance with residential development and infrastructure, development proposals that provide a balance of uses such as retail, leisure and community, commercial and residential - will be supported in principle. Proposals that add to or sustain the distribution of local neighbourhood convenience shops, located so that they are accessible on foot or by bicycle, will be supported.

B. Development proposals to enhance Abbots Langley Village Centre, as set out in the concept Village Centre Masterplan, will be supported where this will not have a detrimental impact on local heritage assets.

C. Development proposals within the following four areas will be assessed having regard to how the proposed design and layout has been influenced by the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code and the framework proposals set out in Chapter 5 of the concept Abbots Langley Village Centre Masterplan (locations mapped in the Masterplan):

i. Around the Library and St Saviour's Church

ii. In front of St Lawrence Church

iii. Main Shopping Parade

iv. Breakspeare Special School site

D. Positive consideration will be given to development proposals that improve the quality of shop fronts and signage in accordance with the advice contained in the Abbots Langley Parish Design Guidance and Code and the Conservation Area Appraisal.

E. Proposals that offer opportunities for housing on otherwise underused upper floors will be supported, both where separate access can be achieved and where these are shown to be no longer suitable for commercial use.

F. The use of E, F1 and F2 premises for temporary uses will be supported in principle. Such uses include 'pop up' shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events. Proposals must demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential, through noise and pollution. Such uses will generally not be considered appropriate if the operation of the business requires a large number of vehicle parking spaces in order to function.

G. The reuse of heritage assets within Abbots Langley Village Centre for activities that will enhance the vitality and viability of the Village Centre is strongly encouraged. Any

alterations to non-listed historic buildings will need to be sympathetic to their historic and architectural character.

H. The placing of tables and chairs outside eating and drinking establishments (Use Classes E, F1 and F2, including where consumption of food and drink is an ancillary activity) is supported in principle, subject to them not impeding pedestrian movement and subject to any necessary street café licence being obtained from the County Council.

Local neighbourhoods

Seven neighbourhoods are identified (Abbotswood Park, Bedmond/Pimlico/Toms Lane (east), Boundary Way, Coates Way, Hunton Bridge /Langleybury, Leavesden, and Roman Gardens/Gade Valley/ Toms Lane (west)) and their catchment areas and main facilities are shown on *Figures 33-39*.

I. Proposals which result in the loss of existing local neighbourhood convenience shops (Use Class F2) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that it is:

- **i not viable, or unlikely to become commercially viable, to operate the number of existing services/facilities within the locality; and**
- **ii it has been the subject of appropriate marketing for a period of at least 18 months.**

Bedmond Village Centre

Bedmond's local catchment is shown at *Figure 33.*

J. To secure the ongoing vitality of Bedmond village centre, proposals which protect, enhance and promote a diverse range of village centre uses - including retail, leisure, cultural and community - will be supported in principle.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 3, 5; Sore Strategy: CP6, CP7; NPPF (2024): 85, 88, 89, 90, 96, 98, 101, 111a, 125

Purpose

8.1. The policies in this section seek to reinforce the role of Abbots Langley village centre, and the smaller local centres, to encourage the broadening of uses within them and maintaining them as places for community interaction and self-sufficiency for basic services.



Justification

8.2. Policy CP7 of the adopted TRDC Core Strategy classifies Abbots Langley as a 'District Centre', along with other places in the district such as South Oxhey and Chorleywood. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy (2011) seeks to promote and encourage activities in these centres so they continue to be the prime focus for community life. This applies not only to Abbots Langley

village, but to the rural areas and settlements it serves. Some of the rural settlements, such as Bedmond, also have small centres, which serve a predominantly local need.

Abbots Langley Village Centre

8.3. Abbots Langley village centre represents a focal point for the local communities in the parish, providing not only retail opportunities, but also a valuable social, healthcare, leisure and recreational components. It is home to the Henderson Hub, St Lawrence Church, St Saviours Catholic Church and the Methodist Church, all of which provide important meeting spaces. The self-sufficiency provided by such a vibrant village centre is highly valued among the local community. As spending habits evolve and competition from the internet and nearby centres intensifies, it will become increasingly important to make sure that the levers are in place to sustain these areas as vibrant and viable spaces that meet the needs of the resident population, surrounding communities and visitors to the area. The main concerns raised by the community are:

Protecting and enhancing the retail and services offer - The loss of shops and services is seen by residents as a threat to the village centre. The recent loss of two local banks a travel agency, a dry-cleaning shop and butcher's shop has had a marked impact locally. Whilst the forthcoming changes to permitted development rights will make it easier for properties to effect a change of use to residential, it is felt that a more flexible approach to encourage the reuse of vacant shop units for continued retail, commercial or community use would be of benefit.

Expanding the village centre 'offer' - An opportunity was seen in providing for more food and beverage establishments to make Abbots Langley village centre a more attractive place for tourists to visit, with an emphasis on 'longer stay' and the 'evening economy' as opposed to simply day visitors and shoppers. There are public spaces in the centre of the village that could be suitable for housing temporary events and markets. Finally, there is scope, as opportunities arise, to re-use both vacant buildings and buildings with historic value for community, cultural or village centre activities (as demonstrated with the Henderson Hub initiative by the community).

Public realm improvements - Many people suggested that the village centre could be made more attractive, particularly as more tourists are visiting the area. Planters and trees could be added and there is scope to consider whether the pavements are wide enough in parts to enable shops and cafes to display/seat outside and enable on-street activities to encourage footfall. The 20mph zone in the village inner area was introduced in 2020 to increase pedestrian safety.

Signage - Feedback has suggested that shop signage could be improved and made more 'uniform'. Signage of the key facilities and walking routes could also be improved.

Car parking - There are over 120 free, off-street public parking places serving the village centre in addition to some designated free on-street parking. Electric vehicle charging points could be made available in the car parks to encourage more sustainable vehicle types.

8.4. To inform the future planning and land-use of Abbots Langley Village Centre, AECOM were commissioned to prepare a Masterplan for the village centre (see Appendix H). This report

provides an evidence base and Masterplan for the Village Centre. It uses the 20-minute Walkable Neighbourhood concept and in consultation with the local community it presents proposals for four different areas of the centre, focusing on enhancing its historic assets, improving public spaces, identifying areas for improved land uses and opportunities to promote increased footfall and sustainable travel. Maps, diagrams and photographs are used to illustrate each set of proposals.

8.5. The Masterplan identified the Breakspeare School site as an 'ideal site' to relocate the Health Centre and expand its facilities when the school relocates to new premises in 2028/9. Working with the existing Vine House Health Centre, a separate Feasibility Study was commissioned to evaluate the suitability of the site to become the new Health Centre.

8.6. TRDC is expected to produce a new Local Plan that would plan for many new houses to be built over the next 15 years. It seems, with this push for new housing, less attention has been paid to the comprehensive planning of the use of land, adequate infrastructure including schools, primary health services and the design of public realm along High Street. There are also concerns about the loss of green belt land for housing development.

8.7. The objective of the Village Centre Masterplan (see Appendix H) is to provide a high-level concept masterplan based on 'the 20-Minute Neighbourhood principles' for the central area of the village. This shows how the central area can evolve as future developments come forward. This Masterplan aligns with the Neighbourhood Plan and informs the emerging Three Rivers District Council Local Plan. The Masterplan provides an evidence base and proposals that should be read in conjunction with the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code completed by AECOM in June 2021 (see Appendix E).

8.8. The Masterplan shows the opportunities that exist in the central area of the village to support existing facilities and businesses and improve the public realm along the High Street. The key components of the scheme are as follows:

To promote a highly distinctive local character that reflect the heritage of the village centre.

To retain and create well-accessible green spaces.

To connect the existing community facilities and businesses in order to increase patronage.

Upgrade connections to the village centre for all residents.

8.9. The Masterplan sets out further details of the central area of the village including four detailed framework proposals in different parts of the central area. These sites are as follows:

Area in front of the library and St Saviours.

Area next to St Lawrence Church.

Area in front of shopping parade.

Breakspeare Special School Site.

8.10. This report encourages the village to be self-efficient by following principles set out in the 20-Minute Neighbourhood principles.



Images show: Abbots Langley Village centre; and Bedmond local centre (Photo credit: C Gardner)

8.11. In relation to Clause G of Policy AL7, the Local List maintained by Three Rivers District Council contains a list of non-designated heritage assets in the Parish. Policy AL6 identifies one further asset (the Holy Well) in Bedmond.

Other local and neighbourhood centres in the Parish

8.12. Regarding the other smaller communities located in the Parish, individual catchment area maps have been prepared for:

Abbotswood Park
Bedmond/Pimlico/Toms Lane (east)
Boundary Way
Coates Way
Hunton Bridge /Langleybury
Leavesden
Roman Gardens/Gade Valley/ Toms Lane (west)

8.13. These maps (see *Figures 33 to 39* in Chapter 16) show what community facilities are available to each community within an 800m distance from its centre, illustrating the extent to which they comply with the characteristics of a 20-minute community. Each community has a summary report listing any key issues and opportunities affecting the area. Furtherfield and Hillside are a continuous extension of the Abbots Langley Village and are not given separate catchment area maps.

8.14. Community profiles and an assessment of the local facilities serving the other communities in the Parish are discussed in Chapter 16. A more detailed assessment is provided for the Bedmond Village – see Appendix I. This explains the local aspirations for this village.

Policy AL8: Supporting recreation and sustainable tourism

POLICY AL8: SUPPORTING RECREATION AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

A. Development proposals for recreational and sustainable tourism activities, including additional visitor accommodation and a Visitor Centre, will be supported in suitable locations where all of the following are met:

- **i. there are demonstrable economic and social benefits of the proposals; and**
- **ii. there is no significant detrimental impact on the existing community; and**
- **iii. adequate provision for parking is included, particularly for proposals within or adjacent to the local centres; and**
- **iv. they are designed in accordance with the Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Code.**

B. The signage for visitor attractions and facilities should be clear and further detail is provided in the Place & Movement Planning and Design Guidance for Hertfordshire Part 4, which includes the criteria for brown tourist signs or any successor document.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 3; Core Strategy: CP1, CP6; NPPF (2024): 85, 88, 89

Purpose

8.15. The report, "Economic Value of Tourism in the United Kingdom shows tourism is worth £147 billion annually to the UK, about 5 percent of the national economy, when including both direct and supply chain impacts. It supports nearly one in every 15 jobs across the UK, about 3.4 million jobs. At the district level, the adopted Core Strategy does not include an explicit policy on tourism and the visitor economy. This is a growing sector in the area. This policy seeks to ensure that the parish capitalises on the benefits by encouraging developments promoting sustainable tourism.

Justification

8.16. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council states that the aim of sustainable tourism is to increase the benefits and to reduce the negative impacts caused by tourism for destinations. This can be achieved by:

Protecting natural environments, wildlife and natural resources when developing and managing tourism activities

Providing authentic tourist experiences that celebrate and conserve heritage and culture

Creating socio-economic benefits for communities through employment and income earning opportunities

8.17. Independent research commissioned by Visit Herts has revealed an impressive picture of tourism across the county, with strong visitor numbers, a high volume of day trips and overnight stays. The visitor economy in Hertfordshire was worth approximately £2.3 billion in 2023, with 27 million trips (day and staying) into the county. Tourism also supports 32,445

full time equivalent jobs within the county with the industry now accounting for 6% of the county's total employment.

8.18. Abbots Langley parish is well-placed to capitalise on this growing sector. It is home to the world famous Warner Bros. Studio Tour London – The Making of Harry Potter, which attracts both day-trippers and overnighters; in fact it is the biggest tourist attraction in Hertfordshire. In addition, there is extensive attractive countryside, woodland and parkland, and a wealth of heritage assets, as well as the village itself.

"encourage visitors to the Warner Bros. Studio to spend time in the village"

8.19. Development that supports the visitor economy, including the provision of additional visitor accommodation and a visitor centre – either in an existing facility or as part of a new development – is supported. Equally, Chapters 12 and 16 of this Neighbourhood Plan explore some of the specific projects in the parish that could be improved. One of these is the Grand Union Canal corridor, which has potential to be regenerated into a visitor hub and sustainable corridor for walkers, cyclists and canal boats.

8.20. The signage for visitor attractions and facilities should be clear and further detail is provided in the Hertfordshire County Council Highways Signing Guidance, 2012, which includes the criteria for brown tourist signs.



The Grand Union Canal - the western boundary of the Parish

Policy AL9: A safe, attractive and welcoming village centre

POLICY AL9: A SAFE, ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING VILLAGE CENTRE

Development proposals to enhance the public realm in Abbots Langley Village Centre, in accordance with the principles of the Village Centre Masterplan, will be encouraged, particularly where they enhance movement by pedestrians. In particular:

i. **the widening of footways and pavements;**
ii. **the provision of cycling facilities, including cycle paths and secure, covered cycle stands;**
iii. **the provision of electric charging points;**
iv. **the provision of information points providing guidance, information and news for visitors and residents.**

Conformity reference: NP objective: 3, 5; Core Strategy: PSP2, CP1, CP12; NPPF (2024): 88, 90, 96, 98, 103, 105, 109, 131-141

Purpose

8.21. This policy provides support for initiatives that will enhance the village centre public realm.

Justification

8.22. Abbots Langley Village Centre has a high-quality historical core, most of which is designated as a Conservation Area, with 25 nationally listed and 21 locally listed buildings. This has served to create a high-quality shopping experience for residents and visitors alike.

8.23. Maintaining and, where possible, improving the public realm environment will help to sustain the Village's distinctiveness and appeal. Areas for potential improvement include:

Accessibility – ensuring that the pavements are sufficiently wide to enable pedestrians, including those with additional mobility requirements, full access to the centre.

Signage and interpretation – to ease wayfinding and provide information on the setting and historical importance of the village centre.

Sustainable modes of transport – providing infrastructure to encourage cycling, such as safe storage and access for electric vehicles, bus provision, timetable displays and information to assist visitors and residents.

9. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

9.1 The Parish of Abbots Langley falls largely within the Metropolitan Green Belt; one of the few exceptions being Abbots Langley Village. It is this openness and greenness that serves to create a strong sense of belonging and distinctive place among local residents. Access to the natural environment brings multiple benefits – promoting recreation, wellbeing, protecting biodiversity and an attractive place to live and work.

9.2 Bearing in mind the level of development that has taken place over the last few decades, and that which is planned, it is vital that the remaining green spaces that surround and weave throughout each community are safeguarded, preventing them from coalescing.

Policy AL10: Natural landscape and environment

POLICY AL10: NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

A. Development proposals should conserve and, where practicable, enhance the natural environment, landscape character and rural setting of the Parish. Development proposals should be informed by, and where possible should seek to deliver the aims of, the Hertfordshire Landscape Area Assessment (Area 9), incorporating natural features typical of the parish, for instance trees, woodland, hedgerows, parkland, water sources (natural springs, etc.) and mature, planted gardens.

B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters:

<u>Trees and woodland:</u>

i. avoided in the first instance, and minimised, any necessary loss of trees and woodland in the design of any scheme and avoided any damage to existing trees or woodlands during construction or as a result of development.

ii. where trees and/or shrubs are replaced with new plantings, native or locally appropriate varieties attractive to insects, birds and other wildlife must be used. Where possible, at least two trees should be planted for every tree removed.

<u>Hedgerows:</u>

iii. natural boundaries (i.e. hedgerows in preference to fencing) are supported.

iv. avoid the loss of, or deterioration in the quality of, hedgerows. Where access points to new developments involve the loss of a section of hedgerow, the access should include trees at either end of the retained hedgerow to aid wildlife to cross overhead from crown to crown.

<u>Wildlife-friendly features:</u>

provide suitable wildlife-friendly features (such as hedgehog holes in new residential fencing, bird and bat nesting boxes, swift boxes and ponds). Swift bricks shall be required on all new developments, with the general aim across a development of a minimum of one nest box per dwelling or for higher rise and non-residential developments, appropriate to the scale

and type of the proposal. Swift bricks should be installed in accordance with best practice guidance contained in the British Standard for integral nest boxes, BS42021:2022.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 4; Core Strategy: CP1, CP9, CP12; Development Management Policies: DM6, DM7, DM11; NPPF (2024): 103, 136, 187, 188

Purpose

9.3 This policy seeks to ensure that important natural features that contribute to the character of the area are not adversely impacted by development. Such development should support and ideally enhance biodiversity.

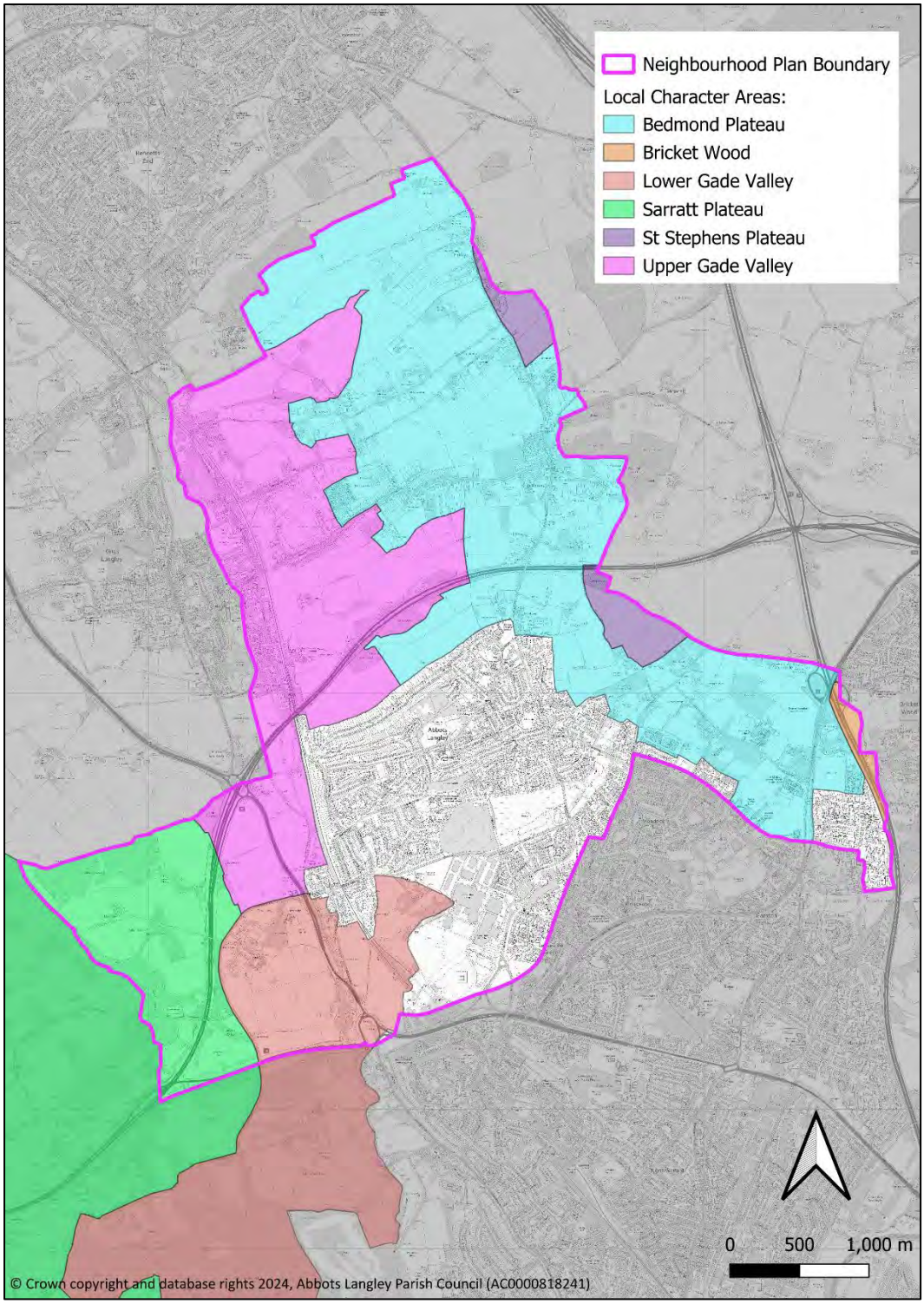
"farmland is an important local amenity; it is used all year round by many local walkers, cyclists and horse riders. It is also a haven for wildlife"

Justification

9.4 *Figure 14* provides a map of the Local Character Areas within which the Parish lies. The Bedmond Plateau is characterised by *"A gently undulating plateau area of small to medium-sized fields that are predominantly pasture. Woodlands are discrete and modest except for Hanging and Pie Corner Woods to the east of Bedmond. A visually contained and coherent landscape with a mature settled appearance arising from a number of traditional farms. Twentieth century development is chiefly residential ribbon development with long gardens".*

9.5 The western part of the parish falls within the River Gade Local Character Area, a chalk stream corridor running through Hertfordshire, defined by a broad v-shaped valley with mixed farmland, water meadows, and pasture. It features, historic, parkland, woodland, and urban, sections. The area is marked by a mix of natural, scenic, and developed landscapes. (See the TRDC interactive planning map showing how Local Planning Policies apply to areas in the parish).

Figure 14: Local Character Areas



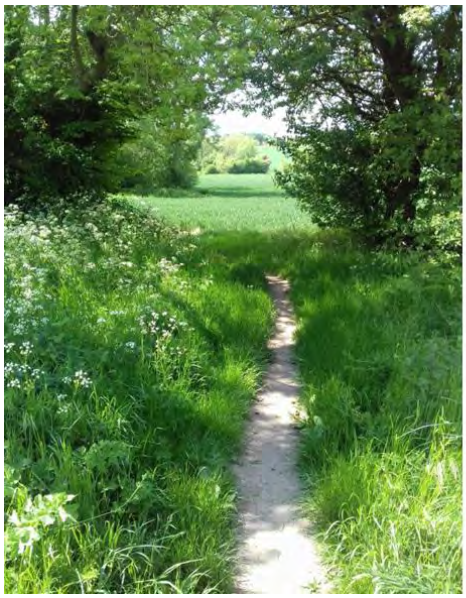
9.6 Some distinctive features of the area are not protected, yet provide vital habitats for flora and fauna, include trees, woodland, hedgerows, mature planted gardens, agricultural and grazing land. Hedgerows are a major part of the wildlife corridors that stretch across the parish.

9.7 Information and data on local species for the area are available from the Herts Biodiversity Record Centre. These habitats and species have evolved in response to local geology and

land use. Some may have taken hundreds of years to establish, and ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees cannot be replaced in any meaningful way.

9.8 Developments should therefore seek to protect and enhance these habitats where possible. This should include an appropriate landscape and ecological management plan which includes a list of trees and shrubs to be planted, which should include native species wherever practical.

9.9 National policy indicates that planning permission should be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland or ancient or veteran trees unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.





The rural character of the parish (Photo credit for left photo of footpath: G Ball)

Policy AL11: Green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity net gain

POLICY AL11: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE AND BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

A. Development proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces will be supported.

B. As appropriate, development proposals should aim to deliver a measurable biodiversity net gain of 20%, where possible, but at a minimum, a net gain of at least 10%. Where biodiversity net gain units cannot be delivered on-site, they should be prioritised for use within the parish, focusing on maintaining and improving identified biodiversity opportunity areas.

C. Proposals that support the enhancement and management of Areas of Particular Biodiversity Importance identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be supported, including linking these to the wildlife corridors. Proposals which cause unacceptable harm to such connectivity will not be supported.

D. Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for the planting of additional native, climate resilient trees and/or continuous hedgerows along streets to provide wildlife corridors and to offset the effects of air pollution and to provide cooling and shelter for people as well as habitat for wildlife will be supported.

E. Subject to their scale, nature and location, proposals that respond positively to the Building with Nature 12 Standards (and any successor document) will be supported.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 4; Core Strategy: CP1, CP9, CP12; Development Management Policies: DM6, DM7; NPPF (2024): 135, 136, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 195

Purpose

9.10 This policy seeks to enhance the multiple benefits of green spaces, including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity as well as their role in capturing carbon to mitigate global warming. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure.

"gardens, soil, farmland, woodlands, green spaces, more trees"

"Policies could also involve proactive action such as incorporation of wildlife crossing structures. There may be other opportunities to improve this habitat connectivity and help support nature (on which ultimately all human life depends). This connectivity is particularly important in Abbots Langley as the civic parish is bounded on two sides by the M25. What was taken for granted in the past cannot be so in future, e.g. hedgehogs are predicted to be extinct in Hertfordshire within the next 20 years. What was once common, will no longer exist."

"Climate change and habitat loss are putting species at risk including pollinators and pest controllers. Arable farming and growing-your-own are features of our neighbourhood which would be impacted. There is now an opportunity for initiatives like the Neighbourhood Plan to recognise and establish ways to address these issues."

Justification

9.11 Where possible, it is important to enhance the green (land-based) and blue (waterways and ponds) infrastructure assets of the parish. *Figure 14* shows the green corridors within the area. These are particularly important spaces to provide critical wildlife refuges and stepping-stones that prevent species becoming isolated. They are also valued by the local communities for recreational purposes and for visitors to the area.



Bedmond Horsefield -meadow habitat (Photo credit: J Smith)

9.12 *Figure 15* also includes the proposals set out in the Three Rivers Green Infrastructure Plan (2011) for increased greening in the parish. This seeks the creation of a green travel link between Leavesden Country Park and Longdean Meadows, which would provide a safe and attractive car free link between two significant semi-natural green spaces, and also an extension to the existing Health Walk at Leavesden Country Park.

9.13 Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was

beforehand. The word 'biodiversity' comes from the term 'biological diversity'. The DEFRA biodiversity metric has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value, in terms of habitats, and the consequent measures required to ensure measurable net gain. Net gain involves a post development increase in biodiversity units of 10%.

9.14 Natural England considers this to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering biodiversity net gain. Ecological assessment by suitably qualified people must utilise this metric on all habitats to determine net gain. Ecological reports must be consistent with BS 42020 Biodiversity – code of practise for planning and development.

9.15 If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for instance by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then proposals should not be supported. The green and blue infrastructure assets of the parish should be maximised and made properly accessible, where this would not put pressure on wildlife. Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community, contributing the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Plan proposals where possible.

9.16 The Environment Act includes provision for a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain. Key elements of the Environment Act are now in place. As such Policy AL11 does not repeat the national requirements for biodiversity net gain. rather it seeks to identify a complementary policy approach. It supports an advisory uplift in biodiversity net gain, where possible, and in line with the aspirations of the National Wildlife Trusts. It also advises that where net gain cannot be delivered on-site, it should be prioritised to within the parish. Three Rivers's 2022 audit of BOAs, "Minor Greenspace Audit Identifying Opportunities" identifies a number of sites in the parish that could be suitable locations for improving net gain as well as the sorts of improvements that could be sought. Some of these spaces coincide with the Local Green Spaces identified in this ALNP. Others include Gypsy Lane (owned by Warner Brothers) and the Horses Field. Project 5 (Measures to enhance biodiversity and natural corridors in the Parish) in Chapter 12 sets out the aspiration to identify additional such sites.

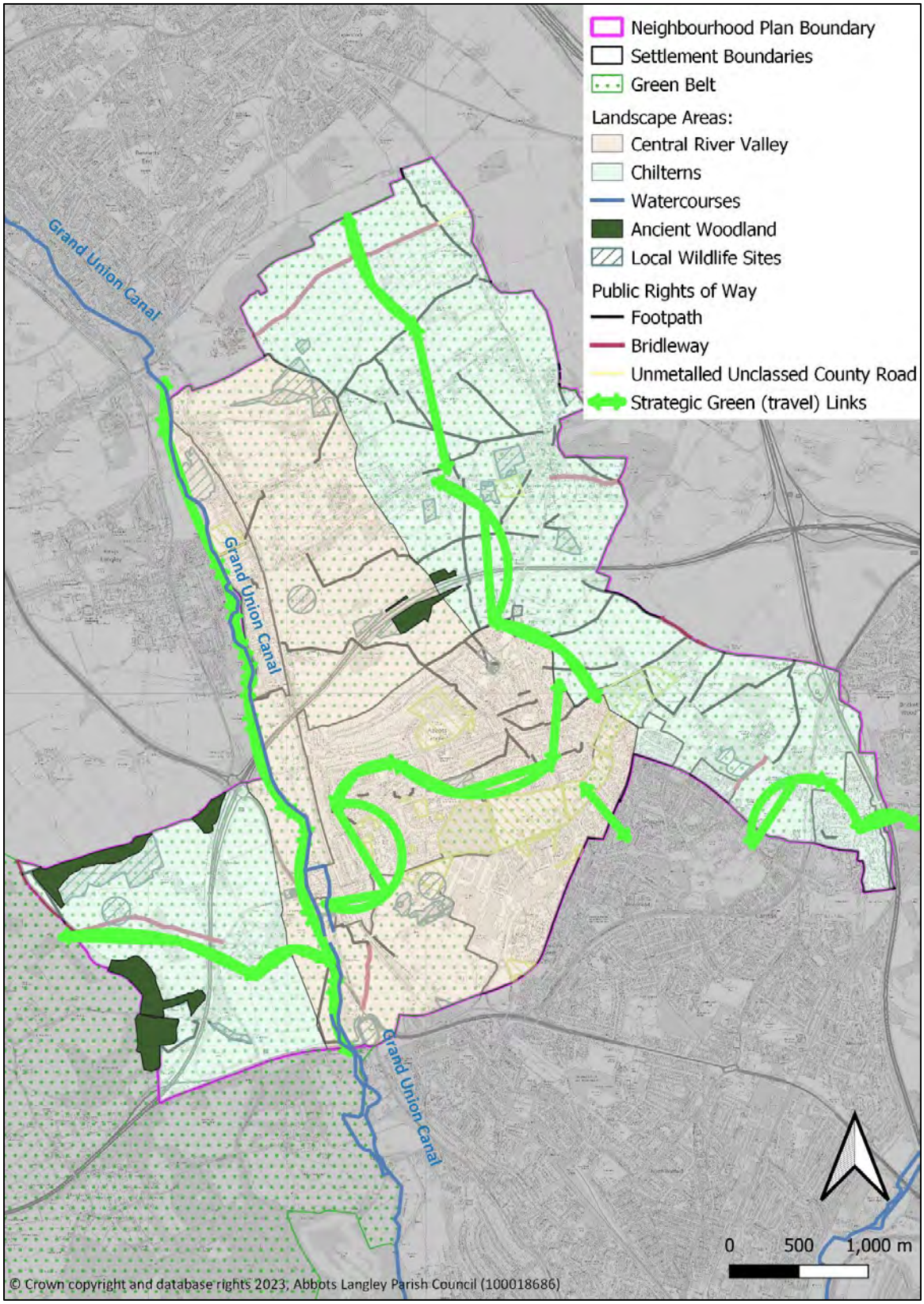
9.17 The Act also recognises the need to protect what it describes as "Nature Recovery Networks", joined-up system of places important for wildlife on land. A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hertfordshire is being prepared and will inform opportunities for the parish in terms of supporting biodiversity.

9.18 Lastly, development proposals should be guided by the Building with Nature Standards to ensure that high-quality green infrastructure is integral to placemaking, putting nature at the heart of development in a way that is good for people and for wildlife. Developers are encouraged to seek the Building with Nature Award accreditation:

Building With Nature 12 Standards



Figure 15: Map of local green and blue infrastructure in the parish of Abbots Langley



Policy AL12: Locally significant views

POLICY AL12: LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

The Plan identifies the following locally significant views (mapped in *Figure 16):*

View 1: View to the north from Hyde Farm
View 2: View to Potters Crouch Hamlet
View 3: View to the Church of the Ascension and former White Hart Pub
View 4: View from Longspring Wood to Local Wildlife Site and the Green Belt
View 5: View of St Lawrence Church
View 6: View to Langley Lane Play Area and Horses Field
View 7: View from Langleybury Lane to the open fields looking across to the River Gade Valley and beyond
View 8: View through Longspring Wood Nature Reserve
View 9: Long-range view across the Gade Valley
View 10: Series of long views south towards Watford & N. London

New development should not detract from the key landscape features and other attributes of these views. It should be designed in a way that demonstrates how it has protected longer distance views out into the countryside by maintaining visual connections into the surrounding landscape.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 4; Core Strategy: CP1, CP12; Development Management Policies: DM7; NPPF (2024): 131 to 135, 187

Purpose

9.19 The policy seeks to ensure that adequate weight is given to conservation and enhancement of views identified as significant by local people and visitors.

"It's vital we retain what is left of open, green spaces and fields in the area in order to retain its semi-rural feel and pleasant environment"

Justification

9.20 Views within and around the village are an important part of what gives the parish its distinctive feel. This is valued by both residents and visitors. The topography of the surrounding area means that there are some significant long-distance views which define Abbots Langley and make it so popular with residents and tourists alike.

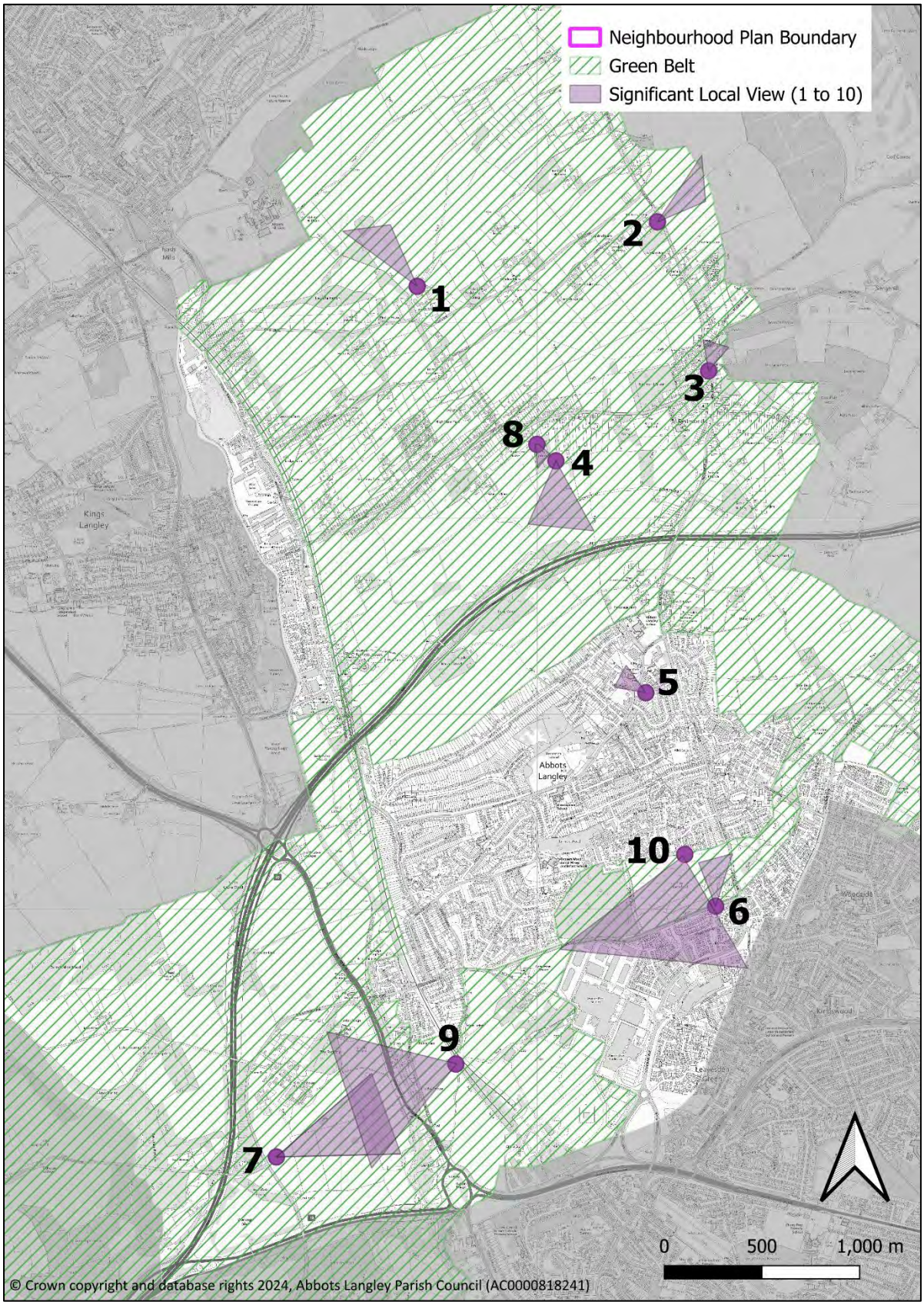
9.21 While the parish benefits from a series of panoramas, the following views are considered to hold particular local significance, with many contributing to the significance of a local heritage asset and enabling greater appreciation of those assets and the wider heritage and natural environment. Therefore, they are worthy of protection. Full details of the

views, including photographs and text explaining why they are special, are included in Appendix G. A map, illustrating the location of the views, is included at *Figure 16*.

9.22 Policy AL12 requires that development proposals are designed in a way that safeguards the locally significant views. It attempts to provide some flexibility for the wide range of development proposals which may come forward within the Plan period. In the majority of cases, proposals will be of a minor nature and will have little or no effect on the identified views. In circumstances where the proposed development is likely to have an impact on any identified key view, the planning application concerned should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Any appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated within the design of the proposed development and captured in the assessment.

9.23 *Figure 16* shows a map of 10 locally significant views in the Abbots Langley Parish. These views are explained in greater detail in Chapter 3, Section 5 of the AECOM Design Guidance and Code for Abbots Langley Parish (see Appendix E and Appendix G) The views which typify the character of the Parish are not just landscape features but include some distinctive buildings.

Figure 16: Map of locally significant views in the Parish of Abbots Langley (numbering cross-references to Policy AL12)



Policy AL13: Local Green Space

POLICY AL13: LOCAL GREEN SPACE

The following spaces (including one cluster of spaces), as shown on *Figures 17 and 18* and on the Policies Maps are designated as a local green spaces:

1. **Primrose Hill playing fields**
2. **Longspring Wood Grounds**
3. **Bedmond playing fields**
4. **Bell Lane Corner**
5. **Manor House Grounds**
6. **Millennium Gardens**
7. **Kitters Green**
8. **Tanners Wood**
9. **Hazelwood Lane/ Upper Highway (cluster of 7 spaces)**
10. **Tanners Hill Green**
11. **School Mead Green**
12. **Abbots Langley Horses' Field**
13. **Leavesden Country Park**
14. **Leavesden High Road / Aerodrome Way/ Halifax Close/ Westfield Close cluster**
15. **South Way Playing Fields**
16. **Langleybury cricket ground**
17. **Lower Field Warner Brothers**

Local policy for managing development on a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belt.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 4; Core Strategy: CP1, CP9; Development Management Policies: DM6, DM7, DM11; NPPF (2024): 106-108, 153 to 160, 198

Purpose

9.24 Protecting green spaces was consistently a top priority for residents in the engagement process for the Neighbourhood Plan. This policy seeks to designate a series of Local Green Spaces that are valued by the community, so that they can be safeguarded for future generations.

> "Green space is important to us such as Jubilee Garden, Tanners Wood, Horses Field and provide more"

Justification

9.25 Under the NPPF, neighbourhood plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the local community. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. The NPPF states that Local Green Spaces should only be designated:

"where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."

9.26 When designating Local Green Spaces, it is important to consider what protection is already afforded to an area and whether the designation will provide any further safeguard. Many of the green spaces identified during the consultation, for instance, are in Green Belt, and have therefore largely been excluded from the policy. 17 areas have been identified by the community as being of value to them and in need of protection. These are listed in the policy.

9.27 Details of how each one of the above sites meets the NPPF Local Green Space criteria is contained in Appendix G. *Figures 17* and *18* show the Local Green Spaces on a map. *Figure 19* is the 'Green and Blue Infrastructure Map' from the AECOM Design Guidance and Code for Abbots Langley Parish (Appendix E, F18 page 21.) and *Figure 20* is a map of the designated open spaces in the Parish of Abbots Langley.



Annual Summer Carnival on Abbots Village Park and Woodlands, Manor House

Figure 17: Local Green Spaces (1 to 4)

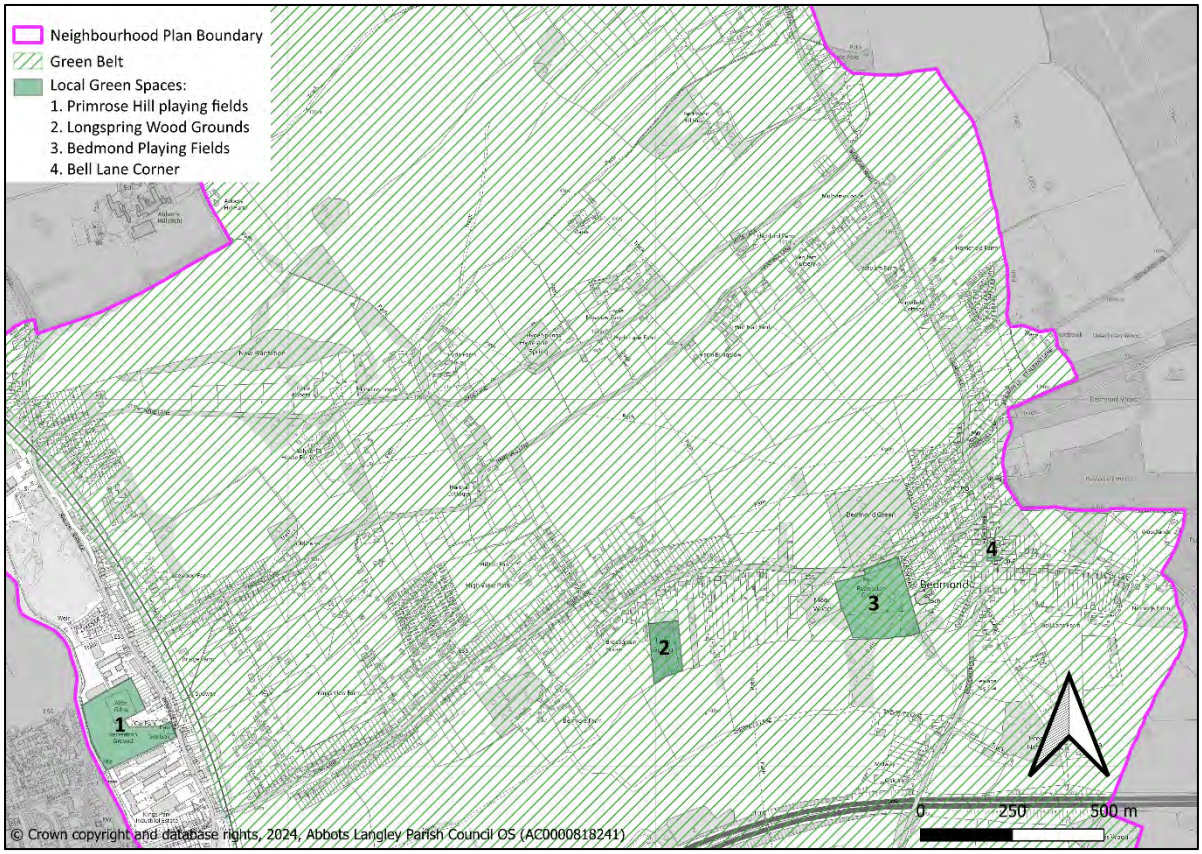


Figure 18: Local Green Spaces (5-17)

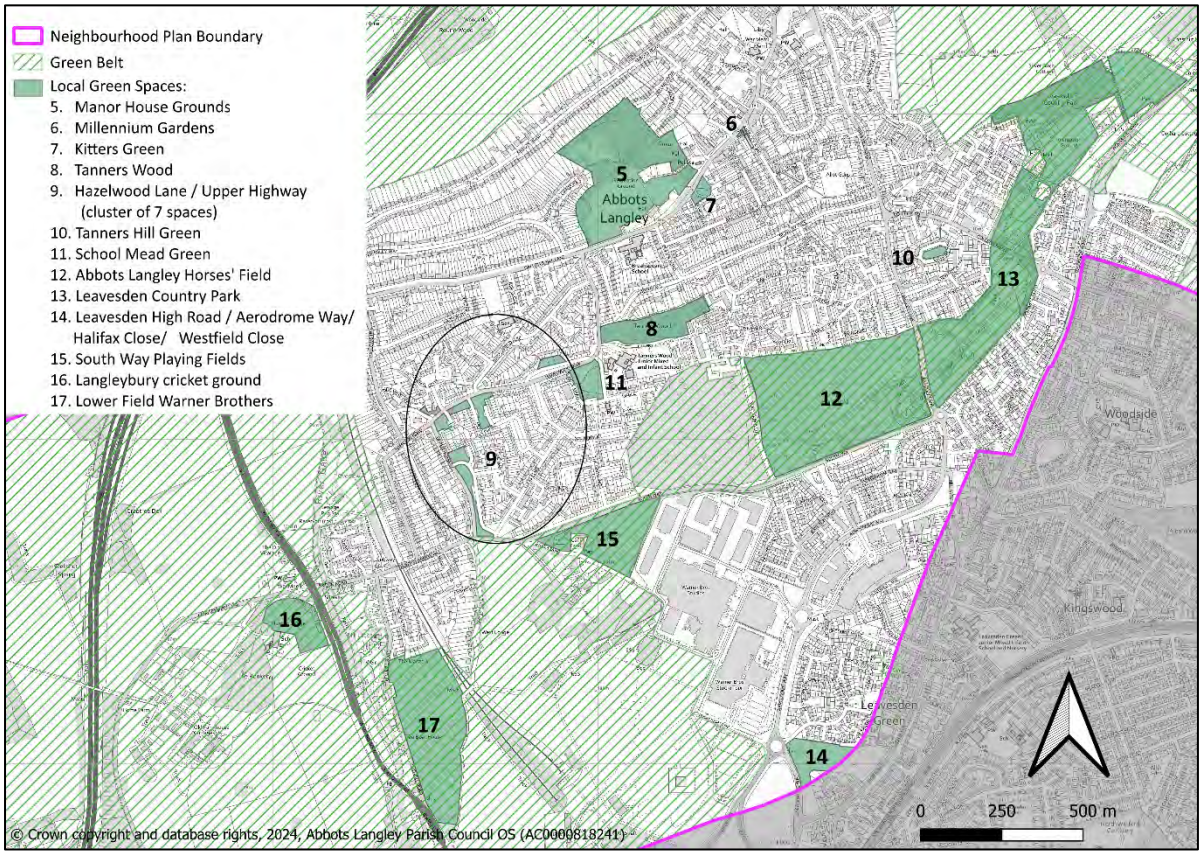


Figure 19: Green and Blue Infrastructure Map from the AECOM Design Guidance and Code for Abbots Langley Parish (Appendix E- F18 page 21)

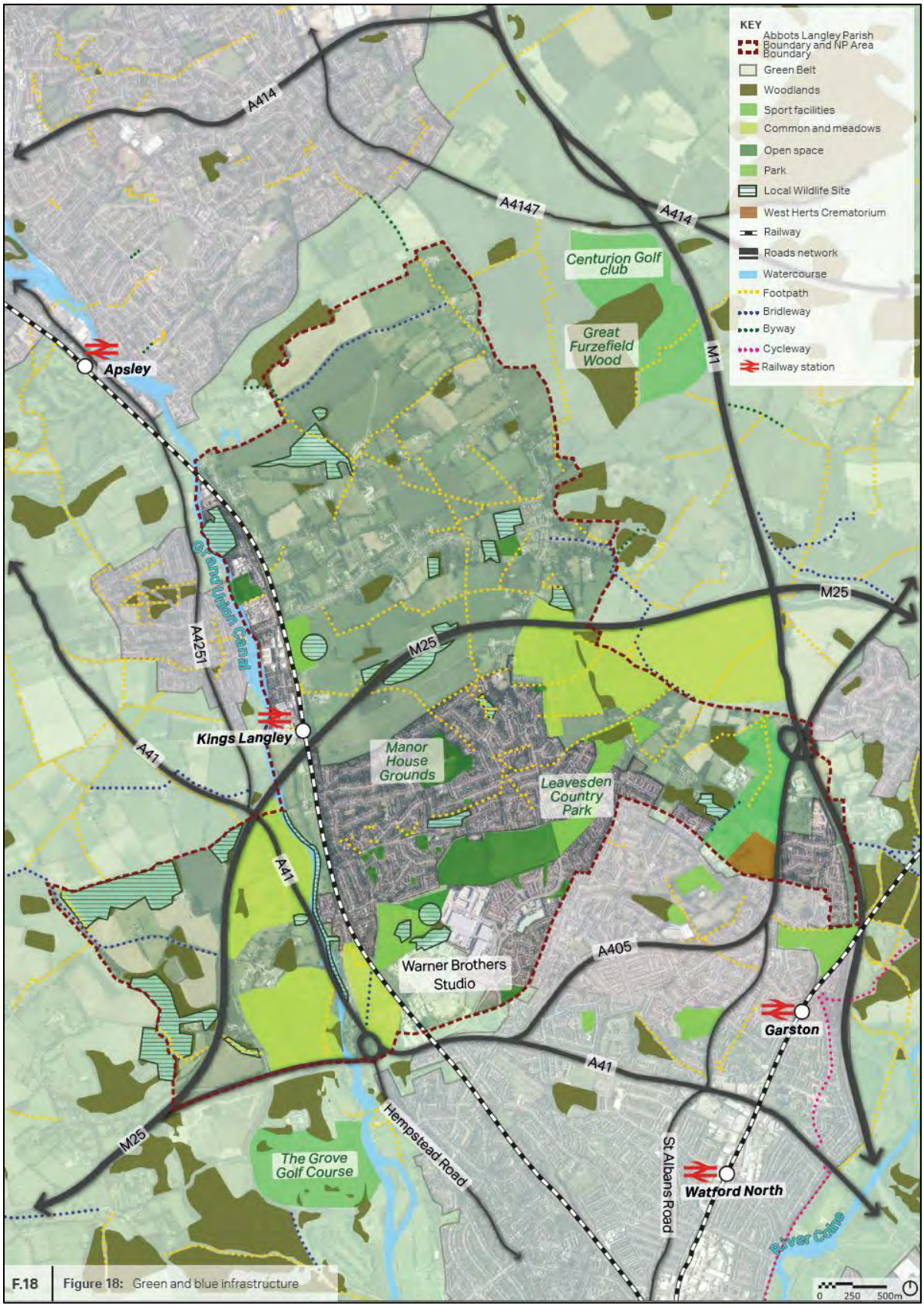
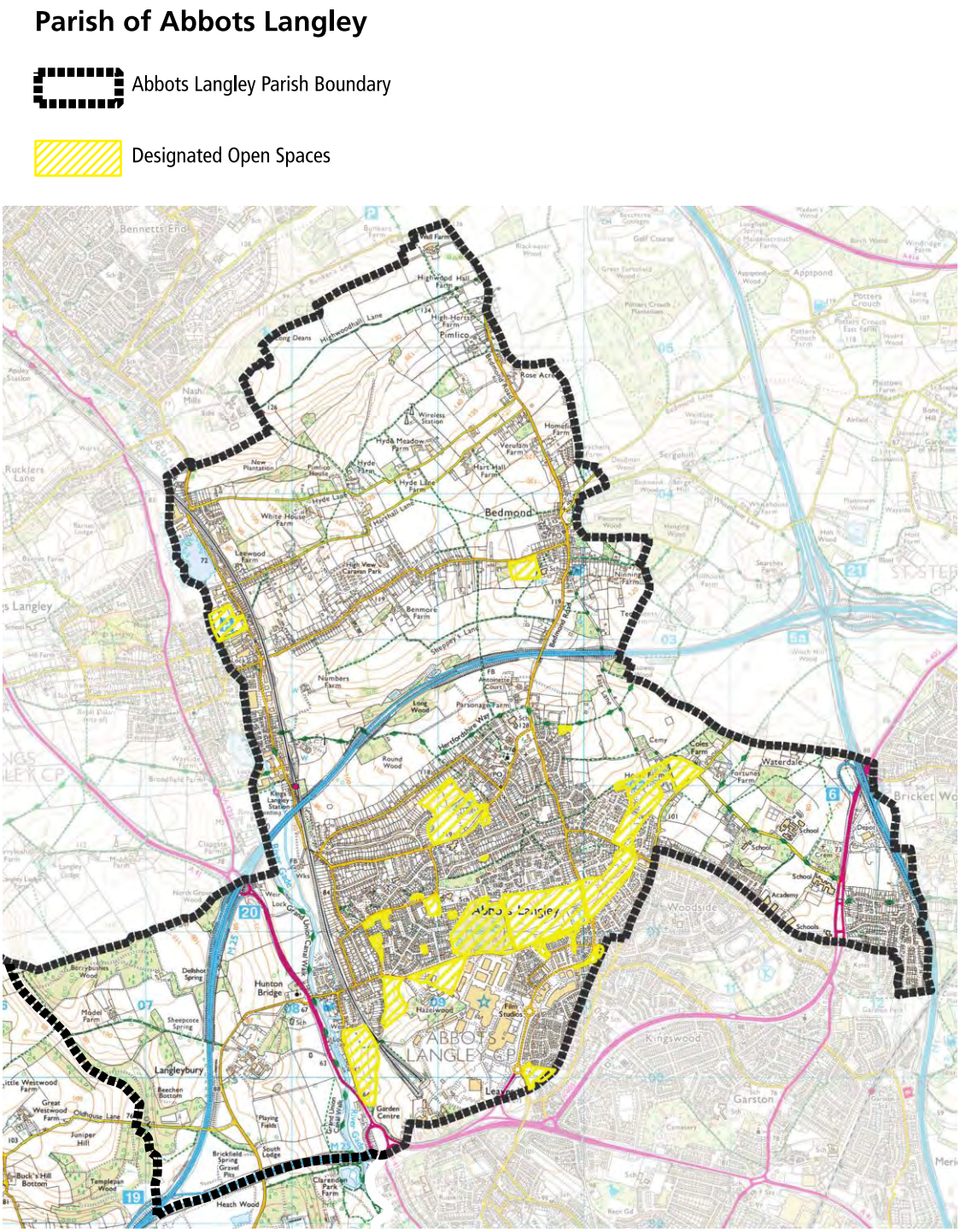


Figure 20: Designated 'Open Spaces' in the Parish of Abbots Langley (Core Strategy, 2011)



10. LEISURE AND COMMUNITY

On-going investments

10.1. The parish of Abbots Langley has benefited in recent years from public investment in leisure and community facilities. Examples include:

The creation of Leavesden Park and its Heritage Trail (partly sponsored by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Warner Bros. Studios) with added facilities including a café and improved sports facilities and playing areas.
The Henderson Hub Arts and Community Centre.
The modernisation of Children Play Areas across the parish.
The creation of the new Skatepark in Manor House Grounds and the renovation of its outdoor courts for tennis, football, basketball and table tennis.

10.2. The Parish Council manages a number of public venues for hire. These encourage a thriving range of voluntary societies and clubs for all ages. There are over a hundred such organisations operating in the parish (see details in the Evidence Base, Chapter 18 of this ALNP). There is a major sports centre, public swimming pool and sports track on the edge of the Parish at Woodside. There are other playing fields for sports activities throughout the parish.

"More playgrounds to serve new housing developments like South Way"
"Improvements to the skate park, a multi-purpose floodlit sports facility in Manor House Grounds and a café at the Club House during the day"

"Community Events like Tough Ten, the switching on of the Christmas lights, the Fireworks, the Carnival, Autumn Fest, the Christmas Eve services at St Lawrence Church -All these events are well organised and bring the community together. They are part of what makes Abbots Langley a great place to live."

Policy AL14: Provide, maintain and improve public facilities for the community

POLICY AL14: PROVIDE, MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE PUBLIC FACILITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY

A. Development proposals for new and/or expanded community facilities should meet identified needs for leisure and social needs in the community that are not adequately provided for at present. They should respond positively to the requirements as set out in the latest TRDC Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Assessment. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals for such uses should:

- **i. not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment; and**
- **ii. not have significant adverse impacts upon the local road network; and**
- **iii. not have harmful impacts on the heritage aspects, including the setting; and**
- **iv. where relevant, the facility is fit for purpose and designed in accordance with Sport England's design guidance notes.**

B. Proposals that would result in the loss of community and leisure facilities will only be supported if alternative facilities of an equivalent or better standard are available or provided in an accessible location to the local community.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 5; Core Strategy: PSP2, CP1, CP8; Development Management Policies: DM11, DM12; NPPF (2024): 96, 98, 101, 103-105

Purpose

10.3. To provide public facilities to meet the cultural, recreational, leisure and social needs of the community.

Justification

10.4. The Parish and District Councils have invested in leisure and social facilities in the area. The Parish Council and the community owns and maintains four halls for hire, three in Abbots Langley Village and the village hall in Bedmond. At the smaller scale, the Parish Council invests in public seating, drinking fountains and other street furniture around the parish for the use of residents.

10.5. A programme to modernise child play facilities in the local parks has been completed in recent years. This followed from a review of leisure activities and a planned investment programme by TRDC.

10.6. Leavesden Country Park (*Figure 21*) is a location where sports and recreation facilities have been improved in recent years. The park covers an area of over 27 hectares and consists of walking/biking paths, heritage trail (with sculptures reflecting the local history in the area,) all-weather football pitch/basketball court, wildlife areas, tennis courts, a children's play area and an outdoor gym for adults. Built facilities include the Hive Centre and café.

10.7. A skatepark opened in May 2019 in the Manor House Grounds along with the upgrade of the all-weather courts for basketball, five-a-side soccer and tennis.

10.8. There is a wide range of sport and leisure facilities in the Parish including football, cricket and outdoor bowls clubs. Football is the most popular team sport, with of the order of 1,000 participants in organised teams. For example, the Evergreen Football Club (South Way Playing fields) have 37 teams registered with various leagues across Hertfordshire. They were the first club in Hertfordshire to secure their FA Charter Standard Community Club renewal. Recent investment in their facilities included a modernised Clubhouse opening in 2017. The club has excellent pitches and an all-weather practice area. The club includes five ladies football teams, in partnership with Watford Ladies FC.

10.9. Drawing on local feedback and evidence prepared by TRDC, including the Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Assessment, the following provision would be supported locally:

additional formal open space in Bedmond

additional senior and mini football facilities, including exploring options for 3G pitch

provision of purpose-designed storage units to house sports equipment near to the existing pitches and facilities used by the various sports and leisure groups.

equipment that helps the Parish Staff maintain the sports facilities to ensure the pitches and courts are kept in good condition throughout the year.

provision of team changing rooms at existing sports facilities, where required.

Figure 21: Plan of Leavesden Country Park and key of its many facilities (source: TRDC)



Policy AL15: Allotments and community growing spaces

POLICY AL15: ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GROWING SPACES

A. Development proposals that incorporate new community growing spaces of a size appropriate to the development and with access to features such as good drainage, light exposure and water/electric options, will be supported, in particular where these can be used to create attractive green screening, for example, car parking areas, roads, and commercial servicing areas.

B. Development proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of existing allotment spaces will not be supported unless an alternative site is provided of equivalent or larger area compared to the existing allotment provision. The alternative site must also meet the following requirements:

i. a location that is within or adjacent to the defined settlement as shown on the Policies Map and that is accessible by pedestrians and cyclists; and

ii. offers topography, soil quality and water supply that allows a choice of layout for good quality private plots and/or community growing space; and

iii. benefits from suitable on- and off-site parking opportunities, including on-site disabled parking bays.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 5, 8; Core Strategy: CP1, CP8, CP9; Development Management Policies: DM11, DM12; NPPF (2024): 96, 98, 103

Purpose

10.10. To provide support for the retention of existing allotments in the Parish and, support for additional growing spaces.

"We need to protect our allotments"

Justification

10.11. Many people wish to grow their own food. This provides exercise, social contact and reduces food miles. Local allotments have experienced waiting lists since 2021, demonstrating demand. There could be more pocket gardens and seating that would make the village centres more attractive and successful. Shared outdoor amenity space should be associated with new development wherever possible.

10.12. Abbots Langley operates four allotment sites at: Manor House, Jacketts Field, Kingsfield and Primrose Hill (See *Figure 22*). There is no provision of allotments in the smaller settlements in the parish. The Open Space Update, prepared by TRDC, in 2010 suggests that in the long term, additional provision should be sought in Abbots Langley as a result of the growing population and in order to meet the national standard of 20 allotments per 1,000 households as suggested by The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners.

10.13. There is certainly a need for more allotment space. Between 2024 and 2025, the waiting list for a plot has ranged from 36 people to 50, which equates to a roughly 2-3 year wait. There are 127 sites available. One of the Aspirational Projects in Chapter 12 outlines potential for the creation of a community garden, which would help towards addressing need.

10.14. Whilst allotments are an important source of space for growing – which increases self-sufficiency, thereby reducing reliance on importing food and the associated higher energy costs of doing so – they are often not in the most convenient location for all users and plots are often too large for users' needs.

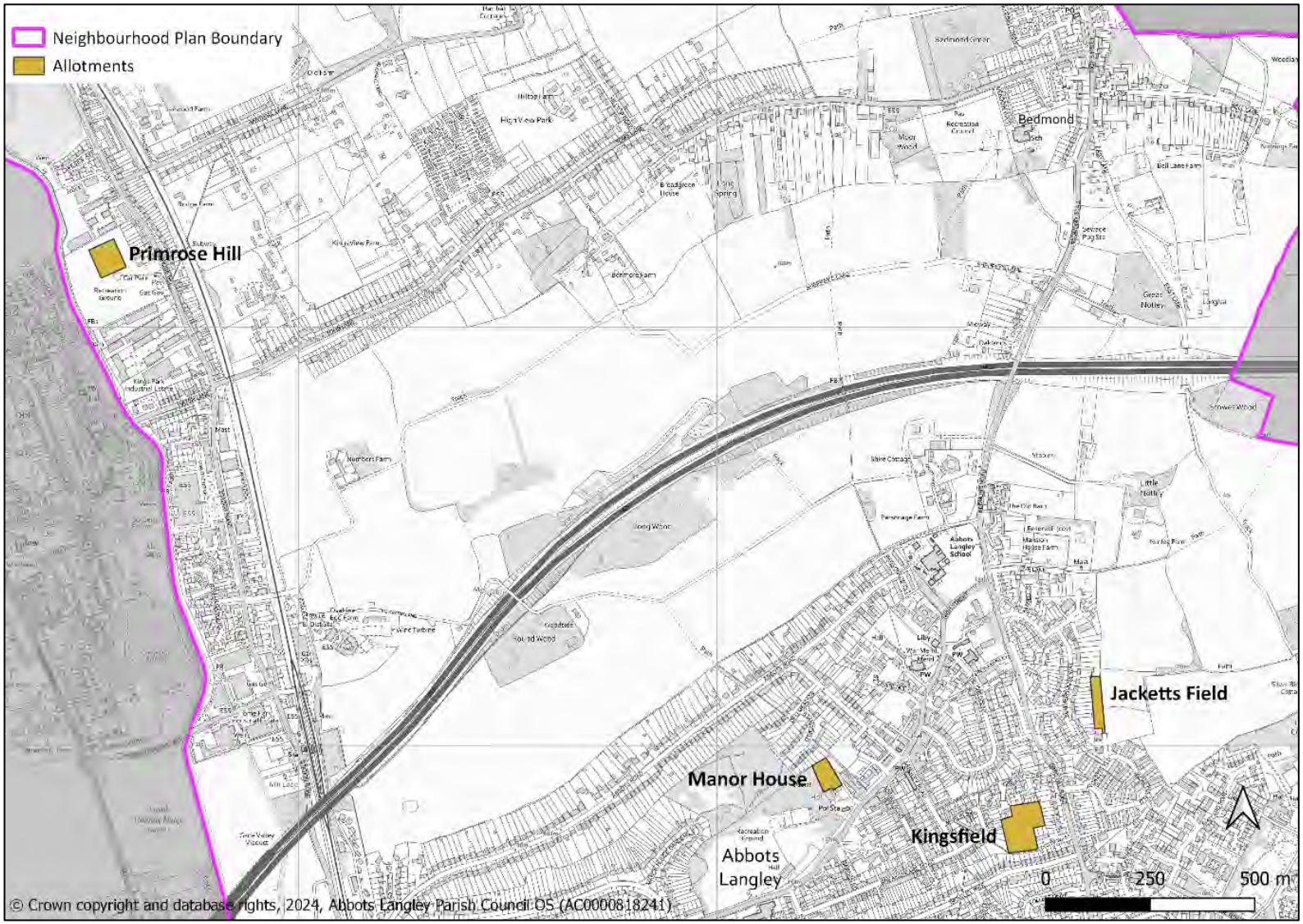
10.15. An alternative solution is community growing spaces which can be designed into new developments, meaning they are close to residents' homes and involve collective growing by residents that helps to ensure that what is grown is of the right quantity for those residents. The safeguarding of existing and provision of new allotments and community growing spaces will therefore be encouraged.





Images show: Community growing space in the village cared for by the AIMS volunteers and One of many of Abbots Langley's allotments

Figure 22: Designated allotments in the Parish of Abbots Langley



Policy AL16: Protection of public houses

POLICY AL16: PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HOUSES

A. Development proposals to change the use of public houses (Use Class sui generis) will be supported only if the public house is demonstrably unviable. In order to demonstrate this, evidence will be required to show that the existing public house has been actively marketed for a period of not less than two years at a market value comparable to the market values of other similar licensed premises in the District.

B. Proposals for the expansion of existing public houses (Use Class sui generis) in the Parish to support business diversification which would improve the viability of the public house, with particular support given to appropriate community-based activities, such as a restaurant, will be supported, subject to there being no adverse effect on the amenity of residential properties in the locality.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 5; Core Strategy: CP1, CP8; Development Management Policies: DM12; NPPF (2023): 96, 98

Purpose

10.16. To increase the viability of all public houses within the Parish by encouraging them to improve and expand suitable community facilities.



Justification

10.17. Over recent years, the Parish has lost at least two of its public houses. It is important that the community continues to be served by public houses or similar licensed premises. They have social or cultural value for particular groups in the community and provide employment opportunities.

10.18. Section 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 directs the removal of permitted development rights for the change of use of public houses to other types of use. This means that a planning application will be required in all cases where an owner wishes to change an existing public house to another use. CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is an independent, voluntary organisation of 192,000 members that campaigns for real ale, community pubs and consumer rights. CAMRA supports well-run pubs and believes their continued existence plays a crucial role in community life. It provides guidance about how the viability of a public house can be considered.

Policy AL17: Safeguard and expand existing health services

Policy AL17: SAFEGUARD AND EXPAND EXISTING HEALTH SERVICES

A. Proposals to enhance and facilitate the continued delivery of health facilities at key sites within the village of Abbots Langley and surrounding settlements (to meet the needs of the local population), will be supported.

B. Proposals for the expansion, and relocation locally if required, of these services, including the development of a new expanded health centre with a potential capacity for 20,000 patients to expand the facilities currently provided by the Vine House Health Centre, will be supported subject to the following criteria:

i. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment.
ii. the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network.
iii. the proposal is located within or immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary as defined in Policy AL1.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 5; Core Strategy: CP1, CP8; Development Management Policies: DM12; NPPF (2024): 96, 98, 101

Purpose

10.19. This policy seeks to ensure the provision of adequate primary health services in the parish during the period up to 2041, safeguarding what already exists and supporting expansion or relocation locally where needed and subject to mitigating any negative impacts of this on the environment, road network and local community.



Justification

General Practice Facilities and Community Health facilities

10.20. The three Health Centres in the parish are all over subscribed. The GPs at the Vine House Health Centre would like a larger facility that would enable a larger range of health services to be provided. To serve their existing patients the Vine House Health Centre would like to maintain their presence in the central area of Abbots Langley village. By 2025, the NHS five-year plan suggests that Primary Health Care facilities in the community should be expanded in SW Hertfordshire to reduce the visits to local hospitals by 40%. It is the responsibility of the NHS to plan and finance the expansion of such facilities. The community has an increased and vital role to play in Public Health. The holistic health and wellbeing of residents is supported through integrated health and social care systems working effectively in conjunction with Third Sector and other community organisations enabling access to the wealth of support and resources available in the community. There are opportunities for social prescribing within the community and improved access to public exercise facilities and open spaces beneficial for health.

10.21. However, the availability of suitable sites in the central area of the Abbots Langley village are limited. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan commissioned a Masterplan in 2022 for the central area of the village to identify what future facilities are needed to serve the local community and support the area as a key settlement. See Appendix H. For example, the recent closure of St Margaret's House – a residential care home for elderly, presents an opportunity to provide additional community facilities rather than just a new housing development. This building is owned by Hertfordshire CC. Therefore, there is a need to create a Planning Brief for the central area of the village to identify what future facilities are needed to serve the local community and support the area as a key settlement.

10.22. Also, Hertfordshire CC decided, on 23 May 2022, to relocate the Breakspeare School to a new, purpose-built school, which will double its capacity. The new school will be located in Croxley Green. In association with the Village Masterplan, a feasibility study was commissioned to determine the suitability of the Breakspeare School site to become a new enlarged Health Centre, replacing the Vine House Health Centre.

10.23. The Feasibility Study concluded that the vacated Breakspeare School site would be 'ideal' to become a new multi-disciplinary Health Centre capable of accommodating the wider range of services and allowing the registered number of patients to be increased from 11,000, currently at the Vine House Health Centre, to possibly as much as 20,000. However, the Partners at the Vine House Health Centre have said that, under current NHS guidelines, they could not raise the capital funds required for such a project. Instead, they have decided to purchase their existing premises from their landlord and consider ways to expand facilities on the existing site.

Policy AL18: Safeguard and expand existing education provision

POLICY AL18: SAFEGUARD AND EXPAND EXISTING EDUCATION PROVISION

A. Development proposals which facilitate and enhance existing schools and associated playing fields, will be supported subject to demonstration that:

- **i. acceptable mitigation measures are offered to overcome access and unacceptable highway impact caused by the development;**
- **ii. the development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other nearby activities; and**
- **iii. the development does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.**

B. Where a proposal for a new secondary school is made within the parish, it will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the catchment area for the school:

- **i. provides easy and safe access to pedestrians and cyclists and be conveniently related to bus routes with adequate provision for school buses to park where appropriate;**
- **ii. provides appropriate vehicular access and would not adversely impact upon traffic capacity;**
- **iii. does not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other nearby activities;**
- **iv. includes the planting of trees and hedgerows to enhance air quality, and reduce noise; and**
- **v. does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.**

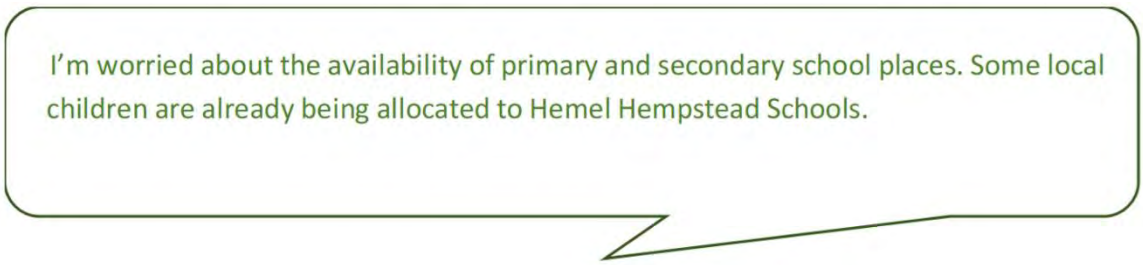
Conformity reference: NP objective: 5; Core Strategy: PSP2, CP1, CP8; Development Management Policies: DM12; NPPF (2024): 96, 98, 100, 101

Purpose

10.24. The provision of adequate education provision – both primary and secondary - is a key issue for the local community. This policy seeks to ensure the provision of adequate education in the Parish over the plan period, safeguarding what already exists and supporting expansion or relocation locally where needed.

Justification

10.25. The NPPF supports the provision of sufficient school places to serve the community and also protects school playing fields unless they are surplus to requirements or can be relocated to an alternative location or would be redeveloped into an alternative leisure or sports provision that would outweigh the benefits of the previous provision.



10.26. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), as the Local Education Authority, is responsible for planning to deliver sufficient education places across the county. Recent figures indicate the pressure for school places in the parish, despite having three large secondary schools located in the Parish. High performing schools like Parmiters, who have an intake 208 pupils per year, received more than 1600 applications in 2021. Another of the secondary schools is St Michael's Catholic School which admits 180 pupils is also well over subscribed, not able to accept all pupils from the Catholic faith that apply.

10.27. Early years provision: The increasing population will serve to increase the birth rate locally. It will be important to ensure that the parish is well-served for nursery and pre-school places, in order to enable families to have the choice to both work and give their children the best start in life.

10.28. Primary Schools: There are five state primary schools in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The need for primary school places depends on the local child population. HCC advises that that demand within the area has fallen in recent years. Whilst new housing could increase demand in the future, the advice from HCC is that it has secured provision to ensure education demand can be met locally.

10.29. Secondary schools: In light of the revised national policy and any significant applications received, the County is expected to conduct a thorough review on the Regulation 19 version of TRDC Local Plan to assess the overall secondary school places requirement within the district, including Abbots Langley. The main requirement is to ensure the catchment areas for each school allows for all local students to be provided for and living within easy access - preferably by walking or cycling.

10.30. Special educational needs schools: There two special educational needs schools serving children from a broader area with special needs. **Garston Manor School** is a Specialist School serving students aged 11 - 16 with Learning Difficulties, Autism and Speech Language and Communication Needs. The school is situated on a very large and pleasant site, having recently been completely rebuilt. It offers outstanding facilities. Pupils attend from a wide area which extends from Watford to Borehamwood and covers parts of Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City. **Breakspeare School** is a local authority day school for pupils aged 3 to 19, who have severe learning difficulties. Some have additional needs due to specific physical and mental disabilities. All students have an education, health and care plan that identifies their special needs. Located in village of Abbots Langley, the school caters for 75 pupils drawn from a wide catchment area - extending across the Districts of Three Rivers and Watford.

10.31. Breakspeare School is due to close and relocate to a new, larger building in Croxley Green in 2028/2029.

11. TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

11.1. Despite its largely rural nature, the parish is dominated by some national transport corridors that both surround it and cut through it. The M25 divides the parish in half. The M1 is on the parish's eastern boundary. To the west, the Parish is bordered by the Grand Union Canal and West Coast Mainline Railway.

11.2. With the projected growth in the population that may occur across the district in the coming years, movement by all modes will continue to be a challenge at peak times. The key types of movement can be classed as 'local' and 'strategic':

> 'Local' movement is principally within the area, to key locations such as the schools, the railway stations, the community hubs, local shops and health services. It also includes people accessing community infrastructure and leisure activities – even as simple as dog walking.
>
> 'Strategic' movement is principally to or from areas outside the area, for instance out- commuting and through traffic to nearby towns or to access the strategic road network.

11.3. The bulk of strategic movement, and proposals to address this, are outside of the remit of a Neighbourhood Plan. However, before the expansion of housing development within the Parish and in the neighbouring urban areas, it is vitally important that the capacity of the local roads and rail services is fully evaluated, and investment made to overcome any predicted shortfalls in the capacity of the main movement corridors.

11.4. Local movement is certainly an issue that the Neighbourhood Plan can address, in terms of promoting more sustainable forms of transport, including walking, cycling, electric bicycles/scooters and public transport provision.

11.5. In raising their local concerns, transport issues accounted for 40% of the comments received on the Abbots Langley Commonplace website. (analysis of comments received is available in the Evidence database and Appendix C). It is hoped that Herts CC can address these issues.





Images show: Towpath and cycle path along the Grand Union Canal linking Watford and Hemel Hempstead and the M25, which cuts the parish in half

Policy AL19: Sustainable travel

POLICY AL19: SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

A. To encourage healthy lifestyles and ensure that residents have a choice of sustainable means of travel to access local destinations such as community buildings, employment, schools, shopping facilities, public transport interchanges, open spaces, and other important facilities, development proposals should provide directly, or via financial planning obligations, safe pedestrian and cycle, both on- and off-site, to link up with the existing and proposed footpath and cycleway network defined on *Figures 22 and 23*.

B. In designing new and improved routes, Sport England's Active Travel Design guidance should be used to inform design and access. The following matters should be addressed:

- **i. pedestrians and cyclists should be physically separated from vehicular traffic and from one another in accordance with the County Council's standards;**
- **ii. where practicable, routes should be designed to be useable by people with disabilities, including users of mobility scooters.**
- **iii. walking routes should be well-lit, clear of obstacles and sign posted;**
- **iv. wide crossings are built on the same level which are well-lit and landscape to create safer crossings for residents;**
- **v. public transport should be prioritised in road layouts over cars to reduce travel times and make using public transport more appealing;**
- **vi. the use of 'landmark buildings' to help people navigate their journeys;**
- **vii. signs and seating on walking routes should be used to encourage more people to walk.**

C. The network of Roman roads and rural lanes across the Abbots Langley shall be protected or enhanced where possible.

D. Proposals to maintain and improve access by walking and cycling throughout the Parish, particularly in the parks and open countryside, should be encouraged to support safe, healthy exercise for all ages.

E. In respect to major development, financial contributions via a S.106 agreement may be required to establish new or extended local bus routes that could sustainably connect the development with employment and shopping centres, education, recreation facilities and transport interchanges. To encourage the use of buses, contributions should include (as may be relevant), the provision of bus shelters with seating and 'countdown' bus information displays.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 6; Core Strategy: CP1, CP10; NPPF (2024): 96, 105, 109, 110, 111, 115-117, 135

Purpose

11.6. If the population of the area is set to grow through the allocation of a number of significant housing sites, traffic and movement around and through the individual settlements will be an even greater issue for residents and visitors alike in the future. In particular, the speed and volume of traffic is of concern. This policy seeks to encourage non-car modes of transport to

access facilities within the area by identifying Primary Movement Routes and encouraging proposals that support or extend the existing network.

11.7. In addition, whilst active travel on foot and by bicycle has health as well as transport benefits, movement by public transport is also key to people being able to get around effectively and to reduce vehicle use. This is particularly so for those without access to a car but wishing to travel a longer distance than walking or cycling might allow. This policy seeks to ensure that adequate public and community transport options are offered.

11.8. *Figure 23* shows a map of the public rights of way, bus stops and local public car parks in the parish.



Justification

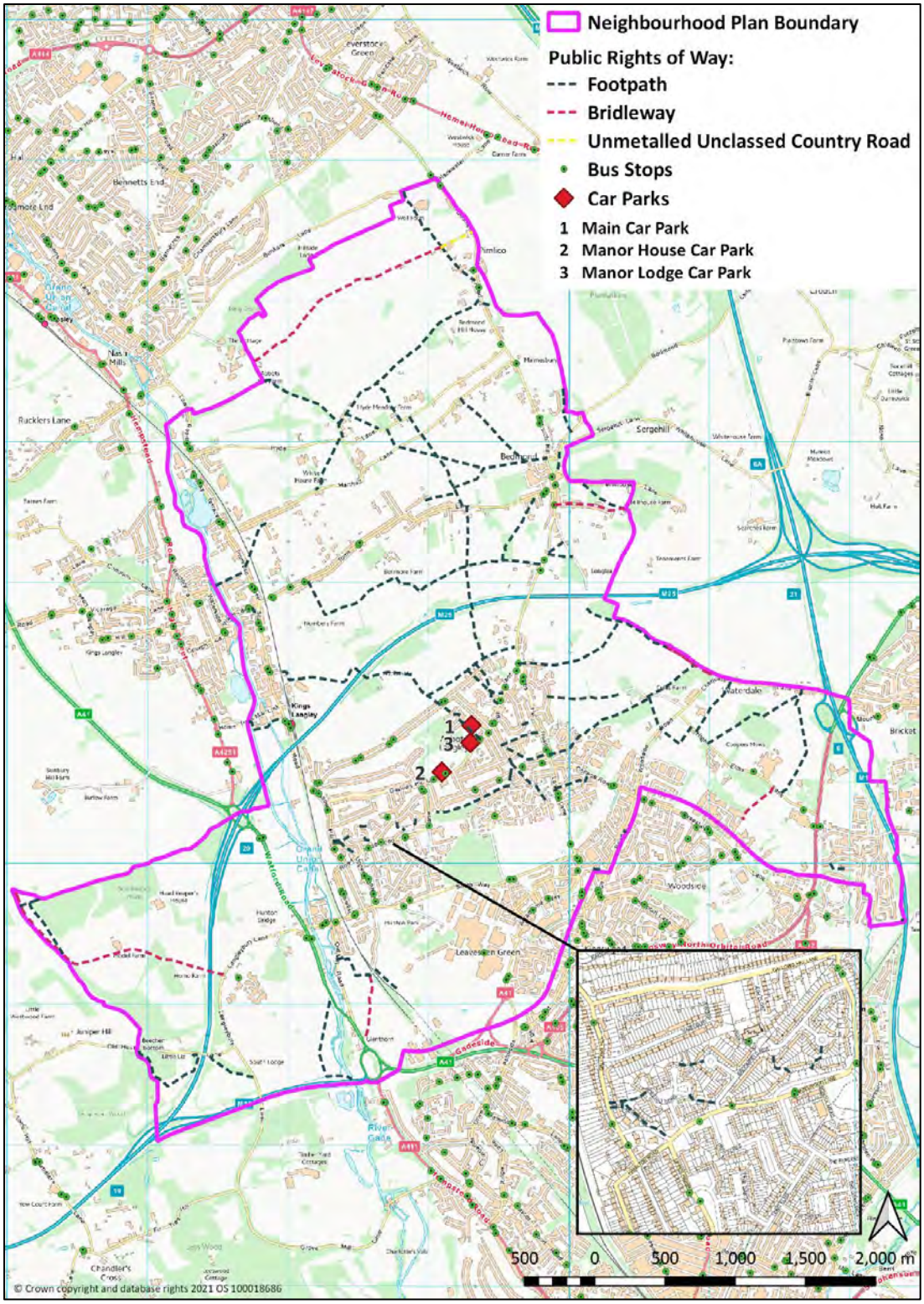
Active travel

11.9. The area has high levels of car ownership and suffers road congestion at peak times. It is important therefore that people are encouraged to use alternative modes of transport where possible. Walking and cycling in particular should be supported for their wider health and wellbeing benefits as well as environmentally friendly aspects. New development should seek to ensure that access to good pedestrian and cycling routes is provided - ideally segregated from the general traffic.

11.10. Feedback from the community during the Neighbourhood Plan process identified a high level of concern about the extra traffic that will be generated by the new housing developments using roads that are already considered by people to be congested at busy times of the day. Therefore, encouraging walking and cycling, particularly for journeys within the area, will be important. This includes linking the new housing developments with key facilities, such as shops, schools, medical and community facilities. A further resource to draw from is the "Traffic in Villages" toolkit developed by Hamilton-Baillie Associates in conjunction with Dorset AONB Partnership.

11.11. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot prevent people from using their cars for short journeys, improvements to Key Cycle/Pedestrian Routes will encourage short, local journeys to be made by foot or bicycle. Not only will this alleviate congestion and associated air pollution (particularly outside the schools and at the main junctions) but will provide regular healthy exercise. Linking both existing and new development areas into the network of existing pedestrian routes is vital to encourage more walking, less use of the car and connect residents to the key destinations within their area.

Figure 23: Public rights of way, bus stops and public car parks in the parish of Abbots Langley

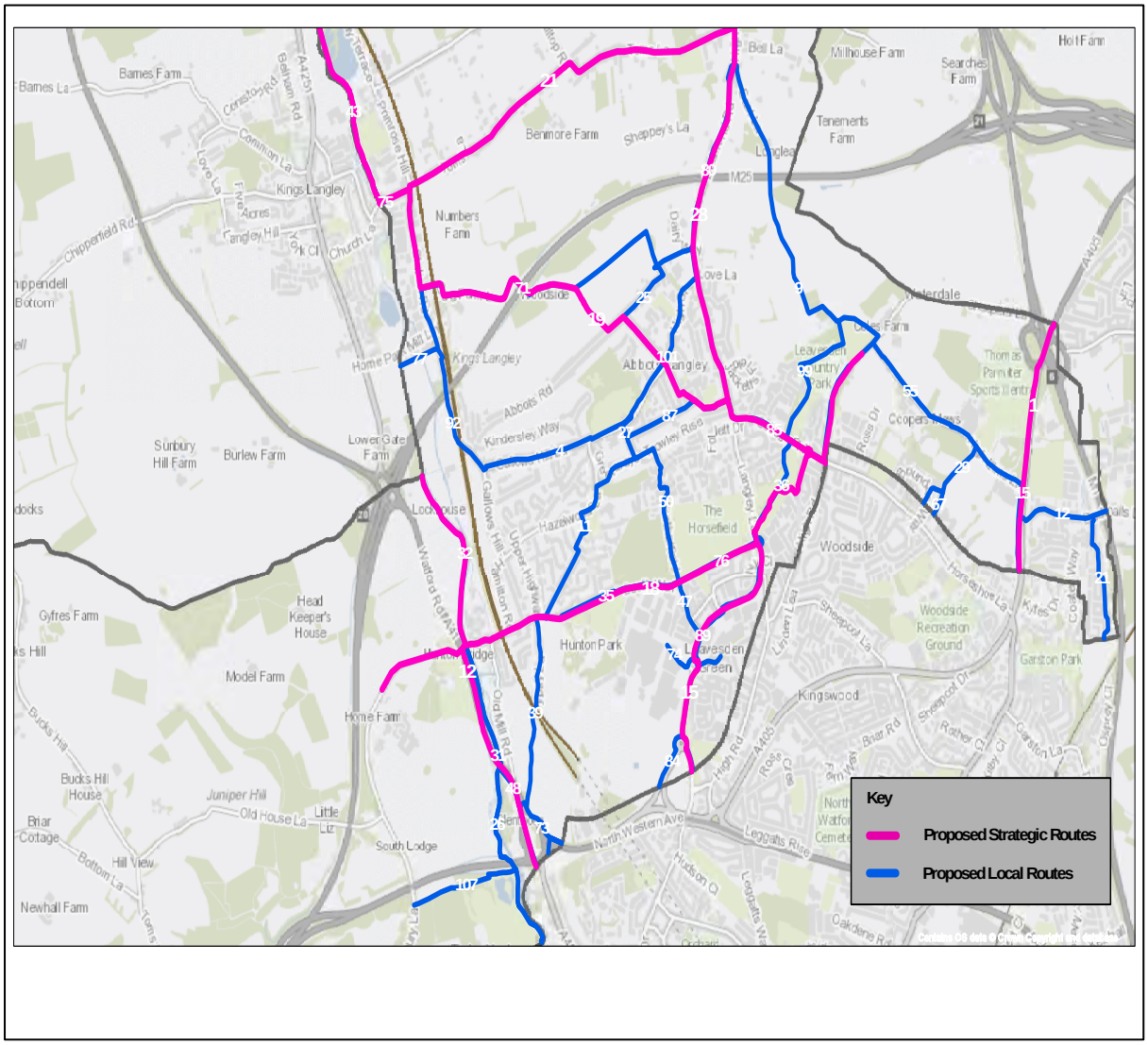


11.12. *Figure 24* shows the proposed strategic and local cycle routes for the parish of Abbots Langley. The District Council state that they have 'developed and promoted its Cycling Strategy since 1981 with visible success in creating and improving the cycle routes.' Examples include the Grand Union Canal towpath which provides a nearly traffic-free route that connects Croxley Green, western Watford, Hunton Bridge, Kings Langley and Nash Mills with five miles of wider, level, surfaced and well-signed paths. This links to the South Way

Cycleway which connects the improved towpath with Abbots Langley, Leavesden and into Garston on a nearly traffic-free shared footway and bridleway. The TRDC Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has now been formally adopted (July 2025), following public consultation held in mid-2023. This has identified five priority routes across the district to develop and improve for the future. The LCWIP may be reviewed and updated in the future. More information can be found at Three Rivers Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

11.13. Three Rivers District Council in partnership with Watford Cycle Hub and One YMCA launched a new Cycle Hub in Leavesden in 2018; providing a new 'one-stop shop' for everything to do with bikes. Located in the new Community building in Leavesden Country Park off College Road in Abbots Langley. The Leavesden Cycle Hub offered a range of facilities including servicing and repairs, bike hire, bike registering, reconditioned bike sales and cycle tuition for children and adults. However, in July 2023 this Cycle Hub was closed. The operations were consolidated at their Watford Cycle Hub.

Figure 24: Proposed strategic and local cycle routes for the Parish of Abbots Langley



Roman roads and rural lanes

11.14. There are a series of important older roads and lanes in the parish that contribute to local character. Many of these routeways have been in active use for hundreds of years. The Abbots Langley Local History Society has undertaken to map the Roman roads in the parish in their document Roman Roads Overlaid on a modern map of Abbots Langley (Copyright © Trevor Foulkes and Abbots Langley Local History Society 2000-2020). Examples of important rural lanes include those bordered by trees and hedgerows, such as East Lane, High Elms Lane and the lanes in and around Bedmond. Some of these lanes are sunken and provide important wildlife corridors.



Rural footpaths and lanes criss-cross the Parish (East Lane) (Photo credit: C Gardner)

Public transport provision

"The bus service could be more reliable and frequent"

11.15. Whilst car ownership in the parish is high, the 2021 census revealed that 11.4% of households (977 households) did not have access to a car. The area has a basic network of commercial bus services, but this is less so for east-west movements in the more rural parts. There is a reduced service in the evening and at weekends.

11.16. The recent economic climate and COVID-19 has shown how expensive it is to run commercial bus services and significant numbers have been withdrawn since 2008. As bus services are reduced, re-routed or withdrawn, it has a significant impact on the community.

11.17. Aside from the commercial bus network, two community transport schemes operate in the area:

Dial-a-Ride – a door-to-door travel service for people over 75 and anyone with a permanent disability.

Hertfordshire Action on Disability (HAD) - a 24-hour accessible transport service to help disabled people to work, shopping, doctor's appointments, holidays and other leisure activities. This is a charged for service.

11.18. These are both very limited in what they offer disabled people. They are limited in terms of eligibility. Frequent, reliable and affordable transport is called for. Experiments in Demand Responsive transport services have been being tried in Watford (e.g. Arriva Click). Such services seldom become commercial, needing subsidies from the Local Authority to continue. For this reason, Arrive Click no longer operates. It is important that all efforts are made to support the existing commercial bus and community transport services. This should ensure that it does not result in high increases in fares. Community bus providers, in particular, have reported that additional services could be provided as long as they can be publicly funded and there are volunteers to operate them.

11.19. Therefore, it is proposed that new major development contributes towards the financing of such expanded services, where appropriate, and improved infrastructure. For housing, major development is defined as where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m^2 or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.



Bus services, passing through Bedmond, provide a lifeline for those without private transport (Photo credit: G Ball)

Policy AL20: Public parking

POLICY AL20: PUBLIC PARKING

A. Development proposals that would result in the loss of publicly available off-street parking spaces at the public car parks identified on *Figure 25* will not be supported.

B. Proposals that enable the provision of additional, publicly accessible off-road car parking spaces, to alleviate parking congestion near to businesses, schools and at transport hubs, will be supported.

C. Alongside any new public car parking provision, the following facilities will be strongly supported as part of that provision:

a. dedicated bicycle parking facilities, preferably with e-bike charging points, covered and secure; and

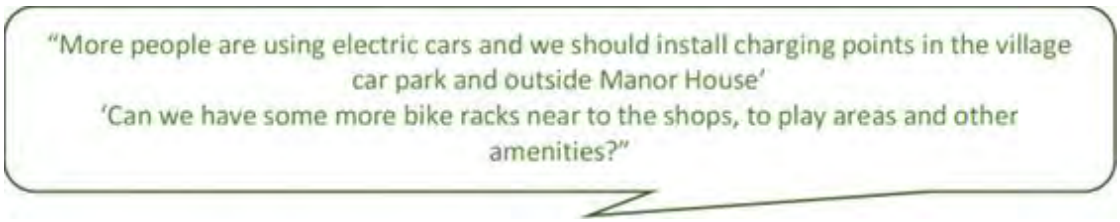
b. electric vehicle charging points.

Conformity reference: NP objective: 6; Core Strategy: CP1, CP10; Development Management Policies: DM13; NPPF (2024): 109, 113

Purpose

11.20. The Neighbourhood Plan first and foremost seeks to encourage sustainable modes of transport, for instance by improving active travel opportunities and encouraging more sustainable travel choices to railway stations and local amenities. Nevertheless, the area does have high car ownership and is a popular destination for those choosing to drive to the railway stations to commute out of the area to work. The issues of car parking, and particularly the availability of parking spaces in each of the settlements - including those with electric vehicle charging points - is a serious concern among local residents.

11.21. This policy seeks to ensure that there is adequate off-road public car parking for those working, shopping or visiting the parish. Also, with policies to encourage cycling, it is important to invest in cycle racks at key places across the network to ensure bicycles can be stored safely and deter theft.



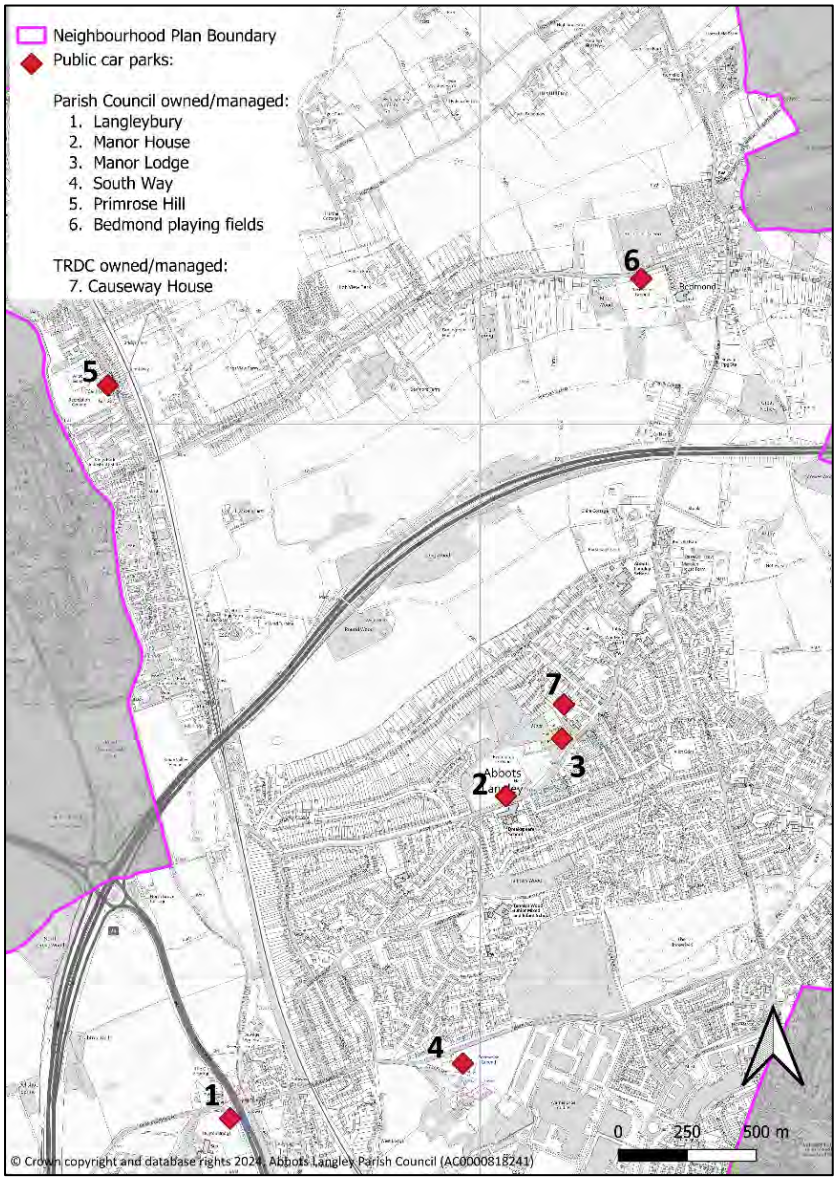
Justification

11.22. Residents and businesses have revealed a concern about the lack of public car parks near to the some of the main facilities, such as the Doctors' Surgery in Abbots Langley Village and Kings Langley railway station. This has led to increasing numbers of cars parked along residential roads during the day, which in turn introduces parking controls and can deny local people the opportunity to park near to their home during the day. Also, such cars in residential areas contribute to air pollution, congestion and can present a safety hazard.

11.23. It will be important to retain, manage and improve the quality of publicly accessible car parking areas (*Figure 25)*, particularly within walking distance of the railway stations, key

facilities and schools. In addition, to consider where additional public car parking might be developed. This is important for the continued economic prosperity of the settlements as well as the convenience of residents, workers and visitors.

Figure 25: Public car parks in the parish



Electric car Charging Points

11.24. With the phasing out of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and new hybrid cars by 2035, a feasibility study is required to provide car charging systems for electric vehicles. Charging points at houses and offices with off-street parking are straightforward. However, in the parish there are many houses where parking has to be on-street and electrical connections to individual houses is not likely to be practical. A feasibility study is required to show how facilities for charging electrical vehicles at or near every house in the Parish and how the electricity can be paid for when not connected to the car owner's electrical supply. The study should take account that many houses may wish to own two or more cars per household and the demand for limited on-street parking may mean owners cannot park next to their homes without controlled parking schemes. See Chapter 12, Project 6, for more details.

12. ASPIRATIONAL PROJECTS

Aspirational development sites

12.1. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating sites for a specific development, potential development sites will come forward, as part of the emerging Local Plan. Locality's Site Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans Guidance states:

'Where you cannot demonstrate that a site is deliverable, for example, it may be in a good location but there is no evidence that it could become available, your plan can identify 'aspirations' for sites you would like to see developed and set out principles for each site linked to plan policies.'

'In order to demonstrate that there is a good prospect the site will be delivered, there should be evidence that it is suitable, available and economically viable.'

12.2. As part of the preparation of this Plan, thought has been given to potential sites that might come forward for regeneration and their optimum use. If such sites were to become available, development will be resisted unless it accords with the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan and aspirations for the sites, as set out below. The Parish Council will welcome direct involvement in the planning for any sites. In particular, it will emphasise the need to ensure that adequate infrastructure provision is in place to support that new development, including schools, health facilities, adequate parking provision, leisure and recreation, improvements to the road and footpath network and flood prevention measures.

12.3. There may be a number of specific sites/ areas that we could provide more detail in the plan – either to allocate them for a specific use, or to set out a series of overarching principles for their development should that happen. This is an on-going part of our work.

Six Project Descriptions that show how Policies could be Implemented

Project 1: Sunnyside Community Food Production and Training Project

12.4. A possible project to be located near to Abbots Langley Village could be a Sunnyside Initiative similar to their successful Northchurch Project. This is an example of establishing a Community Growing Space (Policy AL16) and creating viable employment/training initiatives (Policy AL8.) Once an appropriate site is found, the proposed project is to replicate the initiative provided for Sunnyside in Northchurch. From an initial discussion with the landowners, there may be an opportunity to set up this project on the Langleybury Estate. The business case and feasibility of this project can be developed from the experience gained in Northchurch and the other projects managed by this Trust.

12.5. Sunnyside Rural Trust primarily exists to offer training and support services to young people and adults with disability through horticultural activities. In recent years they have broadened their remit to include wider benefits for the entire community and environment.

12.6. Currently, they offer 150 'trainees' opportunities to build their work skills, self-esteem and work experience, every week. They focus on what people can do rather than their labelled

disability. Sunnyside employ 7 supported employees in their 42 staff members and have 38 volunteers supporting them. Their Chief Executive lives in Abbots Langley Village.

12.7. Sunnyside Rural Trust have three large sites (approx. 6 acres each), plus a small main office in Berkhamsted and a one-acre site in Bedmond. A new site is being planned with developers at Rectory Farm, Kings Langley.

Northchurch Project in more detail

12.8. To coincide with their 30th Anniversary in 2020, the Trust built a new facility at the first site that Sunnyside Rural Trust started, in the Northchurch allotments. It offers an innovative service to young people and adults with learning disabilities, as well as a range of services to the community. They commissioned an excellent local architect at D-Lab and local builders to realise their plans.

12.9. Their priority is to offer a safe and creative service to vulnerable young people and adults to benefit from training, confidence building and employment services. The development centres around a new stable block and courtyard to house a small number of rescued animals, including pigs, sheep, goats and feral cats. This means that trainees can benefit from the therapeutic nature of working with animals. This allows them to manage, sustainably, the land in line with Sunnyside Rural Trust's environmental principles. They foresee that the introduction of animals encourages the public to visit their site and the new farm shop. This offers and promotes retail experience for young people and adults with learning disabilities.

12.10. They have a successful farm shop at their Hemel Food Garden site. This has proven to lead to employment opportunities for individuals and provide a much-needed place to sell local goods.

12.11. There are accessible facilities for the trainees to enjoy. Everyone works hard at Sunnyside. Having a space to sit and enjoy the land they work and the animals they share it with, is therapeutic in itself. This project recognises how important it is that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to society. It celebrates what people can do rather than any disability.



Images of the Sunnyside Project during construction and on completion

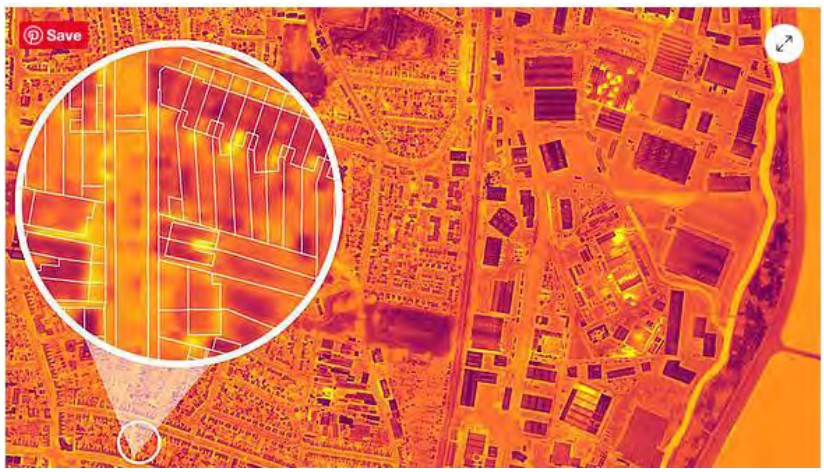
Project 2: Using aerial photography to measure factors affecting Climate Change across the Parish

12.12. To deal effectively with local issues affecting Climate Change in the Parish, it is important to have efficient means to measure some of the key factors that could reduce local carbon emissions. Three examples are to improve the heat insulation of buildings, increase locally generated electricity and protect/extend the tree and hedgerows coverage in the Parish.

12.13. Analysis using aerial photography is an effective tool to address these issues. The results from analysis, available from Bluesky, can show where investment should be directed to improve the insulation of buildings, add more solar panels to south-facing roofs and maintain and extend tree coverage in the area. Bluesky is the leading aerial survey company in the UK providing a range of survey, geographic and CAD data, including aerial photography and mapping. They provide the products to conduct 3D building models, National Tree Map™, topographic mapping, thermal surveys and a range of specialist data analysis. Bluesky are partners with Ordnance Survey.

a) Measuring Heat Loss from Buildings across the Parish

12.14. 'Bluesky uses a high-tech thermal imaging camera to measure heat loss from roofs. This identifies poorly insulated homes and other public buildings. The property level heat loss maps provide an accurate and up-to-date picture that can be used to pinpoint homes eligible for financial support, such as the UK Government's Green Homes Grants.' Bluesky International state: 'The intelligence we can derive from a thermal image can help target this money, highlighting at a glance, properties that would benefit from additional insulation and double glazing.' 'Bluesky have produced thermal maps for a number of towns and cities across the UK covering a significant percentage of the population.'



Colour coded thermal maps from Bluesky

12.15. Working with property owners, local authorities and energy companies, the colour-coded thermal maps, combined with other types of geographic data, such as local authority address database, are used to give accurate and up to date information to tackle fuel poverty, manage carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency.' 'Thermal surveys are flown in the winter months, during the evening and after sunset, in order to capture the widest variations in temperature that can occur as a result of poor insulation or excessive energy consumption. The data can be produced ready for use in a Geographical Information System (GIS) or Bluesky can produce a list of properties with high heat loss values.'

b) Increase locally generated electricity

12.16. One of the set objectives of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan is Objective 7 'Explore the potential for viable renewable energy projects locally, serving and ideally owned by the local community.' This is another aspirational project to assist locally to adapt to Climate Change. Examining aerial photography across the parish (say on Google Earth), it is clear that only a very small proportion of properties use solar panels on their south facing roofs. From the knowledge gained from their use in the area during the past ten years, it would be possible to estimate how much electricity could be generated with the deployment of solar panels on most houses, commercial and public buildings. This would not necessarily involve owners investing in solar panels for their own premises, but this is one of the options. The project would examine the business case for widescale investment in solar panels, calculate the electricity that could be generated annually and the most efficient methods of implementing such a scheme.

12.17. Mounting solar panels on existing buildings seems a far better means of capturing solar energy than deploying arrays of solar panels across open farmland. There are local firms in the area that can provide the technical information to assist with this exploratory project.

12.18. 'The campaign for the Local Electricity Bill recently hit a milestone of 326 MPs (supporting the proposals in June 2024) which is encouraging - this is over half of the Members of the House of Commons.' This campaign states that 'there is huge potential for more community-scale renewable energy generation infrastructure to be built across the country.' 'The programme is blocked by the current market rules.' 'Legislation is proposed that could make it financially viable for current and potential renewable generators to sell locally generated energy directly to local customers.' In Germany, where this type of legislation exists, 'there are over 1000 supply companies (in comparison to around 50 in the UK) most of these are local, community-owned suppliers.' For more information see: https://powerforpeople.org.uk/blog/local-electricity-bill-briefing-for-mps

c) Understanding the location, size and height of trees/hedgerows across the Parish

12.19. Trees, woodlands and forests have a very special place in UK culture. They have provided us with many of the essentials of life throughout our history. Their health is essential for our wellbeing and prosperity. They shape our landscapes and street scenes. Our choices today will shape our future and the future of the environment.



Extract from the National Tree Map from Bluesky

"Plant more trees: There are a lot of 'bare' patches of grass; verges and other small pieces of open land dotted all around residential parts of the neighbourhood, many of them public or parish spaces. These are all potential opportunities to plant more trees in Abbots Langley, and this could be included as a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. Trees provide a home and food for all kinds of nature and help to support the health and well-being of a local community and its quality of life. They help to keep environmental pollution in check. They give us oxygen to breathe in and they absorb carbon dioxide. Abbots Langley also has the air pollution impact of the M25 to contend with. Abbots Langley civic parish can have a role to play in supporting biodiversity and nature at local level, and trees can help to achieve that. There are many kinds of hardy native species of different shapes, sizes and features that could help to enhance the well-being our neighbourhood and also its appearance. Take a mental 'walk' around the local area and imagine all the trees that are currently there, not being there. How would it look or feel without them? What would be the environmental impact? We cannot separate the quality of our lives from the quality of our environment and the Neighbourhood Plan should do all that it can to improve the situation."

12.20. Lone trees, woodland and trees in hedgerows create important ecologies. For those who work in this sector, knowledge of the location of trees in order to manage and maintain ecological areas and habitat pathways is essential. The National Tree Map TM (NTMTM) has been used by organisations to help them understand and manage ecologically sensitive areas, and also to identify where habitat can be improved by replanting. Conversely, planting new trees too close to other established trees can lead to growth being suppressed and ultimately a tree failing and being removed. Using NTMTM to aid area planning and future expansion of tree planting can mitigate against such risks.

12.21. A map, detailing the location and attributes of more than 300 million trees, is being used to research the role of natural woodland in meeting climate change targets. NTMTM is a unique map which contains the location, height and spread of almost every tree in England and Wales. The map is already widely used among tree managers and practitioners.

12.22. The UK Government is pledging tens of millions of pounds for tree planting schemes. The Bluesky National Tree Map data is being used for Sustainable Land Use to understand where many thousands of hectares of new woodland could be located. Created from high resolution aerial photography, terrain and surface height data and colour infrared imagery, the National Tree Map accurately records the location, height and canopy for every tree in the UK over 3 metres in height.

12.23. Bluesky's National Tree Map is created using innovative algorithms and image processing techniques in combination with the most up-to-date and detailed aerial photography. In addition to the three vector map layers; Crown Polygons, Idealised Crowns and Height Points, the Bluesky National Tree Map also includes an attribute table with unique

identification for each crown feature, height attributes and area calculations. The data is available in a range of GIS ready formats on Bluesky's online Map Shop alongside the most up-to-date aerial photography, accurate height data and 3D building models.



Extract from Bluesky's National Tree Map

Project 3: Masterplan for Abbots Langley Village Centre

12.24. Land in the central area of Abbots Langley village has important assets for the wider community. The residents want the centre of the village to remain a vibrant place with a concentration of key facilities associated with retail, health services, communal gatherings and activities, restaurants/cafes, churches, etc. Opportunities to add to its value should not be missed when sites becoming available. Preparing a planning brief for this central area would demonstrate the potential opportunities that may be possible if sites become available. Such opportunities may be missed if no preparations are made in advance. The fate of the village centre is then left to market forces. 'If you **fail** to **plan**, you are **planning to fail**!'- a quote from Benjamin Franklin.

12.25. The current central area of the village focuses on the High Street extending from Margaret House to Breakspeare School. The brief for a local development plan for the area would be to monitor trends in changing land uses, maintain and improve the current range of land uses and services, and identify what new initiatives are required to enhance attraction of Abbots Langley as a Key Centre for the surrounding residential community.

12.26. A recent example showing the need for a Masterplan for the area is the closure of Margaret House in November 2020. Previously, this was a care centre for the elderly. This building is owned by Hertfordshire County Council and is located next to the Library and Abbots Langley Primary School.

12.27. Apparently, the County Council regard the site as 'surplus to its needs.' The site was sold in 2024 for housing development. Given its central position in the village on the High Street, there were missed opportunities for mixed development on this site.

12.28. Another example is the relocation of the Breakspeare School in 2024. This is another site owned by Hertfordshire County Council. The Masterplan has considered this vacated site's suitability to redevelop as a new, expanded Health Centre to replace the Vine House Health

Centre. See Appendix H for more details. However, at present, there are no known proposals for its redevelopment. Given its central location in the village, it is a valuable public asset and could be a mixed development, including facilities and services of value to the local community.



12.29. Health and well-being hubs are being developed by the NHS across West Hertfordshire. Four initial sites were proposed in Elstree, South Oxhey, Hemel Hempstead and Harpenden. These hubs are recommended to create a network of services closer to where people live, meaning in many cases people won't have to travel far to get the care they need. Health and social care teams will be based together in the same place to deliver more joined-up care, sharing information and decision making.

'Expanding care closer to where people live will mean high quality and safer services for local people. People will experience more joined up care as local providers will work together in a network of health, social care, wellbeing and community services, reducing the need for people to travel to hospital.' Dr Michael Van der Watt, Consultant Cardiologist, West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust

12.30. These hubs will offer services according to local needs including:

Health promotion and prevention services, such as stop smoking and weight loss clinics

Some GP, pharmacy, optometry and dentistry services alongside community and social care

A range of tests and treatments traditionally offered in hospitals such as x-rays, ultrasound scans, blood tests, physiotherapy services, mental health services, minor surgery, rehabilitation services and outpatient clinics for children

Health and wellbeing hubs will be able to offer urgent care too, helping to prevent many unnecessary journeys to an A&E department and even prevent hospital admissions

In some hubs there will also be some community beds for people needing short stays before returning home; also, some urgent care services, for example to treat minor injuries

We would like services to be located or linked with children's centres and voluntary sector organisations. This will help people access information about dance and reading classes, as well as support groups such as those for carers who look after someone with dementia or another condition.

Project 4: Community Affordable Housing Scheme

12.31. Development that is led by the community is very often driven by a need to secure affordable housing for local people in the belief that housing that comes through the planning system may be neither the right tenure nor price-point to be attractive to residents, especially those in the lower quartile incomes seeking affordable rented accommodation. It has the potential to address some common market failures, for example the poor supply of dwellings for the elderly, the need for key workers in areas of high property values and the importance of enabling those seeking to set up an independent home to stay in the area they know, close to valued social and economic networks.

12.32. Community-led models for developing affordable housing include:

Community self-build involves local people, who need housing, building their own homes. In doing so, residents gain both a home and new skills. The end product is usually a self-build housing association or a housing cooperative. The homes can be either for rent, outright ownership or shared ownership. Self-builders normally purchase an equity stake of 50 per cent and pay rent on the other 50 per cent.

Collective custom-build is another form of self-provided housing, where groups work closely with a developer who either builds the homes to a custom design or oversees the process, managing supply chains and facilitating access to financial advice and other professional support. However, sometimes group custom-builders choose to manage their own project, known as 'independent group custom-build'.

Community land trusts are non-profit organisations controlled by their members through a democratic governance structure. Membership is open to anyone who lives in a defined local area, including occupiers of the properties provided by the community land trust. While it may provide homes for sale as well as for rent, a key feature of a community land trust is that the homes it provides are kept permanently affordable.

12.33. By bringing forward development, which is owned by the community, the community is able to set rents and/or mortgage payments at a rate that it feels is appropriate, for example, a Community Land Trust can link the cost of a mortgage to the area's average wage, and dwellings are not subject to 'right to buy' thus helping to ensure they remain in community hands in perpetuity.

12.34. The need to pass a test of viability is in many ways healthy. Crispin Kelly writes, *Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are a good vehicle for neighbourhood plan policies to be delivered. A CLT can agree with the owners of allocated sites to buy their land on a deferred basis and at a*

*discount to reflect the community's decision to allocate only land which can be bought cheaply. Out of every 12 homes built by a CLT, about seven will need to be sold to pay for the land and construction costs, with the balance owned debt-free by the community (*Crispin Kelly, Nimbys need to become Yimbys, and merely taking part in plan-making is not enough, Architects Journal, 17th April 2015 (Crispin Kelly is an architect and founder of development company Baylight, http://www.baylight.co.uk/).

12.35. The need to ensure viability leaves scope for not only market housing, but also other forms of 'alternative' development, for example self and custom-build units and co-housing projects. In addition, land may be allocated elsewhere within the NPA accompanied by a development brief which encourages alternative housing products as a share of the overall development. Including a Project that allows the community to take initiatives to provide affordable housing is required if other forms of public housing schemes fail to meet the local housing needs of the community.

12.36. In June 2011 TRDC published 'Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document with Proposed Changes.' This designated Bedmond as a rural village with 'Rural Exception Sites' for affordable housing. Dwellings built under the Rural exception Policy must remain affordable in perpetuity. The TRDC report explains how houses can be provided under this policy.

12.37. **The suggestions in this section identify that there are alternative approaches for the community to provide affordable housing schemes and, whilst beyond the scope of producing this Neighbourhood Plan, it is presented as an aspirational project for the community to develop it if the need for low-cost affordable housing is not met by private developers or Housing Association Projects.**

Project 5: Measures to enhance biodiversity and natural corridors in the Parish

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

12.38. Nature conservation is an integral part of the planning system. As such, this needs to be taken into consideration in any development. We must ensure that future generations can enjoy the neighbourhood's rich geological and biological inheritance. We must continue to improve the protection and management of what we have today. In future we believe the planning system must give higher priority to maintaining and improving biodiversity.

12.39. **We believe that establishing a Local Interest Group of residents in the Parish to focus attention on local biodiversity issues would be helpful. The Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre is the primary resource for ecological data for the County. Advice can be sought from the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.** There are many well-established Local Interest Groups in the Parish including the Gardening Society, Local History Society and the 'Abbots in Transition' Group. It may be possible to work with these organisations and harness their knowledge and interest in local biodiversity.

12.40. In addition, the Leavesden HIVE in Leavesden Country Park is another local resource that hosts a wide variety of community, heritage and wildlife activities. This eco-building creates opportunities for outdoor learning and environmental citizenship with the help of employed Park Rangers. Leavesden HIVE provides a home for a wide range of nature activities for the

community and educational activities for schools, a meeting point for the *'Friends of'* Leavesden Country Park and local Historical Societies and a focal point for the Heritage and wildlife activities throughout the year. The Hive could become a focus meeting point for this aspirational project.

12.41. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity assets is dependent on robust networks of Green Infrastructure which facilitate movement and genetic exchange. Green infrastructure is expected to contribute positively to the conservation, restoration, re-creation and enhancement of networks of biodiversity on a landscape scale. Provision of green infrastructure should be guided by the Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping dataset to ensure that it is strategically located and consistent with the habitat priorities for the location.

12.42. Buffering of watercourses is important to protect the aquatic environment from pollution and disturbance, and to create movement and habitat corridors for wildlife. Development will not be permitted within 8m of the top of the bank of a watercourse as a minimum, but a 15m buffer is preferable.

12.43. Lighting within and around development is expected to respect the ecological functionality of movement corridors. Certain species of invertebrate and mammal are highly sensitive to inappropriate lighting. In these circumstances, surveys are expected to determine where these movement corridors are. Measures are required that demonstrate how these corridors will be protected and enhanced.

12.44. Bat populations are particularly sensitive to development that severs or disturbs movement corridors. Where appropriate, flight corridors should be identified and protected or enhanced to ensure the ecological functionality of bat populations. Examples of suitable measures include green bridges, underpasses or tunnels that are situated on the exact traditional routes of bat populations and free from disturbance.

12.45. Development should always seek a net gain to biodiversity and to create opportunities for wildlife. Landscaping design can have a significant beneficial effect on wildlife. Tree planting schemes where the primary purpose is to provide ecological enhancement should maximise diversity of species. Species selected should be suitable to the soil conditions and be comprised of appropriate vegetation communities consistent with National Vegetation Classification communities (NVC). Naturalistic tree planting should not be in straight lines.

Project 6: Planning the completion of the off-road cycle and footpath networks and other measures to assist with the decarbonisation of private transport

12.46. In 2021 the UK Government is launching a Transport Decarbonisation Plan. Sustainable fuels are delivering the hard-to-electrify transport sectors, with biomethane or green hydrogen prominent for heavy vehicles such as buses, coaches and HGV's. However, a much wider evaluation of our travel behaviour is now in the spotlight, partly stimulated by Covid-19. As well as investing in changing vehicle technologies, new energy sources and the supporting infrastructure is required. We must consider the need to travel, the wide range of active (walking and cycling) and shared modes, the risks and benefits from a range of autonomous

systems, including unmanned drones. Our relationship with the physical world is blending with the digital and virtual environment in ways we never thought possible.

a) Completing the off-road Cycle / Footpath Networks in the Parish

12.47. In the Parish, we expect there to be a much wider role and usage of the off-road networks. Besides their use by pedestrians and cyclists, there will be more use of privately owned electrical bicycles and electric scooters as well as mobility scooters for the elderly and disabled. So, these networks can be designed for use by all ages with the primary safety requirement that the surfaces are well-maintained and separate from vehicular traffic. As shown in *Figure 23*, Three Rivers District Council has proposed Strategic and Local Networks for cycling in the Parish of Abbots Langley. Some of the links in this network are highways and therefore mixing cyclists with general traffic. To encourage much greater use of the cycle network by all ages, ideally the cycle network needs to be free of traffic. Therefore, further design work is required to achieve this with greater involve of residents who use their bicycles, electric cycles/scooters, mobility scooters, etc. **This aspirational project could be led by the Parish Council and set up as a Local Cyclists and Walking Group who would be encouraged to audit the existing networks and recommend where improvements are required for action by the Local Authority.**

b) Off-street and on-street electrical charging systems in the Parish.

12.48. With the phasing out of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and new hybrid cars by 2035, vehicle charging systems for electric vehicles are required. Charging points at houses and offices with off-street parking are straightforward. However, in the Parish there are streets where parking has to be on-street and electrical connections to individual houses may not be practical. **A feasibility study is required to show how facilities for charging electrical vehicles at every house in the Parish can be achieved.** Also, policies are required on how electricity charging can be paid for when not connected to the car owner's electrical supply. The study should take account that many houses may wish to own two or more cars per household. Limited on-street parking may mean owners cannot park next to their homes without introducing controlled parking schemes.

c) Shared Transport - Local Electric Car/Cycle/Scooter Clubs

12.49. By the 2030 deadline, methods to provide alternatives to multi-car ownership in a household will be introduced. Already the move towards car-leasing rather than outright purchase is widespread. Car and van hire companies are developing community car/van clubs where local residents can pay an annual membership fee and then rent a community-based car by the hour. Such cars are allocated parking places throughout the area they serve. Similar arrangements can be done to set up Cycle Clubs or Scooter Clubs. For example, in Watford see: https://beryl.cc/bikeshare/watford . These cycles can be powered by batteries, to make them more accessible for most age groups.

12.50. The viability of these 'mobility clubs' depend on attracting high usage. Therefore, at present, they are set up in the larger cities and not rural settlements. **The suggestion is to conduct a Feasibly Study to determine if it would be viable to operate 'multi-modal**

mobility clubs' in the larger settlements within the Parish and, if so, how best to deliver these services. This would require a survey via social media to determine the willingness of residents to pay for the membership of such services and test the local demand and viability for such an initiative.

d) Other future transport systems to aid carbon-free mobility: Self-Driving Delivery Robots and Automated Scooters

12.51. With a combination of mobile technology, autonomous robots and partnerships with stores and restaurants, 'Starship' robots make local delivery faster, smarter and more cost-efficient. 'Starship' robots can carry items within a 4-mile (6km) radius. Their delivery platform enables dispatch of parcels, groceries and food delivered direct from stores, at the time that the customer requests via a mobile app. Once ordered the robots' entire journey and location can be monitored on a smartphone.



A Starship robot in Milton Keynes, https://www.starship.xyz/follow/,
Photograph c/o: Starship Technologies; and Automated e-scooters by Spin

12.52. Starship's robots move at pedestrian speed and weigh no more than 100 pounds. According to the operator, these robots are inherently safe and can navigate around objects and people. By 2021, the system had made more than 1million deliveries worldwide, operating in many cities. Locally, the system has been in widespread use in Milton Keynes since March 2020. For security, the cargo bay on the robot is mechanically locked throughout the journey and can be opened only by the recipient with their smartphone app. The location of the robots is tracked, so you know exactly the location of your order and receive a notification at the time of arrival. The entire delivery platform is both energy and cost efficient. It can be used for a large variety of tasks. In comparison to more traditional delivery services, things such as groceries, packages and food can be delivered for less cost. As an electronically powered robot, the system is clean and green.

12.53. Applying the same principle for automating three-wheeled e-scooters for passengers is being introduced by a Ford-owned company, called Spin. The company offers an in-app "scooter-hailing" feature for riders to schedule or request a real-time scooter pickup within a several-blocks radius.'

12.54. The examples provided by Starship and Spin show the opportunities that are possible for places that have a fully developed traffic-free network which, in turn, can reduce dependency on the private car for local trips. All deliveries could be consolidated at a local freight hub either for local collection or, where appropriate delivered to the home or business by a Starship robot. This would reduce vehicle traffic on local roads.

13. IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

13.1. Abbots Langley Parish Council is the official body responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan. It established a Steering Group – comprising councillors and residents - to lead on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Once the Plan has been 'made', the work of the Steering Group effectively comes to an end. There are, however, a series of actions and projects that will need to be undertaken, not least the early review of the Neighbourhood Plan, in light of the emerging Local Plan. For this reason, the Parish Council might consider extending the role of the Steering Group, which could include the same members or provide an opportunity for new members to join.

13.2. Specific actions that will need to be undertaken are as follows:

Pursuing the Non-Policy Actions detailed in Chapter 16 of this document.

Comment on planning applications or consultations relating to the Plan area.

Monitoring the application of the Neighbourhood Plan policies to ensure they have been applied consistently and interpreted correctly in response to planning applications.

Maintaining a dialogue with Three Rivers District Council regarding the timing and content of the emerging new Local Plan.

Initiating the Aspirational Projects described in Chapter 12, as funding becomes available.

Working with Three Rivers District Council and Historic England to explore further additions to the Local List for Abbots Langley to include buildings noted as historically important in the Neighbourhood Plan engagement process. The application of Policy AL6, however, does not depend on the inclusion of the identified non-designated heritage assets on the Local List.

Identifying areas / sites within the parish of potential biodiversity gain to officially designate as banked sites that developers can use to meet bio-diversity gains requirement.

13.3. This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared whilst Three Rivers District Council is preparing a new Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan will cover the period up to 2041. The Parish Council recognises that it will be important to keep the Neighbourhood Plan up to date in general terms and ensure that it remains in general conformity with the wider development plan in particular. In this context, it should commence a review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of the Local Plan.

14. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

Financial Contributions from Developers with Projects in the Parish

14.1. Going forward, the Parish Council is keen to influence the way in which developer contributions are spent in the Parish to the full extent of its powers, under national legislation and planning guidance.

14.2. There are different types of contributions arising from Section 106 agreements, Section 278 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy. A Section 106 agreement (based on that section of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) or planning obligation is a private agreement made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. A Section 278 agreement refers to a section of the Highways Act 1980 that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the local authority to make alterations or improvements to a public highway as part of a planning application.

14.3. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site and is levied by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC). Different charge rates apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its Local Plan.

14.4. This could include new roads and transport, local amenities such as parks, community centres, schools and health facilities. Affordable housing is explicitly excluded from the list of things on which CIL can be spent by charging authorities. Whilst CIL monies are retained by TRDC, the authority is required to put aside a 'neighbourhood portion' of the CIL collected in each neighbourhood – 15% of the amounts paid (capped) in respect of local development (and 25% (uncapped) in places where there is a Neighbourhood Plan). This portion is to be spent on infrastructure or 'anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area'.

14.5. Following the publication of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council will set out a Spending Priority Schedule for developer contributions to be spent on. This will apply to monies raised from development by any successor mechanism to CIL or other funding from developers e.g. Section 106 agreements or other planning obligations.

14.6. The Parish Council intends to regularly review the spending of CIL, and CIL priorities. Any proposed changes to the CIL spending principles or priorities will be published for comment by the community and other interested parties. Once finalised, any updated list will be published on the Neighbourhood Plan website and in relevant literature.

15. POLICIES MAPS

Key to Figures 26 to 31



Figure 26: Policies map - Parish-wide

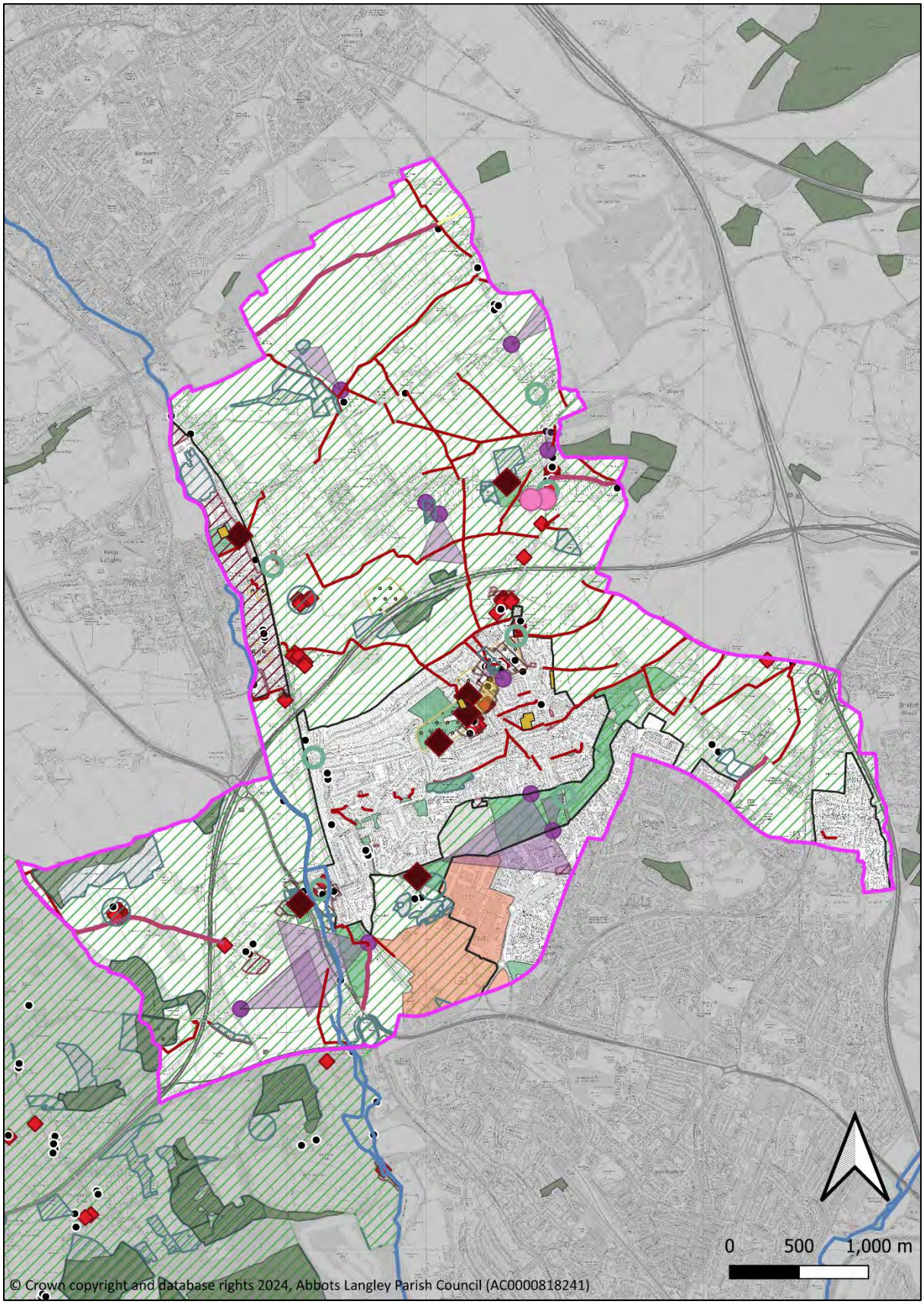


Figure 27: Policies map - north of the Parish

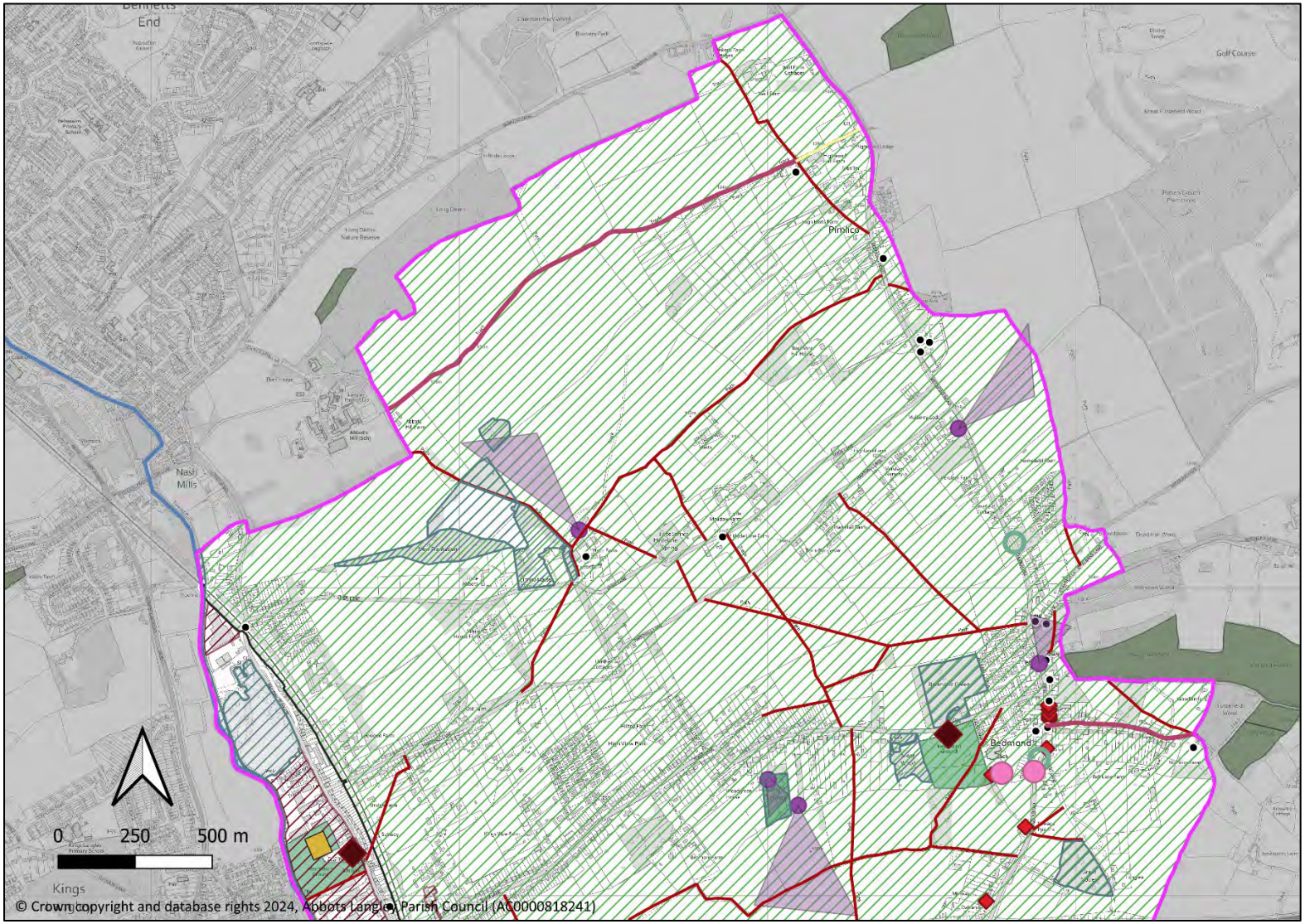


Figure 28: Policies map - south west of the Parish

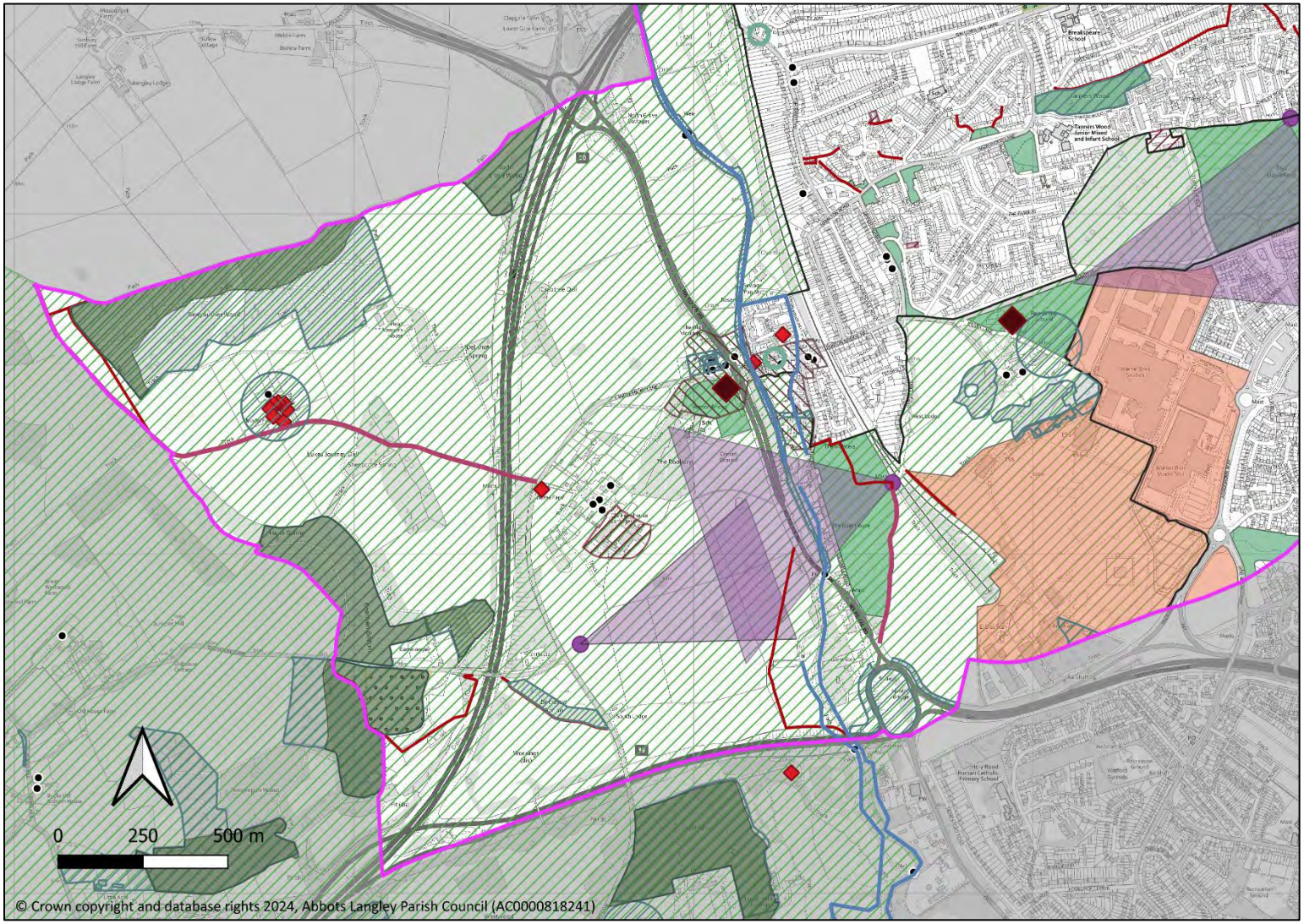


Figure 29: Policies map - south east of the Parish

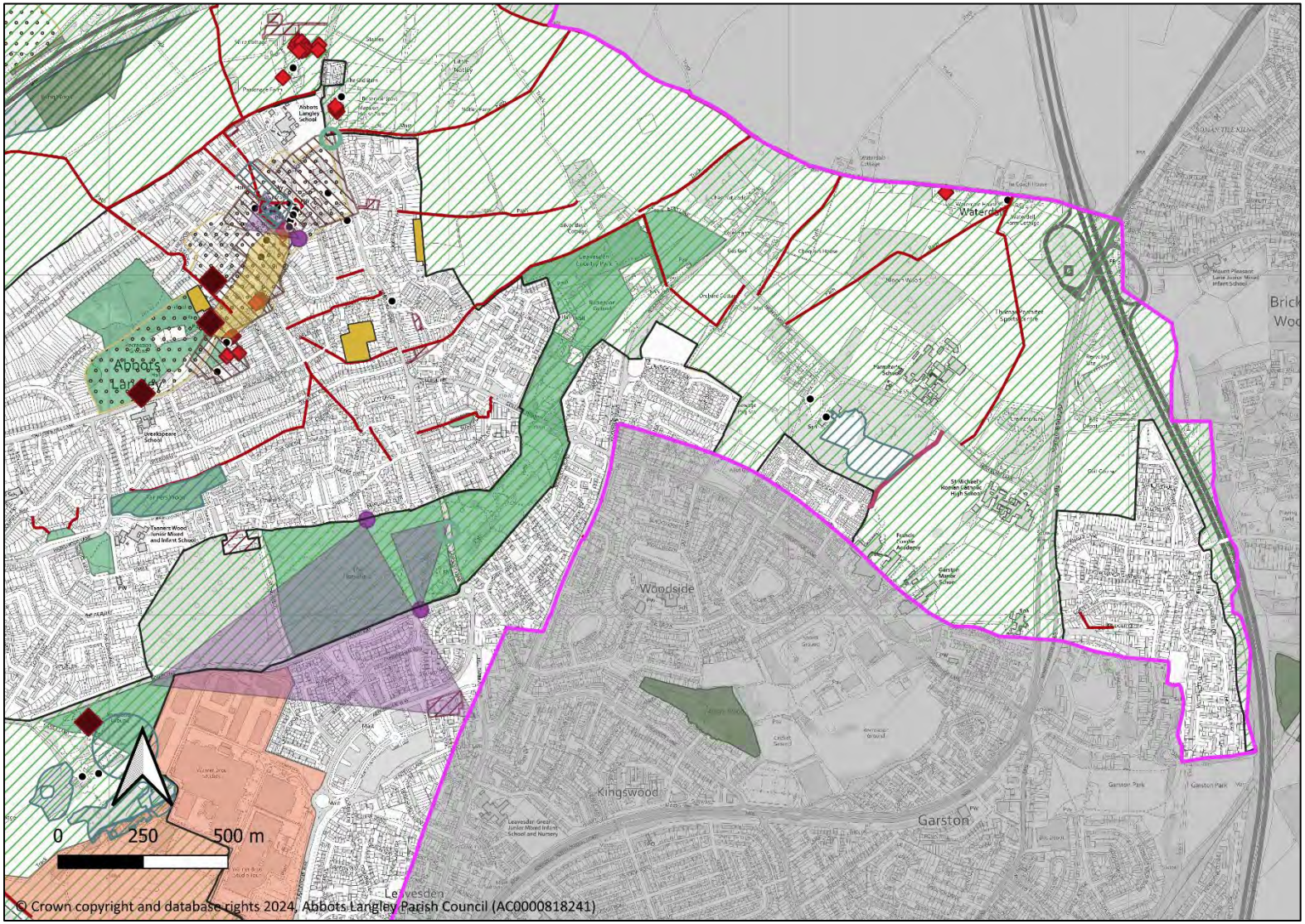


Figure 30: Policies map - Abbots Langley village

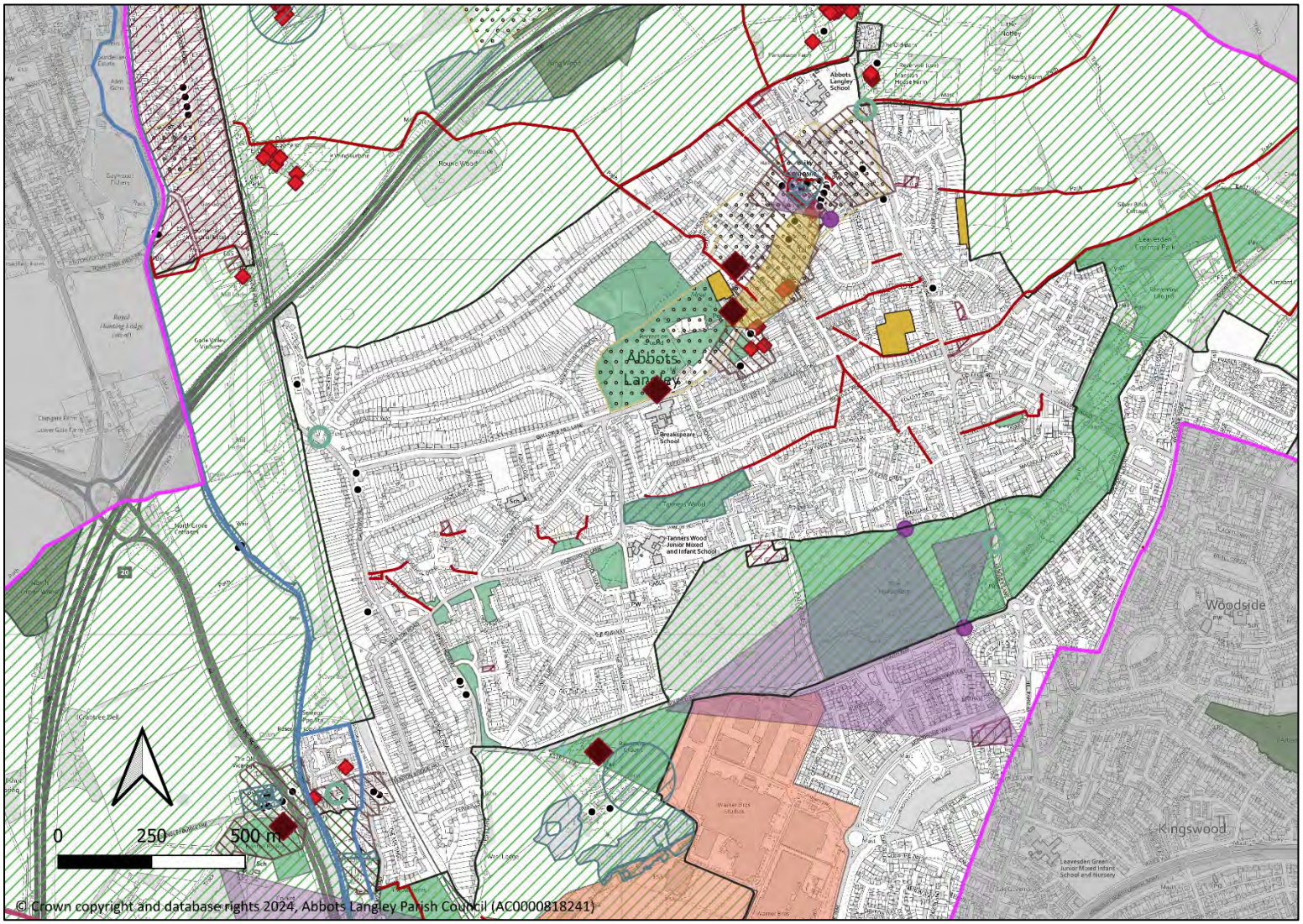
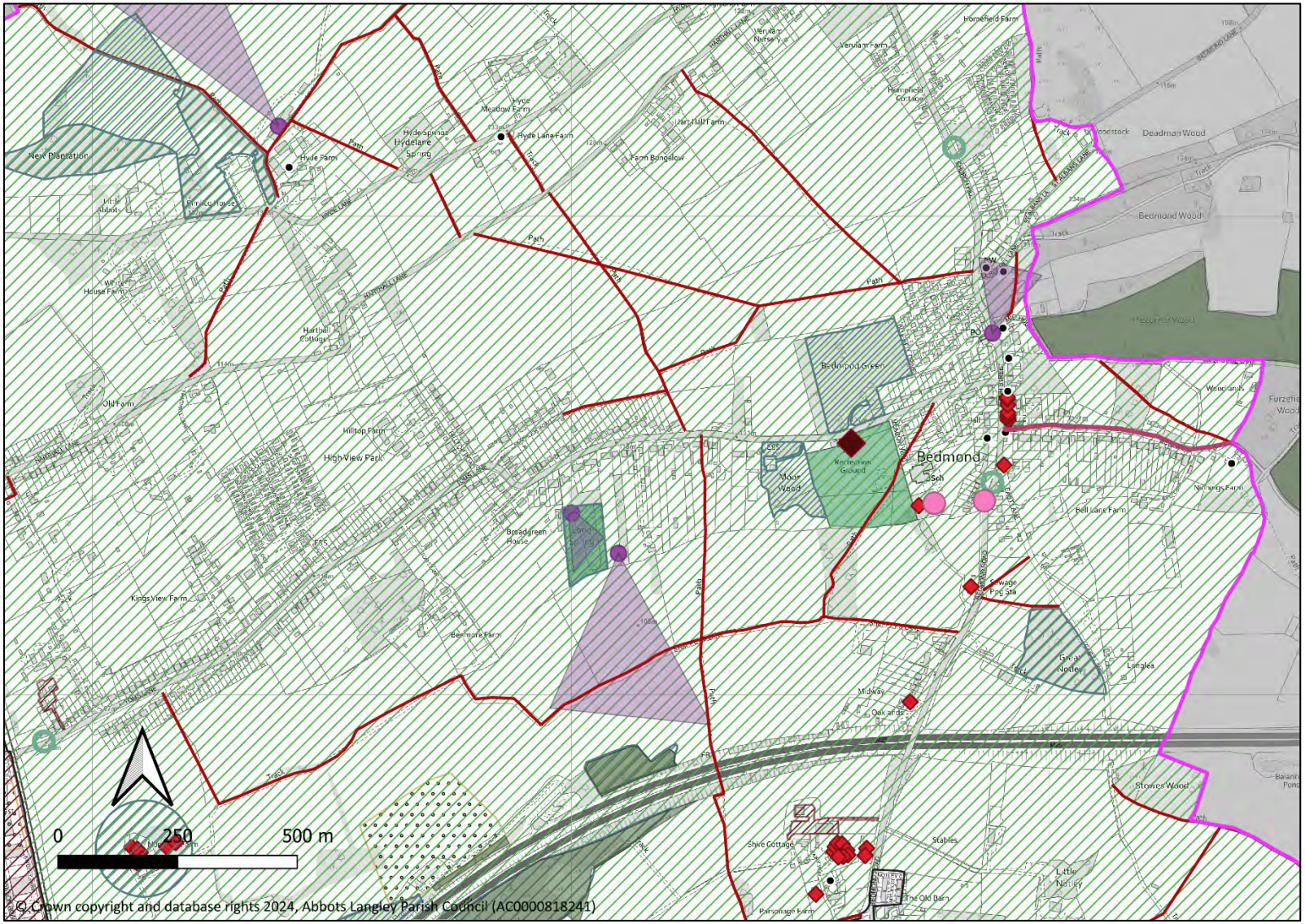


Figure 31: Policies Map - Bedmond



16. COMMUNITY STATEMENTS (ASPIRATIONAL) AND LOCAL FACILITIES

Introduction

16.1. There are fourteen distinct communities in the Parish of Abbots Langley. The 'Design Guide and Code' for the Abbots Langley Parish (Appendix E) groups the different communities into five distinctive 'character areas.' These 'character areas' cover the Parish and are shown in this report on *Figure 32.* These 'character areas' are:

1. **Pimlico and Bedmond**. i) Pimlico ii) Bedmond iii) Toms Lane (east)
2. **Gade Valley** iii) Toms Lane (west) iv) Gade Valley v) Roman Gardens
3. **Abbots Langley Village** vi) Abbots Langley Village vii) Hillside viii) Furtherfield
4. **Leavesden** ix) Abbotswood Park x) Leavesden xi) Boundary Way xii) Coates Way / Bucknalls lane
5. **Langleybury/ Hunton Bridge** xiii) Langleybury xiv) Hunton Bridge

16.2. In the following paragraphs, each community is reviewed to determine its self-sufficiency with regard to nearby basic facilities - associated with local shops, health care, education, leisure activities and public transport services. The intention is to show the extent to which communities can become '20-minute neighbourhoods' - with basic facilities serving daily needs within walkable distances. Maps have been prepared to show the locations of existing facilities relative to each community. See *Figures 33 to 39*. Note that this is aspirational as opposed to forming the basis of planning policy.

Pimlico and Bedmond

16.3. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan, a report has been prepared on the 'Aspirations for Bedmond' - see Appendix I. Bedmond and the nearby small settlement of Pimlico are located in the north of the Parish. Residents believe Bedmond has sufficient facilities for its size and continues to serve its residents well. Facilities include the local primary school (Bedmond Academy), a Village Hall, the Church of the Ascension, Bedmond Stores, the Bell Pub, the Sports and Social Club, associated playing fields and children's playground and a number of local businesses. The community wishes to support and maintain these facilities rather than aspiring to increase the range of local services. There is a regular local bus service calling at Bedmond and Pimlico and linking these places with Hemel Hempstead, Abbots Langley Village and Watford. See *Figure 33.*

16.4. Local residents wish to protect the local heritage and Green Belt status of the villages and the surrounding rural area. There is local pressure from developers to build housing on local farmland currently protected by the Green Belt. Improvements are required to improve the attractiveness of the public realm including village signage, more public seating and planting schemes. More effective measures are required to improve pedestrian safety resulting from traffic speeding through the villages and improved maintenance of some local drainage to protect against flooding in low lying areas.

Figure 32: Character areas map (from the Design Guidance and Code - Abbots Langley Parish)

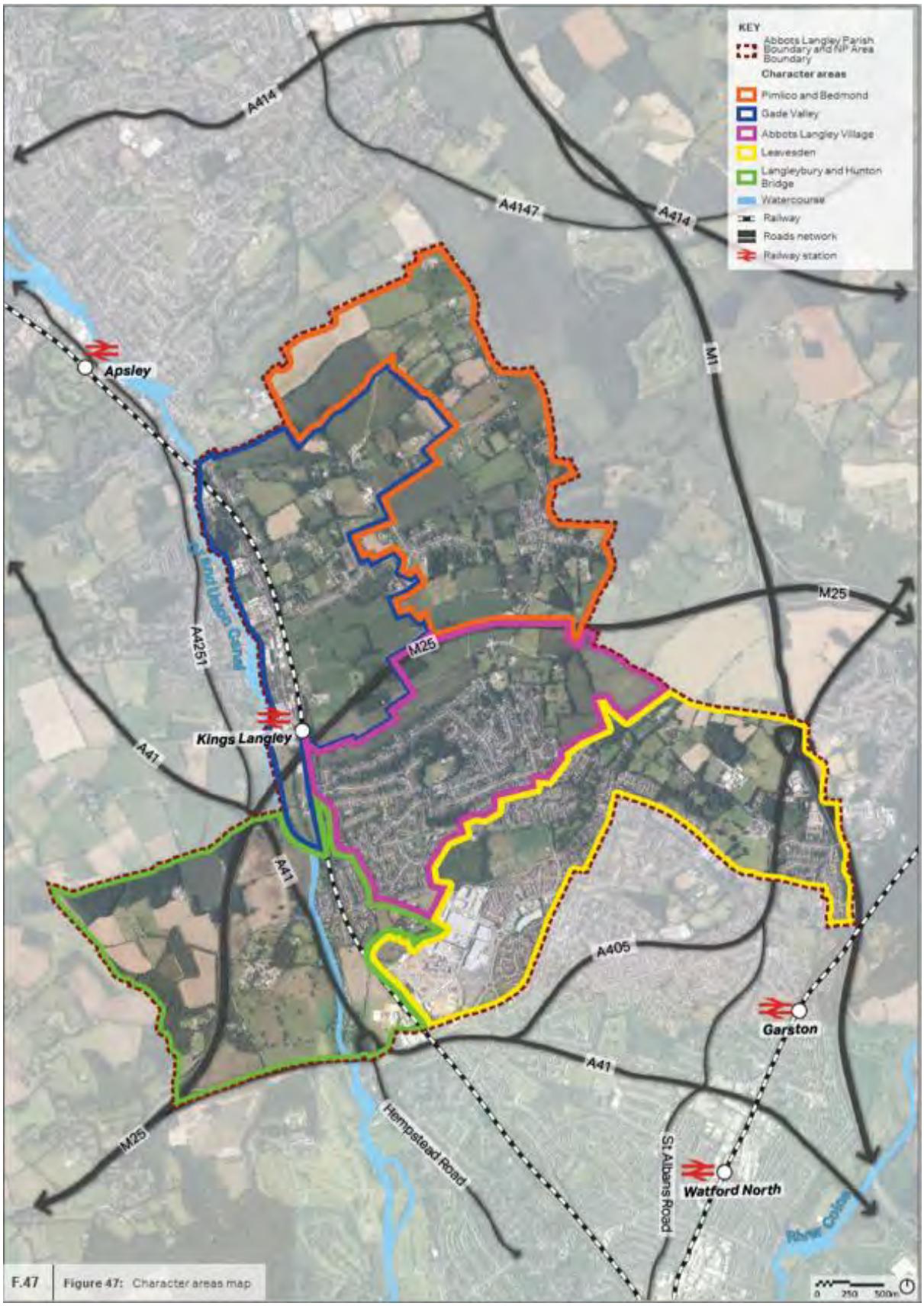


Figure 33: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Bedmond

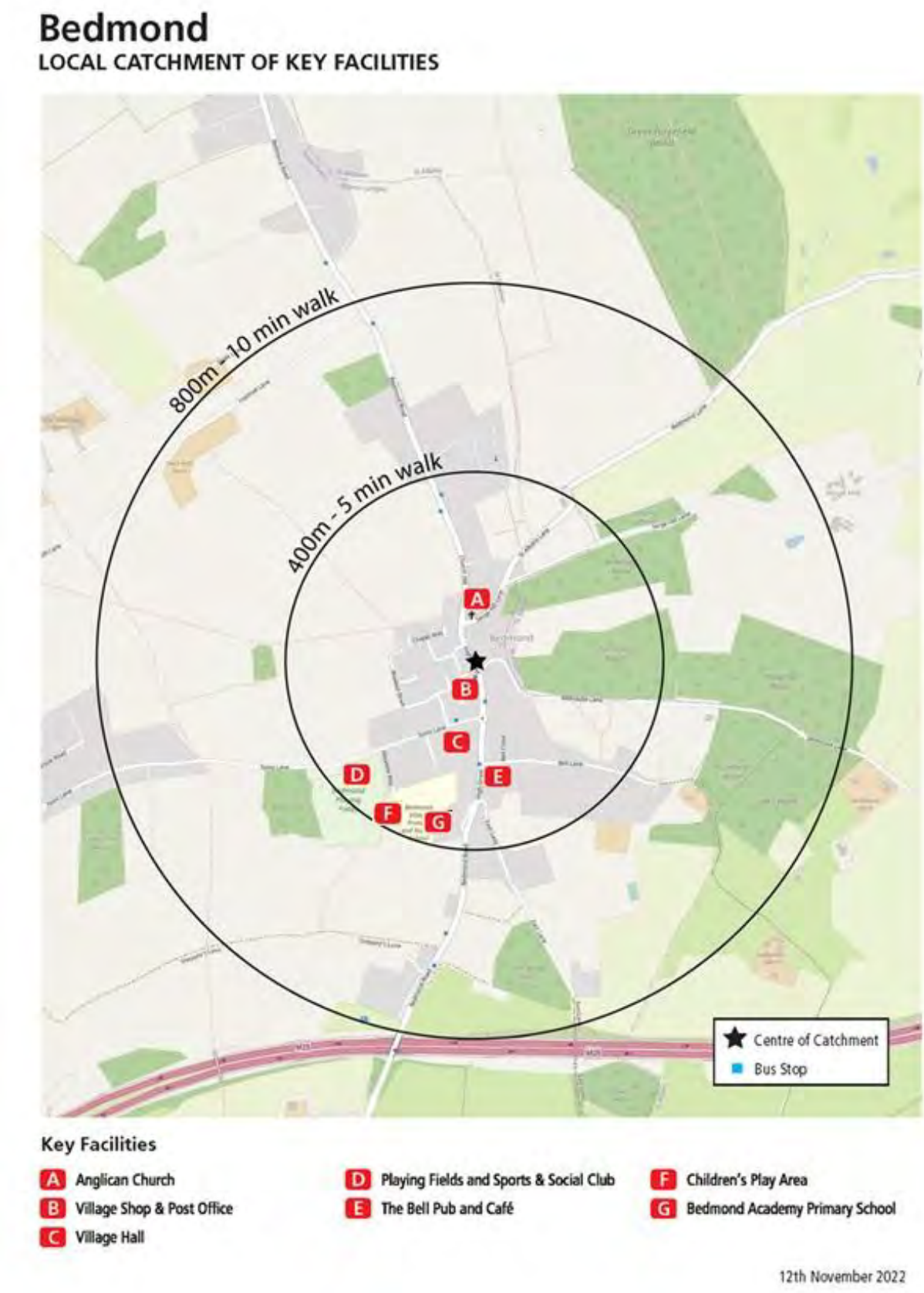


Figure 34: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Roman Gardens

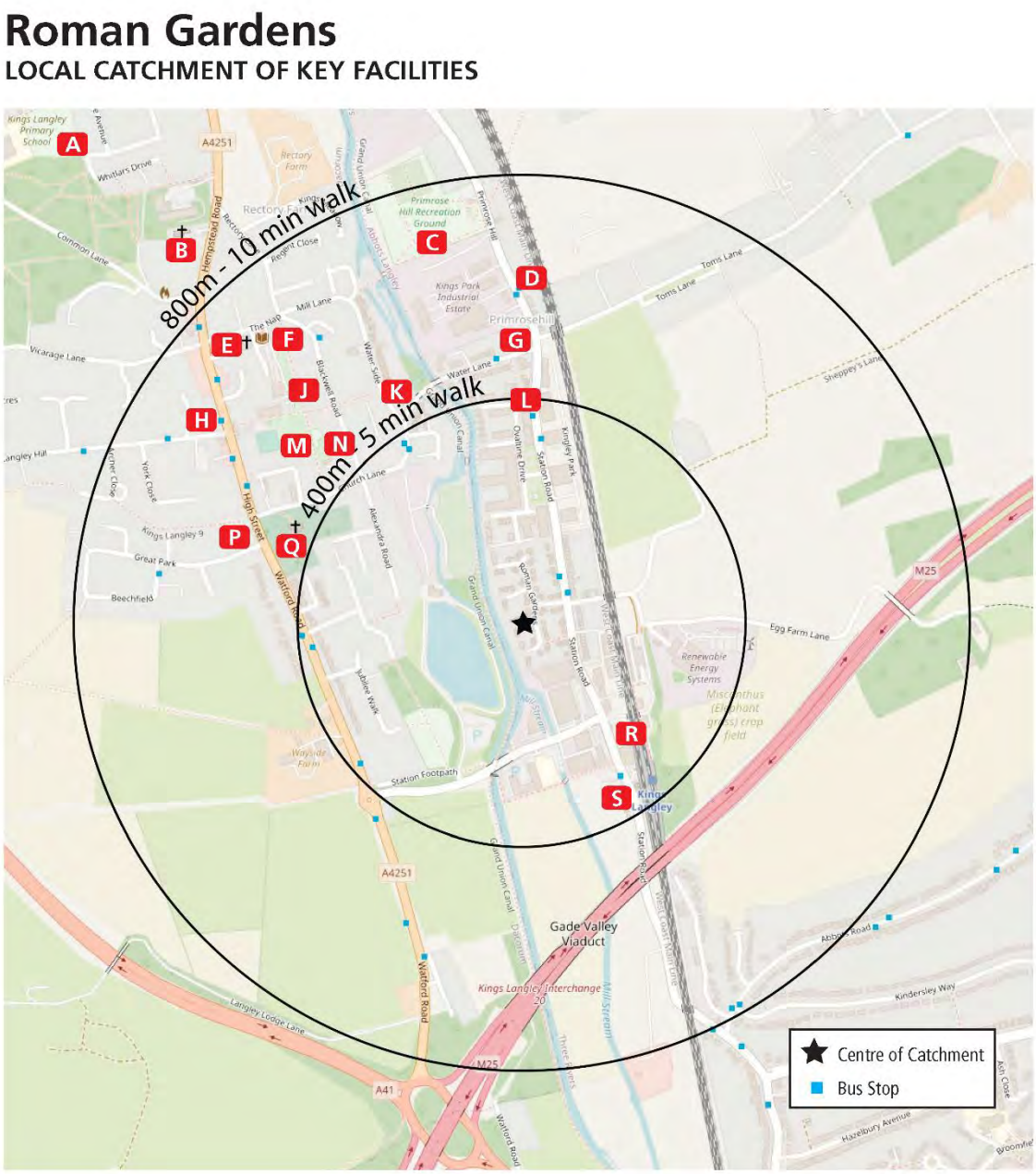


Figure 35: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Abbotswood Park

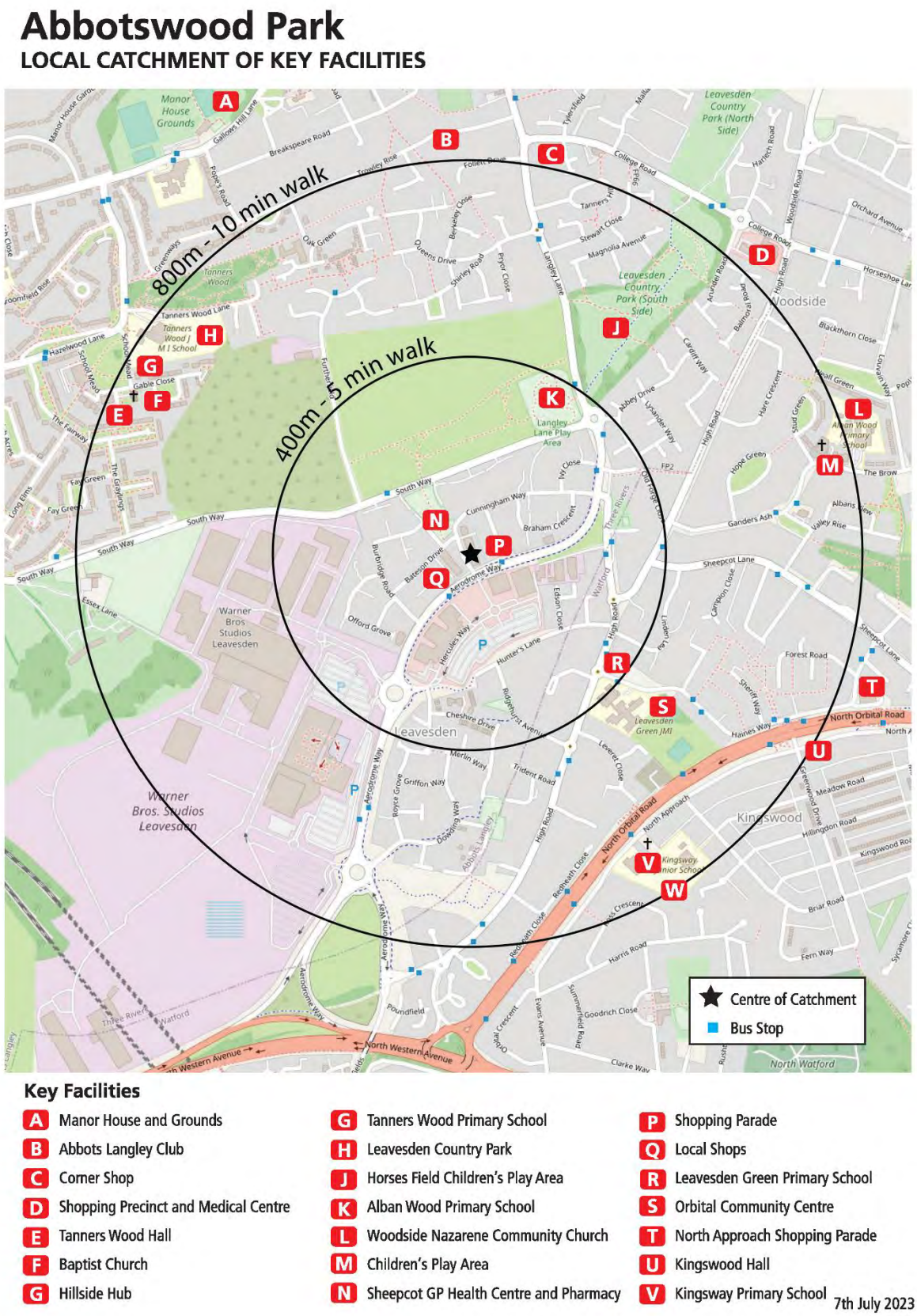


Figure 36: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Leavesden

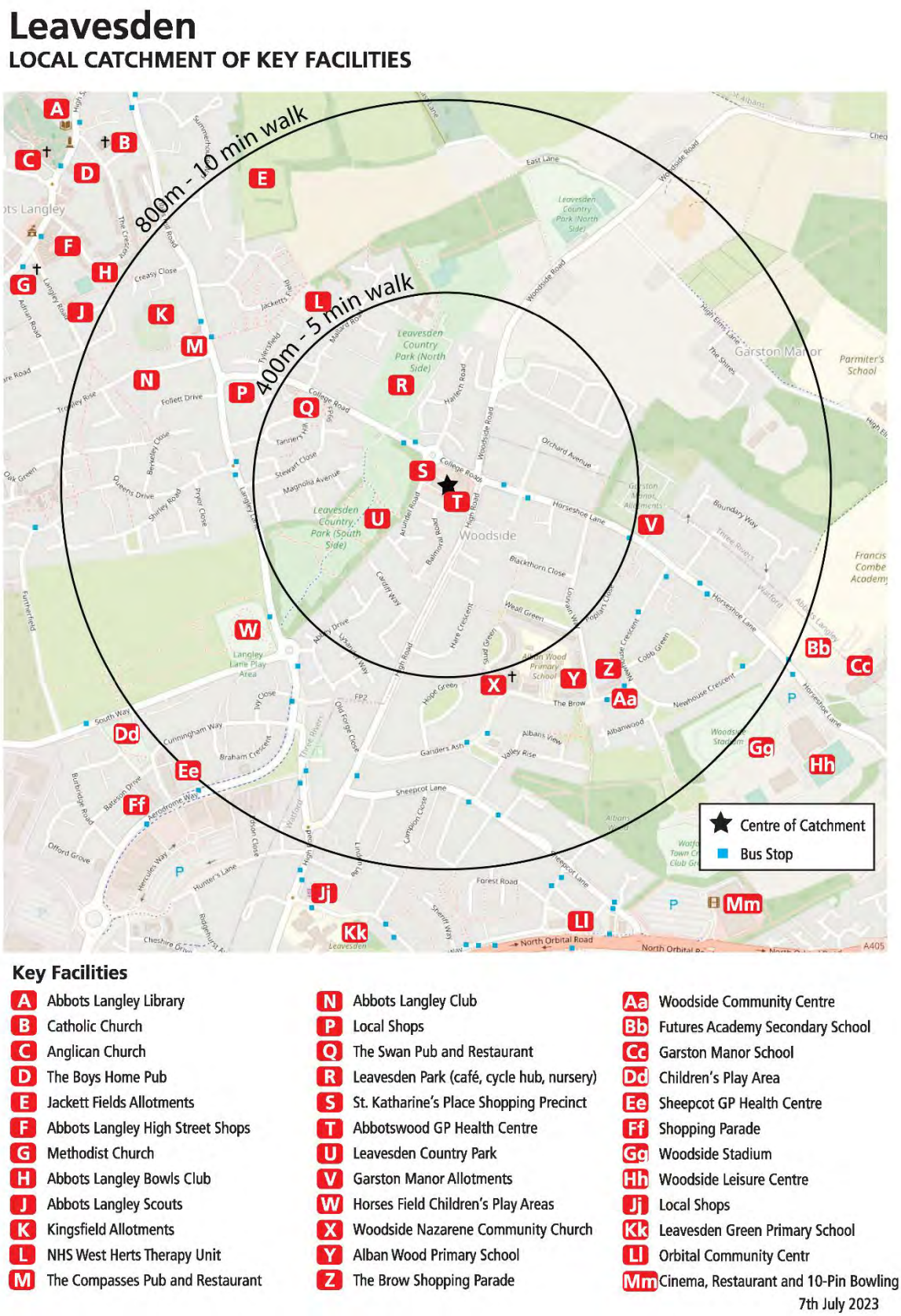


Figure 37: Local Catchment Map for Key facilities in Boundary Way

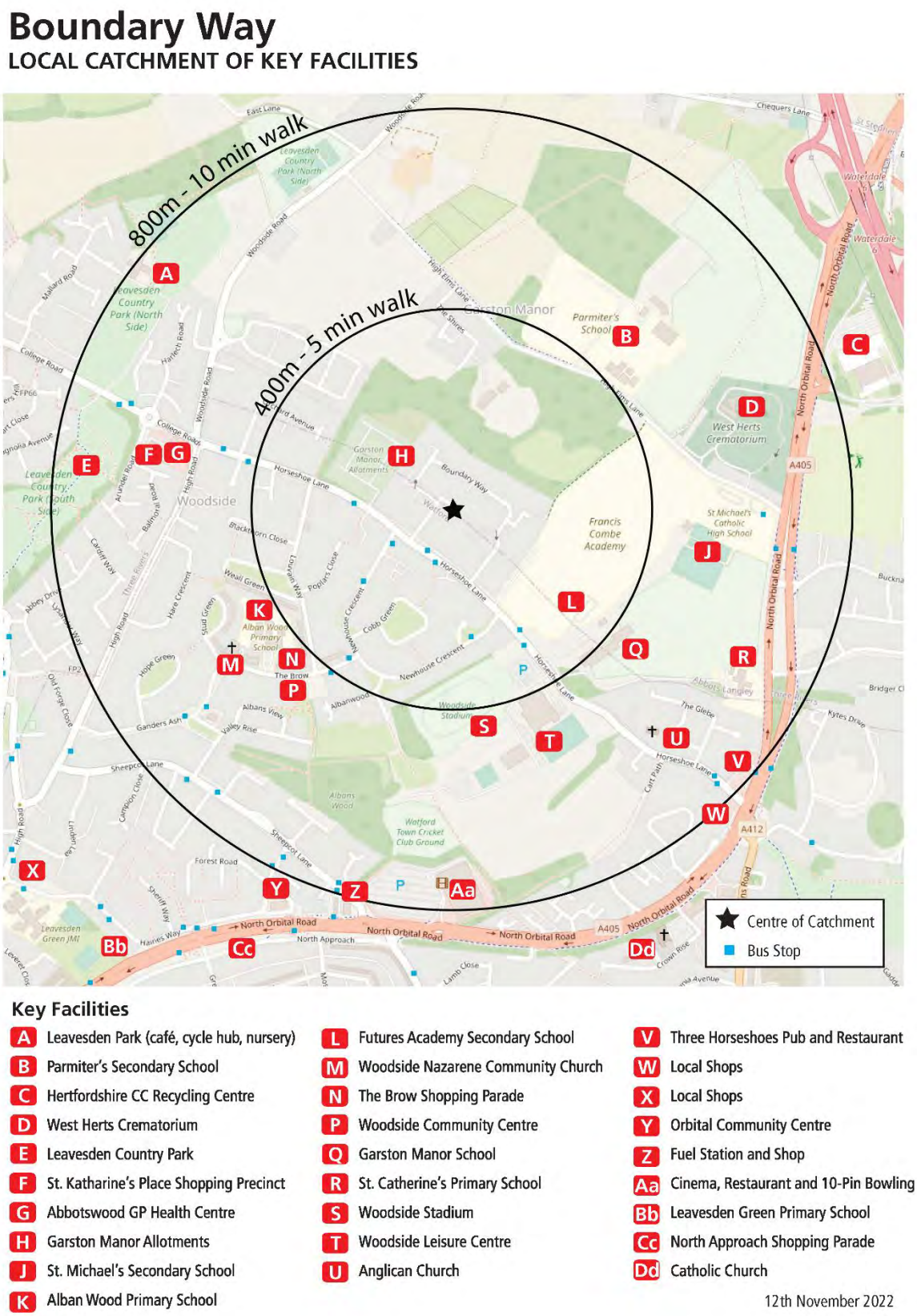


Figure 38: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities for Coates Way and Bucknalls Lane

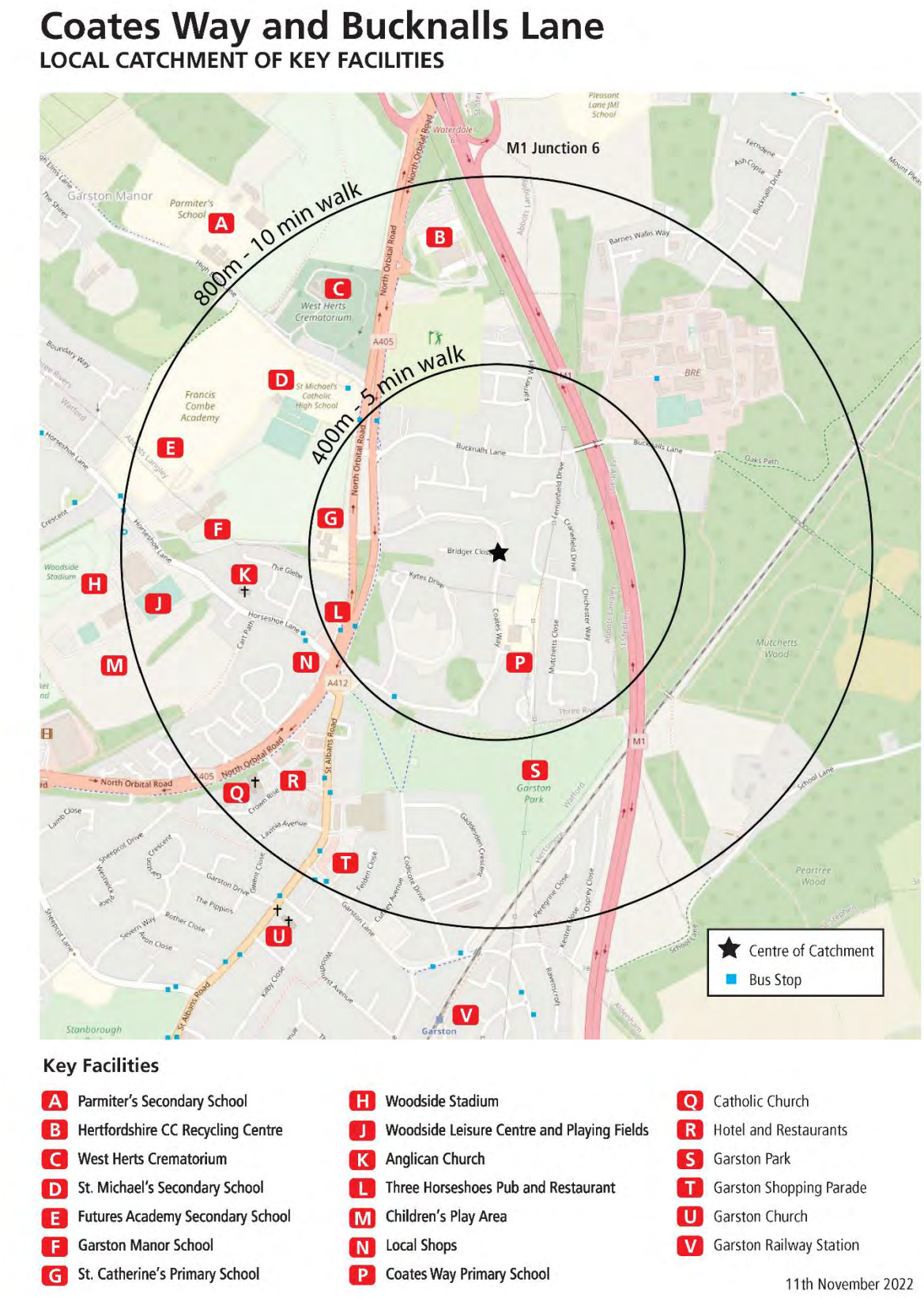
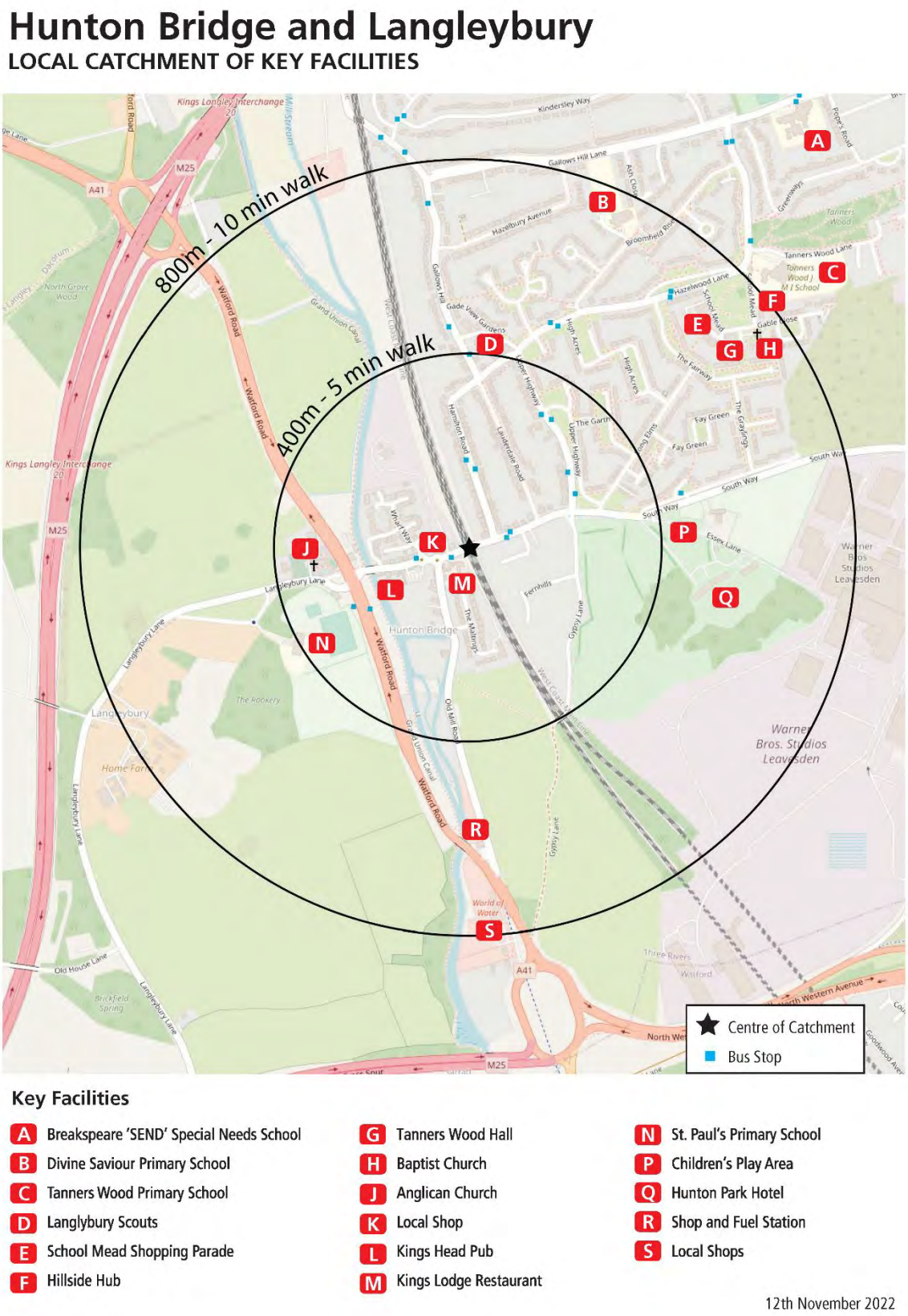


Figure 39: Local Catchment Map for Key Facilities in Hunton Bridge and Langleybury



Gade Valley

16.5. The communities associated with Toms Lane and Romans Gardens are predominately housing. On Toms Lane this includes Mobile Home Parks. Romans Gardens is located off Station Road and is a small modern housing area built on the east side of the Grand Union Canal on the Parish boundary. These housing areas, together with the mixed development along the Gade Valley, orientate towards the Kings Langley Village - even though they are part of the Parish of Abbots Langley. Accordingly, most of their local facilities, within walking distances, are mainly beyond the parish boundary in the Kings Langley Village. In the last twenty years, significant new housing and office developments have occurred in the Gade Valley replacing older industrial and office buildings. The presence of the Kings Langley rail station in this locality makes the area attractive for rail commuters working in urban centres along this line, including London. The area is also well connected to the motorway network with the nearby M25 and M1. See *Figure 34.*

16.6. Local residents wish to preserve the local employment opportunities along the Gade Valley. They are concerned that commercial units near Kings Langley Station are being redeveloped to become new housing – mainly new apartments. There is concern that the Gade Valley, as a traffic corridor between Hemel Hempstead and Watford and a location for traffic to connect with the national motorway network, is experiencing significant traffic growth. Policies relating to the local facilities that serve the Gade Valley are mainly in the Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan.

Abbots Langley Village

16.7. The largest settlement in the parish is the village of Abbots Langley, with the adjoining housing estates of Hillside and Furtherfield. Whilst the village is largely residential, the village centre provides an important focus for many of the community's facilities including shops, primary health care services, community halls, churches, public houses, schools, parks and recreation. Given the importance of the Village Centre to the Parish of Abbots Langley, the Neighbourhood Plan developed a new Masterplan for this locality. See Appendix H.

16.8. The last time an overall plan for the village centre was developed by the local District Council and Parish Council was over 25 years ago. The objective of the Village Centre Masterplan is to provide a 'high-level concept masterplan based on the 20-minute Neighbourhood principles'.

16.9. Having identified, in detail, the range of land uses in the village centre, the masterplan proposes how these facilities can be improved based on a dialogue with the community exploring the current constraints and opportunities. Proposals are presented in the Masterplan for four different areas of the village centre dealing with key aspects such as: the historic assets, land use, public spaces and sustainable travel. This work contributes to the Aspirational Project 3 - explained earlier in this document.

Abbotswood Park

16.10. This new housing area was developed during the last fifteen years, after Warner Bros Film Studios purchased the former Leavesden Aerodrome/Rolls Royce factory to develop their film studios. At the time, part of this land was sold for new housing, creating the Abbotswood Park community. The estate includes about 600 housing units with its own group of local shops - including a local supermarket, café, estate agent, pharmacy and Health Centre - forming its local centre. The adjoining Leavesden Country Park / Horses Field provides nearby recreational facilities for all ages. In the early years of the development, space was allocated for a community hall, but this was not provided. The estate is bordered by office development across Aerodrome Way and the expanding

Film Studios on its southern boundary. Warner Bros. Studios are planning a 40% increase in employment for their film and TV production activities, with over half of the jobs filled by local residents. To accommodate this, new sound studios and production facilities are planned with supporting infrastructure. See *Figure 35*.

Leavesden

16.11. The Leavesden area is south of the Abbots Langley Village and forms the southern boundary of the parish. Included in this southern boundary area are various housing estates, namely: Abbotswood Park, Leavesden, Boundary Way and Coates Way/Bucknalls Lane. South of this area is Watford, with its northern housing estates of Leavesden, Woodside, Boundary Way and Garston. The housing development extends continuously across much of parish's southern boundary with Watford.

16.12. The Leavesden Hospital was closed in 1997. Its extensive grounds and buildings were converted and developed as private housing, built around Leavesden Country Park up until 2010. This parkland of 27 hectares has been awarded Green Flag status for a number of years. The area consists of a network of walks and cycle paths, children's play areas, football pitches and tennis courts with recent investments from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to provide buildings for a café, cycle hub, a heritage trail and the Hive – a centre dedicated to local history and wildlife issues. A popular local shopping parade was created at Katherine Place, next to the park, and includes a Health centre, child nursey, supermarket with other shops and cafes. See *Figure 36*.

16.13. A site has been set aside for a new primary school off Woodside Road, although no timescale has been decided to build the school. Three secondary schools are within walking distance of this area. So, the area has good local facilities together with regular bus services for travel to Watford town centre, Abbots Langley village and Hemel Hempstead. Given the investment in Leavesden over the last 25 years, it is a well-planned and popular residential area with no additional facilities being demanded by local residents at the present time. However, residents are concerned to protect the Green Belt countryside on its border to the west. Some new housing is being considered for this area in the emerging Local Plan.

Boundary Way

16.14. The Boundary Way estate was built originally as public housing and, as its name implies, strides the boundary of the Three Rivers District and Watford Borough. Within the estate there are no community facilities. A community room that was provided originally for residents was incorporated with in-fill housing development by the local Housing Association. Good local facilities are accessible beyond the immediate boundary of the estate as shown in *Figure 37*. This includes the Garston Manor allotments on the north-west boundary, the Futures Academy Secondary School on the south-east boundary and the Watford Woodside Leisure Centre within a short walk. The Woodside Park Leisure Centre includes an indoor swimming pool, large gym, squash courts and other recreational facilities. The adjoining park include playing fields, the Woodside Athletics Stadium, Watford Town Cricket Ground and other sports club facilities. Beyond the Woodside Park, is an entertainment complex including a cinema and indoor child play area. A redeveloped local shopping parade, on The Brow, is provided within a five-minute walk from Boundary Way, within the neighbouring Woodside estate and also at Katherine Place, as described above for Leavesden.

16.15. Boundary Way, with its recent investments, has no spare land within the estate for other land uses - given its high-density housing. Local frequent bus services to Watford town centre and Abbots Langley Village/ Hemel Hempstead operate on Horseshoe Lane, adjacent to the Boundary Way estate. No further local improvements are recommended for this area at the present time.

Coates Way/Bucknalls Lane

16.16. This area consists of a number of local housing estates located between the A405 dual carriageway and the M1 motorway on the eastern boundary of the parish. These include housingestates such as Lemonfield Drive (1960's) and Coates Way (1950's) and more recent estates such as the Tudor Manor estate (late 1980s). Bucknalls Lane was developed for housing from 1930's to 1950's. This area is on the edge of the parish. Its location means that it probably has more affinity with Garston and North Watford than Abbots Langley. It has a local primary school, within the community, on Coates Way. There are two nearby secondary schools, located across the A405 on High Elms Lane. There is a local park and children's play area on the southern boundary of the estates at Garston Park. Beyond this area, within a 10-to-15-minute walk, is the Garston Shopping Parade on St Albans Road and a number of nearby restaurants and a hotel. Bus services operate along the A405 and St Albans Road to Watford town centre and St Albans. See *Figure 38/.*

16.17. In the emerging Local Plan for Three Rivers District Council, the former 9-hole golf course to the north of Bucknalls Lane is expected to be developed for housing, adding to development that has recently occurred off Farriers Way on the east side of the site. If more housing is developed, existing local residents do not want any build-up of traffic on Bucknalls Lane, accessing the A405 during busy periods of the day. Therefore, any proposed new housing should have access to/from the A405 directly and not via any adjoining roads. More houses in the area could stimulate a review of local community facilities and may result in a few local shops and possibly some primary health care facilities in the area.

16.18. At the northern location of this area is the Hertfordshire CC Recycling Centre and Refuse Depot. This is being expanded and modified with the recent acquisition of the Mullany's Coach and Bus Depot. This is the second large bus depot that has been sold for redevelopment in the area. In the longer term, this could affect the quality and cost of local bus services and school transport in the Watford and Abbots Langley areas.

Langleybury and Hunton Bridge

16.19. Hunton Bridge is a well-established housing area on the west of Abbots Langley village with the West Coast mainline and the Grand Union canal on its western boundary. Hunton Bridge has been a settlement since the 19th century. It has recently expanded with new estates to the south and north of the village. In terms of local facilities, there is one general store, two pubs and a hotel. In the nearby Langleybury, across the A41 dual carriageway, there is a local Anglican church, an associated St Paul's primary school and the Langleybury Cricket Ground (owned by Hertfordshire CC and leased to the Parish Council.) The cricket ground and surrounding woods provide good open space and, together with the canal, means local residents have plenty of opportunities for local exercise and dog walking. See *Figure 39.*

16.20. Beyond the school and cricket ground, is the Langleybury Estate, now part of the nearby Grove Hotel grounds located to the south of this area. The hotel opened in 2003 and is owned by Ralph Trustees Ltd. On this estate, there are proposals to restore fully the Grade Two listed building, Langleybury House, built in 1720. This is on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register. There are proposals also to replace the derelict Langleybury Secondary School that closed in 1996. The old secondary school has been used over the years as a favourite film location for TV series, etc. In the current Local Plan 2014, there is a Development Brief for the designated Grove Development Area enclosed by the M25, the link road at Junction 19 and the A41.

16.21. In 2022, proposals for the Grove Development Area includes a new Film Hub to support the local film and TV industries. See: https://www.langleyburyfilmhub.com. The web pages describe the proposals which include a Craft Campus with units for long term hire as well as a Film and Television Training Facility, workshops, sound stages and production offices. For the public, there is a proposed enlarged area of open parkland with tree planting, a joined up public foot paths and cycle network, improved facilities and relocation of the Children's Farm, additional parking facilities and a café in the restored walled gardens of Langleybury House. It is understood that the proposals have been developed in consultation with Historic England and could provide many benefits for the area, although, if approved, it would involve some development on Green Belt land. The project has received outline planning permission.

16.22. Just off the A41, near the main roundabout for the M25 Junction 19 link road, there are two shops and a coffee bar. One of these shops, the 'World of Water' has been sold to Lidl in 2022 to convert the complex, with its car park, to become a supermarket. The public are concerned that the anticipated increased demand will exacerbate the current traffic issues affecting this busy area, including the generation of traffic queues attempting to enter/exit the site. A planning application was submitted in September 2022 to Three Rivers District Council. This application received planning approval in 2024 and is being built in 2025/2026.

16.23. With all the changes and investment occurring in this area, it would be opportune to review the potential of improving access and use of the canal for recreation. Whilst the towpath has been upgraded for the benefit of walkers and cyclists, there are other vacant sites along the canal that could provide visitor parking and enhanced visitor experiences to enjoy the heritage and wildlife along this corridor.

17. NON-POLICY COMMUNITY ACTIONS

19.1. The actions included in *Table 5* are not planning and land use policies. Rather they are activities to be pursued, which have been identified during the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Table 5: Non-Policy Community Actions

Issue	Possible actions	Main partners
Need to keep up to date with policy change at the national and strategic level	Commit to a periodic review of the NP including once the new Local Plan has been adopted.	ALPC
Preservation of non-designated heritage assets	Apply to TRDC to add the non-designated heritage assets to the Local List.	ALPC, Local History Society, TRDC
Foster improved relationships between local businesses and other community organisations	Explore opportunities for a community partnership to be established that will seek opportunities for joint working between businesses, schools, community organisations etc. In particular, work with the Parish Council to implement the Abbots Langley Village Centre Masterplan, including improved primary care facilities.	Local businesses, schools, ALPC, community organisations
Improve shop signage	Explore options (including funding) to develop a local shop signage scheme to set out core principles to enhance the look and feel of the village centre.	Local businesses, ALPC
Address problems of littering, graffiti and fly tipping	Work with local sports clubs to explore what can be done post-events to target littering and fly tipping. Organise local litter picks and targeted litter action plans. Installing of additional bins – for litter and dog mess – at key locations identified as 'hot spots'.	ALPC, local residents, local sporting venues and teams ALPC, TRDC, HCC PROW team, local community, TRDC
Need to improve public areas	Continue programme of public planting and flower displays including a replacement tree at Toms Lane roundabout.	ALPC, local businesses
Completion of the park on Langley Way/South Way	Work with developer to set out timeline for delivery.	Developer, TRDC, ALPC
Need to promote low carbon transition in the parish	Work with local businesses and other partnerships to identify local actions that can be taken to help reduce carbon emissions.	ALPC, local businesses, TRDC

Need for continued co-ordinated events programme locally	Continue to seek volunteers and community groups to be involved in organising community events.	ALPC, local community organisations
Local desire for a community market	Explore options to periodically close the car park in the village centre in order to house a local market.	ALPC, TRDC, local businesses
Lack of public toilet provision	Consider developing a Community Toilet Scheme	Local shops, cafes, pubs, facilities, amenities, ALPC
Noise and pollution from M25	Liaise with Highways England to look at options to reduce noise and pollution levels, such as tree buffers alongside motorway, resurfacing etc.	ALPC, Highways England, local MP.
Overgrown and poorly maintained footpaths and ensure footpaths are kept open	Undertake an audit of the current footpath network and lobby for improvements.	HCC PROW team, PC, local walking groups
Cars parking on pavements and grass verges	Local communications campaign	ALPC, local community
Bus timetables not integrating with train timetables	Meet with rail and bus companies to explore options for greater integration.	ALPC, HCC, bus and rail providers
Congestion	Explore options to set up a Car Club locally.	ALPC, local residents
Speeding vehicles	Explore options for increasing the 20mph zones in the villages.	ALPC, local residents
Biodiversity net gain	Identify areas of the parish that could be 'banked' as biodiversity net gain priority areas and where net gain units could be spent, if on-site delivery is not possible.	ALPC, local landowners
Conservation Area Appraisals	Work with partners to update the Conservation Area Appraisals for Abbots Langley and Hunton Bridge.	ALPC, TRDC
Sports provision in the parish	Explore need and opportunities for enhanced sports and recreational facilities in the parish including, for instance, the development of a 3G football pitch.	ALPC, TRDC, Sport England, local organisations

18. GLOSSARY

Affordable housing - Social rented, affordable rented, shared equity and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Brownfield land registers: Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by the District Council. A proportion accrues to the parish council.

Community Right to Build Order: An Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Conservation area - an area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.

Convenience shop: A small retail store that stocks everyday items.

Geodiversity: The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Habitats site: Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

Heritage asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Local connection: For the purposes of allocating affordable homes, housing shall be occupied in accordance with the District Council's standard allocation procedures with priority given to applicants who can demonstrate that they have a local connection to the parish of Abbots Langley at the time of occupation.

Local Enterprise Partnership: A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local housing need: the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach.

Local plan: A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Local shop: A retail store usually classified as Use Class F2, serving the needs of the local community. They would normally stock everyday items.

Major development: For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m2 or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – the national planning policy document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Neighbourhood plan: A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Non-strategic policies: Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

Older people: People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

People with disabilities: People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

Planning condition: A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Playing field: The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural exception sites: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at

the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Section 106 agreement - A mechanism under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable.

Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Starter Homes - Homes targeted at first time buyers who would otherwise be priced out of the market. Like shared ownership homes, these should be available to households that need them most, with an income of less than £80,000 (£90,000 for London). Eligible first-time buyers will also be required to have a mortgage in order to buy starter homes to stop cash buyers.

Supplementary planning documents: Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Use Class Order - The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (most recently amended in 2020) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning Permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.

Wildlife corridor: Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

Windfall sites: Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

19. EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS

19.1. This chapter provides an index of the main documents referred to in this ALNP report and the documents on the Abbots Langley Parish website. On the website documents include the main ALNP report and its nine Appendices. These can be accessed with other material under the seven topics (via the Abbots Langley Parish website in the Parish Section, Sub-section Neighbourhood Plan.) See: https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/introduction/. Information in relevant sub sections on the website includes:

1. Introduction.

Abbots Langley Commonplace Web site: https://abbotslangley.commonplace.is

Locality website: https://abbotslangley.commonplace.is

https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/?type%5B%5D=key-documents

2. The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan.

Main Documents and Appendices A to J: https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/draft-abbots-langley-neighbourhood-plan/

3. Parish Maps.

Abbots Langley Designated Area Map. https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/maps-of-abbots-langley-parish/

Other key Maps prepared for the ANLP.

4. Terms of Reference.

For the ALNP Steering Group. https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/terms-of-reference/

5. Agendas.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee: 2016 to 2019. https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/agendas-for-the-neighbourhood-planning-team/

6. Other ANLP Documents.

Eight documents associated with a published ALNP Summary, Workshops, Public feedback from Workshops, Exhibitions, Presentations on ALNP and a New Local Plan Forum and ALNP Policy Development Summary (2018). https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/draft-abbots-langley-neighbourhood-plan/documents/

7.Bi-monthly Progress Reports on the ALNP work programme.

Over forty ALNP Bi-monthly Progress Reports for the Parish Council meetings from May 2016 to January 2023. https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/bi-monthly-progress-report/

19.2. Index of the main documents referred to in the ALNP:

Abbots Langley Parish Design Guide and Code 2021 Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan.

AECOM. See Appendix E

https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/draft-abbots-langley-neighbourhood-plan/

Abbots Langley Housing Needs Assessment – AECOM. See Appendix D.
https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/07/Abbots-Langley-HNA_FinalVersion.p- neighbourdf

Abbots Langley Timeline. Prepared by the Abbots Langley History Society 2019
http://www.allhs.org.uk

Abbots Langley Village Centre masterplan September 2022. AECOM. See Appendix H.
https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/draft-abbots-langley-neighbourhood-plan/

Adopted Development Plan for Three Rivers District Council.
https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/development-plan

Adopted Development Plan for Three Rivers District Council.
https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/development-plan

Aspirations for Bedmond- Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan -See Appendix I
https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/draft-abbots-langley-neighbourhood-plan/

'A life on our Planet' 2020. David Attenborough.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Attenborough:_A_Life_on_Our_Planet

Breeam Certification on Sustainable Built Environmental Standards
https://www.buildenergy.co.uk/services/breeam/what-is-breeam/

Building for a Healthy Life 2020
https://www.designforhomes.org/project/building-for-life/

Community Infrastructure Levy -Guidance – Spending the Levy
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy#spending-the-levy

Decarbonising Transport Setting the Challenge – Department of Transport 2020
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932122/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf

Economic Impact of Tourism 2019 Hertfordshire 2019 Results - Visit Herts.
https://www.visithertsbusiness.co.uk/media/63227/economic-impact-of-tourism-hertfordshire-2019.pdf

Economic Value of Tourism, January 2026, Tourism Economics, 2026
https://www.visitbritain.org/research-insights/economic-value-tourism

Economic Impact of Tourism in Hertfordshire, 2026
https://www.visithertsbusiness.co.uk/media/117571/economic-impact-of-tourism-hertfordshire-2023.pdf

Housing Delivery Test Action Plan. Three Rivers District Council.
https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/housing-delivery-test

National Census 2021

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk

National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Updated December 2024.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

National Planning Guidelines, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2018.

New Local Plan for Rivers District Council. -Preferred Policy Options and Sites for Potential Allocation. 2021. Three Rivers District Council
https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/new-local-plan

Progress Report to Parliament, 2022. Climate Change Committee.
https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2022-progress-report-to-parliament/

South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment. 2020
https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/45/south-west-hertfordshire-local-housing-needs-assessment-2020

Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment
https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/new-local-plan-evidence-base

The 20-minute Neighbourhood Guide
https://tcpa.org.uk/collection/the-20-minute-neighbourhood/

The Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Update 2022
http://aspect-ecology.com/march-2022-natural-england-introduces-a-12-6km-zone-of-influence-around-chiltern-beechwoods-sac-where-mitigation-will-be-required-for-residential-development/

South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment. 2020
https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/45/south-west-hertfordshire-local-housing-needs-assessment-2020

Woodland Trust: Ancient Tree Guide 4
https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1836/what-are-ancient-trees.pdf