



London Colney  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Area Analysis

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Troy Planning + Design  
for London Colney Parish Council  
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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper builds upon the initial review prepared in December 2020, summarising the policy position of relevance to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, the status of the St Albans City and District Local Plan and potential areas of focus for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 This document presents a summary of the analysis and research undertaken to help drive and inform emerging policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. It includes a summary of key statistics and data, analysis of the wider context and setting for the Parish, as well as local information.
- 1.3 Further analysis will be undertaken as part of the production of Design Codes/Housing Needs Assessment to be provided through the Locality Technical Support programme. As such, the paper does not seek to duplicate those efforts. Furthermore, as the Neighbourhood Plan evolves and objectives are agreed, additional evidence will be collected as appropriate to supplement this paper and the drafting of policies for incorporation in the Plan.

## 2. Location and Setting

### Location

- 2.1 London Colney is a village and civil parish situated along the River Colne in the south of Hertfordshire. The Parish includes the North West, East and South West wards.
- 2.2 As shown in Figure 1 below, London Colney is bordered in the north by the A414 North Orbital Road, with a 200 metre stretch of agricultural fields and commercial greenhouses separating London Colney from the built-up edge of St. Albans. The southern boundary generally aligns with the M25 London Orbital Road, although it extends south of the M25 in places, to include some properties along Harper Lane and land associated with the Frogmore Fishery. The western boundary is demarcated by a private unnamed track which provides access to the Tarmac concrete supplier site in Radlett to the A414. London Colney's eastern boundary is less defined, however, from north to south the boundary is marked by White Horse Lane, an unnamed agricultural track, the River Colne and a minor stream.
- 2.3 London Colney is inset in the Green Belt and is surrounded by agricultural fields. However, its built edge is separated from the wider countryside by major roads, comprising the M25 to the south, the A414 to the north, the B5378 to the west and the A1081 to the east. Strategically located, London Colney also lies approximately 10km north of the London Borough of Barnet, which is served by the London Underground Northern Line services via High Barnet Station.
- 2.4 Due to its close proximity to the M25, the south-eastern edge of London Colney includes numerous commercial and industrial warehouses which partially operate as freight and distribution hubs. This is in stark contrast to the main built-up area of London Colney which has a more distinctive rural character and contains residential and retail streets with smaller plots. The Neighbourhood Area also contains Napsbury, a former mental institute that has evolved into a leafy, well-defined residential suburb of London Colney.
- 2.5 London Colney was defined as 'Category 1: City, Towns – Main urban settlements excluded from the Green Belt' in the withdrawn Local Plan. Category 1 settlements are regarded as *"the most accessible locations for development, with the widest range of services and facilities. Larger scale, higher density developments will be encouraged, but will need to respect local character and heritage."* With regard to retail, services and leisure, Policy L12 of the withdrawn Local Plan defines London Colney as a 'district centre' which *"provides food and grocery shopping facilities, supported by a limited range of their shops and non-retail services situated within and serving neighbourhoods in Towns"*.

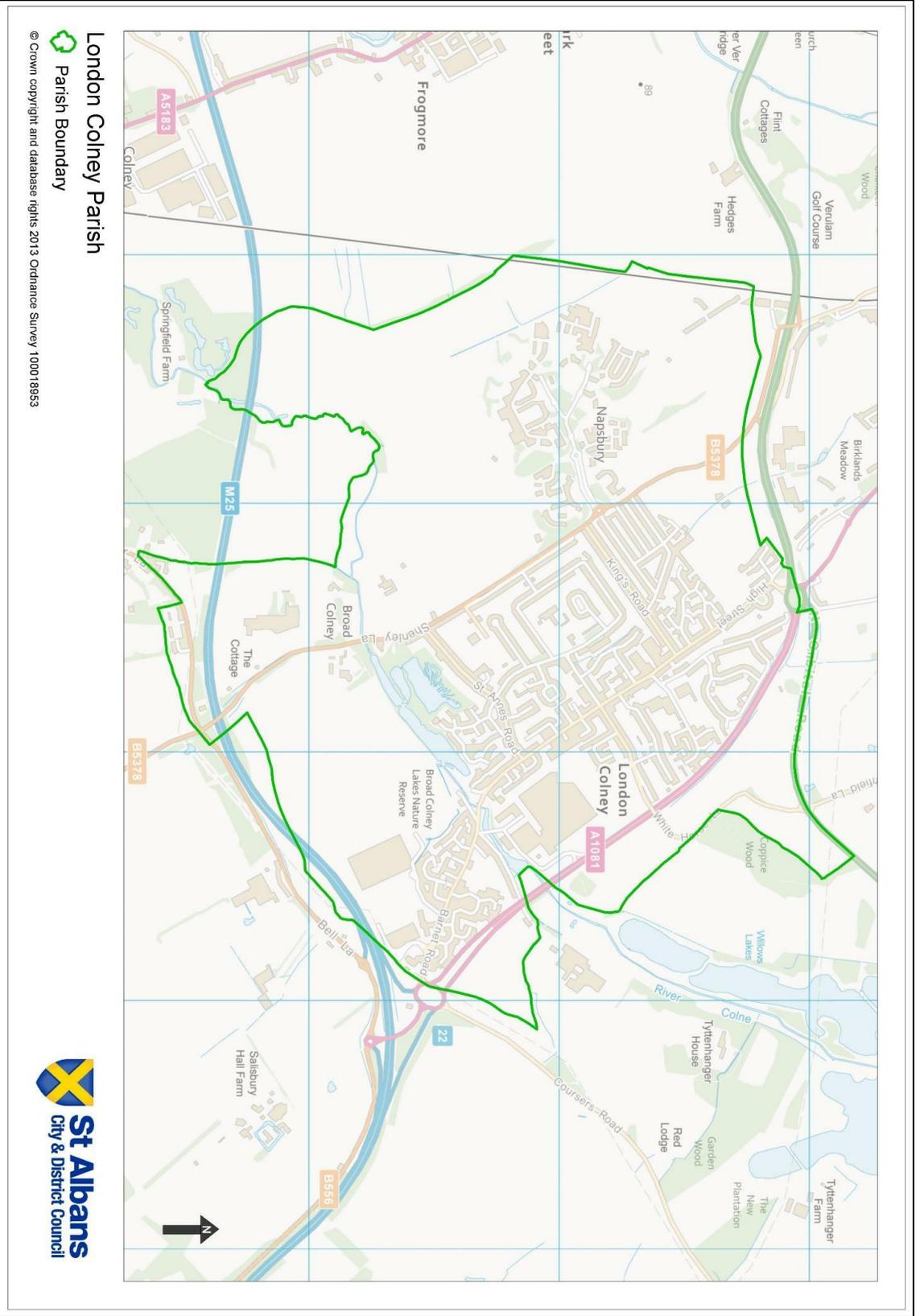


Figure 1: London Colney Neighbourhood Area

## Setting

- 2.6 According to the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Area Statements<sup>1</sup>, south, west and eastern areas of the Neighbourhood Area fall within the Vale of St Albans character area, which is defined as a broad and shallow basin of the upper River Colne. The most north-eastern area, which includes land east of the A1081, is markedly different and falls within the Colney Heath Farmland character area.

### Vale of St Albans

- 2.7 The broad valley was formed as a result of the proto-Thames, which flowed north of its present course during the last Ice Age. The geology of much of the Vale is the product of this last Ice Age, consisting of silty drift and till.
- 2.8 The Vale of St Albans is characterised by its broad basin, extensive views along the Vale (and up to Shenley Ridge), predominantly arable landscape, active and restored mineral extraction sites and areas of woodland and parkland to the north east (in association with Tyttenhanger Park).
- 2.9 The Domesday Survey of 1098 suggests that London Colney (including Napsbury) was made up of woodland and mixed agriculture such as arable and pasture<sup>2</sup>. Geographical and archaeological evidence indicates that large-scale 'setting out' of land occurred in the late Mesolithic period. The existing landscape and rectilinear forms are consistent with field patterns which date back to the Bronze Age. In more recent times, the land was divided into three large estates: the holdings of St Albans Abbey, Tyttenhanger Estate and the Park Estate.
- 2.10 Since then, the Vale of St Albans has been pockmarked by extensive mineral extraction sites. Evidence of this includes the four waterbodies and mounds of overflow and spoil within the setting of Tyttenhanger Park. Extraction sites have distinctively altered the landscape character of the area. Remnants of woodland exist only in the grounds of large estates or in well-contained thin fragments.
- 2.11 The present-day settlement pattern originates from the earlier estates layout and consists of dispersed farmsteads and larger house set within parkland. Modern human influences such as mineral extraction sites and the M25 and other major roads have had a large impact on the surrounding landscape. The effects of modern roads (including increased noise pollution and impaired visual amenity) have, in effect, been exacerbated by the

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP\\_SLP\\_ENV005HertfordshireLandscapeCharacterAreaStatementsStAlbansDistrict\\_tcm15-54905.pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP_SLP_ENV005HertfordshireLandscapeCharacterAreaStatementsStAlbansDistrict_tcm15-54905.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.londoncolney-pc.gov.uk/village-history/>

openness and flatness of the Vale of St Albans. In addition, many of the Public Rights of Way are uninviting due to active and inactive mineral extraction sites and the major roads and industrial sites which exert negative visual influence.

- 2.12 The focus of the Landscape Character Area Statement<sup>3</sup> management strategy for the Vale of St Albans is to 'reconstruct'. This includes opportunities to *"promote the creation of extensive areas of new large-scale woodlands to reflect the scale of the area, particularly in the open arable areas and mineral sites away from the river corridor"*. With regard to the M25 and the road network, the management strategy states that *"woodland planting should provide screening from motorways, roads and intrusive built development at London Colney and Colney Street"*. The Strategy adds that *"new development [should be] integrated into the landscape with minimal impact"* and that framed views including Shenley Ridge, Napsbury water tower and All Saints pastoral entre chapel should be maintained.

#### Colney Heath Farmland

- 2.13 The north-eastern part of the Neighbourhood Area falls within the Colney Heath Farmland character area. This includes land which separates St Albans from London Colney and land east of the A1081. This area is characterised by medium-scale arable farmland, gentle undulating landforms and areas of restored former mineral extraction sites. This landscape is severed by transport corridors.
- 2.14 Much like the Vale of St Albans, the settlement pattern is traditional and dispersed and there is a sense of urban pressure from the surrounding areas. The A414 provides a major source of noise and disruption. Built development within and on the perimeter of this area is well concealed by vegetation.
- 2.15 The Landscape Character Area Statement management strategy stipulates that the area should be 'improved and conserved', and, *"where ancient lanes and their associated hedgerows fall within or abut a proposed development, ensure that developers retain, protect, enhance and integrate such features into the new development with due regard to their historic, ecological and landscape value"*. In addition, *"new woodland planting should be promoted to maintain and improve visual separation from the adjacent urban uses and transport corridors, including the A414 and A1(M)."* Views of heathland landscapes are valued for their distinctiveness and should therefore be conserved.

#### Significance

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP\\_SLP\\_ENV005HertfordshireLandscapeCharacterAreaStatementsStAlbansDistrict\\_tcm15-54905.pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP_SLP_ENV005HertfordshireLandscapeCharacterAreaStatementsStAlbansDistrict_tcm15-54905.pdf)

- 2.16 The distinctiveness of the Vale of St Albans is recognised in the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Area Statements as *'rather unusual by virtue of its openness and flatness'*. Despite this, there are no statutory environment designations (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [AONBs], Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSIs], Special Areas of Conservation [SACs], Ramsar sites or Special Protection Areas [SPAs]) within the Neighbourhood Area, although Redwell Wood – a designated SSSI, lies 2 kilometres south east of London Colney. Broad Colney Lakes is an 8.37-hectare former Local Nature Reserve which is situated in the south of the Neighbourhood Area. The site is a reclaimed gravel pit which now consists of wetlands and woodland<sup>4</sup>. The Watling Chase Community Forest covers the entire Neighbourhood Area<sup>5</sup>. This is a long-term initiative to improve the countryside between North London and Hertfordshire. The Watling Chase Community Forest provides public access, including the 17 kilometre 'Timberland Trail' which traverses land adjacent to Borehamwood northwards to Colney Heath. Coppice Wood and Dudley Wood lie just outside the eastern boundary of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.17 A number of statutory and non-statutory historic designations exist within the Neighbourhood Area. The Chantry Island (Colney Chapel) moated site is a designated Scheduled Monument. This oval shaped moated site has great historical religious significance and is one of just 6,000 moated sites which still remain in England today<sup>6</sup>. Napsbury Hospital, a former psychiatric hospital, is a Registered Park and Garden which lies to the west of the main built-up area of London Colney. This site is described as an 'echelon-style mental asylum'<sup>7</sup> which was designed in 1900 and opened in 1905, with grounds designed by notable landscape designer William Goldring. Formerly known as the Middlesex County Asylum, the overall design consisted of the main asylum complex laid out in a dog-leg echelon form and additional villa-style wards spread across the grounds. The associated gardens consisted of airing courts, L-shaped pavilions, lawns, mature trees and serpentine paths. Today, the site has been converted into residential units.
- 2.18 There are also two Conservation Areas within London Colney – Napsbury and London Colney. Napsbury Conservation Area consists of the former psychiatric hospital and surrounding residential areas. The Conservation Area Statement<sup>8</sup> recognises the historic significance of the site, as both a psychiatric hospital in the early 1900s and a war hospital for soldiers wounded on the Front during the First World War. The site was served by its own railway line (now known as Siding Way) which delivered supplies from the mainline

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/broad-colney-lakes/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/countryside-management-service/walking-and-cycling-routes/watling-chase-timberland-trail.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010718>

<sup>7</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001400>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/conservation/Napsbury%20Conservation%20Area%20Character%20Statement.pdf>

to the west before it was closed and dismantled in 1959. The hospital reverted back to a psychiatric hospital until its official closure in 1998. Most recently, the site was bought by Crest Nicholson and redeveloped as 550 homes. The redevelopment was phased and included both the conversion of the former hospital buildings and the development of new builds which reflect the architectural style of the former hospital and its parkland. Since this period, Napsbury has been subject to further development. The London Colney Conservation Area Statement<sup>9</sup> states that the settlement dates back to the Medieval period and that the earliest record of London Colney exists in charters which date back to the eighth century. The village was formed around the ford crossing on the main road from London to Holyhead. Today, the village includes an assemblage of listed buildings which can be divided into two groups – buildings adjacent to the River Colne and the triangular green south of the bridge; and those located along Barnet Road and the High Street.

- 2.19 The London Colney Conservation Area still contains remnants of its history as a key coaching route stop<sup>10</sup>. This is evidenced by the existence of timber-framed buildings near the River Colne, which are mainly of sixteenth and seventeenth century date. Examples of this include the Bull Public House and Briar Cottage, both of which are timber-framed two-storey buildings with roof tiles. These original buildings are thought to have formed the original core of the settlement. Many of the listed and locally listed buildings in this area are clustered around the triangular green adjacent to the river, which creates a distinctive rural village character. Along Barnet Road the High Street there are examples of eighteenth or early-nineteenth developments which take the form of short runs of cottages faced in brick.
- 2.20 As a result of its proximity to the River Colne, London Colney is at moderate risk from flooding due to its flat topography and the existence of streams which flow into the River Colne. Cherry Tree Avenue, Peters Avenue and Lowbell Lane are at a high risk of surface water flooding. In accordance with paragraph 163 of the NPPF<sup>11</sup>, development should only be in areas at risk of flooding (in light of a site-specific flood-risk assessment and sequential and exception tests [where applicable]) where it can be demonstrated that the development “[...] incorporates sustainable drainage systems” and where “[...] the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient [...]”.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/conservation/London%20Colney%20CACS.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/conservation/London%20Colney%20CACS.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)

### 3. Growth and development

- 3.1 The construction of St Peter's Church in 1825<sup>12</sup> and the existence of the Chantry Island moated site confirm that the settlement was a well-established chapelry in the late 1800s<sup>13</sup>. During this period, London Colney was also a key passing route along the London to Holyhead coaching route<sup>14</sup>. An extract from 'The Holyhead Road: The Mail Coach Road to Dublin'<sup>15</sup> written by Charles Harper in 1902 details the journey through London Colney as follows:

*"The Holyhead Road goes broad and straight, and with a long perspective of dust-clouds and telegraph-poles up Ridge Hill, where the borders of Middlesex are crossed and Hertfordshire entered [...]"*

*"Descending Ridge Hill, into the valley of the Colne, London Colney is reached, skirting the road by that insignificant stream, spanned by a picturesque old red-brick bridge, whose generous proportions seem to be much too large for so unassuming a runlet. Such criticism, however, is severely deprecated by those who know the Colne throughout the year. They tell wondrous stories of the things it is capable of. London Colney's name is perhaps not a very attractive one, but the place is exceedingly picturesque. Quant village inns, timber-and-plaster gabled cottages, and old brick houses with a certain air of refinement that comes of chaste design and sound workmanship, are its constituent features".*

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<sup>12</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1174696>

<sup>13</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010718>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.londoncolney-pc.gov.uk/village-history/>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.public-library.uk/dailyebook/The%20Holyhead%20Road%20-%20the%20mail-coach%20road%20to%20Dublin%20\(1902\)%20Volume%201.pdf](http://www.public-library.uk/dailyebook/The%20Holyhead%20Road%20-%20the%20mail-coach%20road%20to%20Dublin%20(1902)%20Volume%201.pdf)

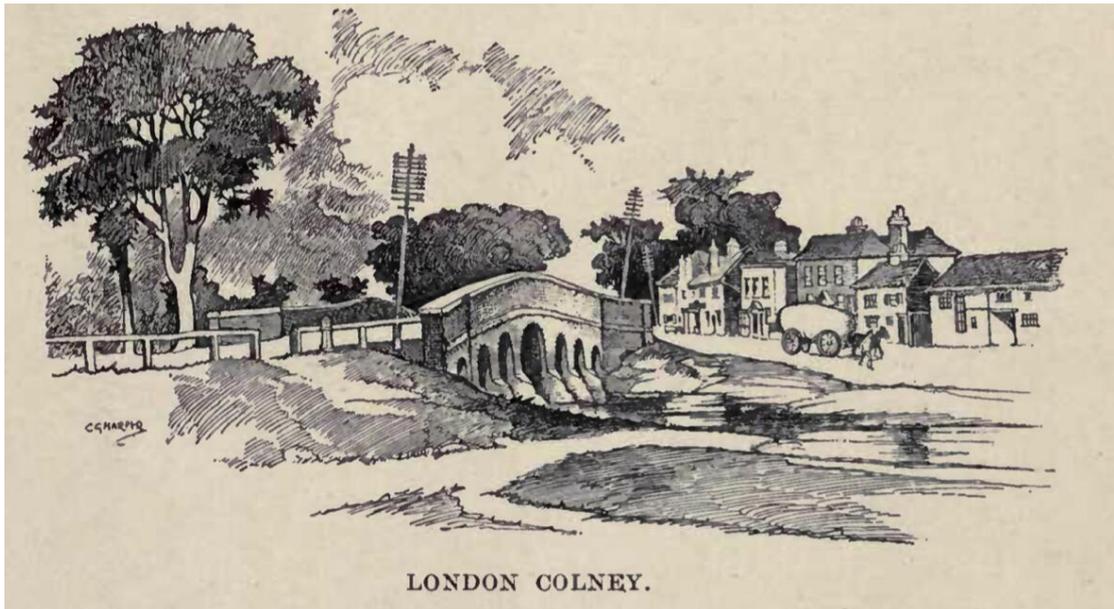


Figure 2: Historic illustration of the London Colney bridge (sketched by Charles Harper in 1902) (source: [http://www.public-library.uk/dailyebook/The%20Holyhead%20Road%20-%20the%20mail-coach%20road%20to%20Dublin%20\(1902\)%20Volume%201.pdf](http://www.public-library.uk/dailyebook/The%20Holyhead%20Road%20-%20the%20mail-coach%20road%20to%20Dublin%20(1902)%20Volume%201.pdf))

- 3.2 As shown in Figure 3, a Victorian map (dated 1888-1913) of the local area shows that village growth remained relatively stable throughout the 1800s, with ribbon development along the coaching route (now known as the High Street) and the banks of the River Colne.

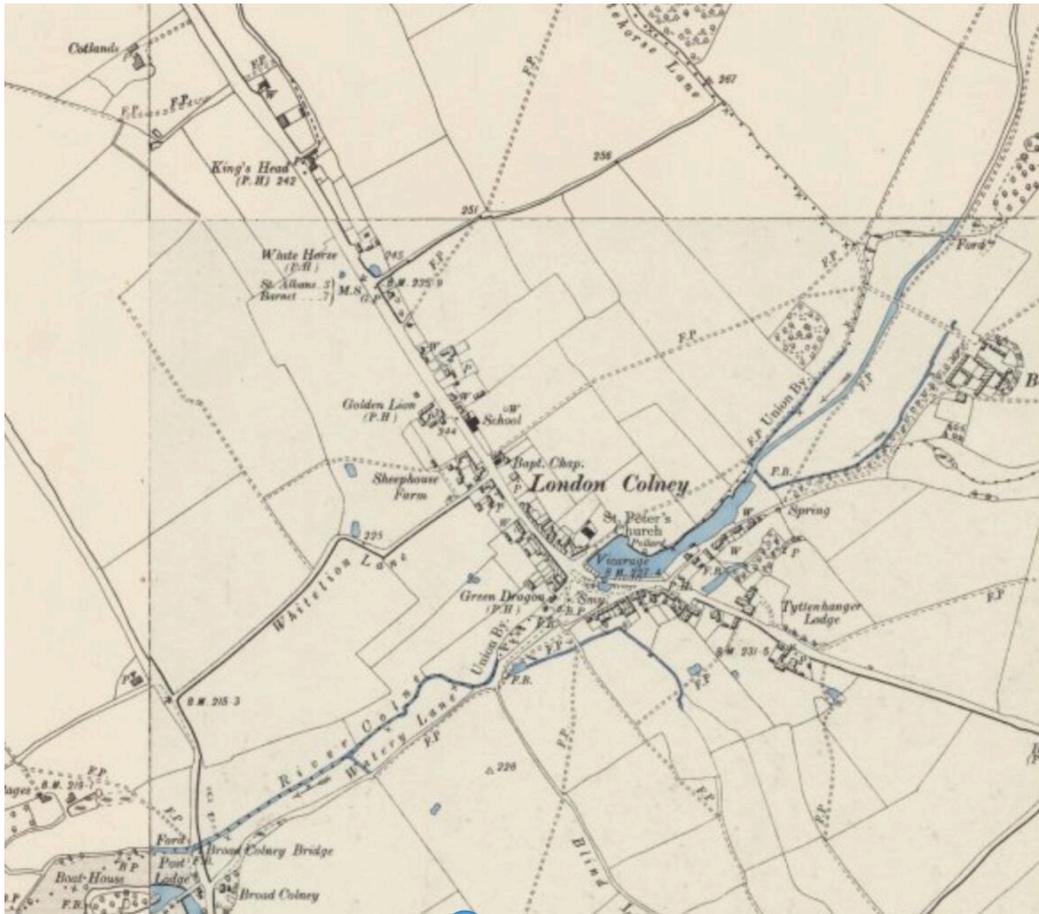


Figure 3: Victorian-era Ordnance Survey map of London Colney (1888-1913) (source: <http://www.archiuk.com>)

- 3.3 Opened in 1868 the Midland Main Line brought rail services between London and northern towns and cities such as Bedford, Leicester, Derby and Sheffield alongside the village<sup>16</sup>. The railway could be accessed at Radlett and St Albans stations. The London and North Western Railway opened a branch from Watford Junction to St Albans which passed to the west of the Neighbourhood Area, where the two lines were originally connected by a link from Napsbury to park Street. The opening of Napsbury Station in 1905 brought passenger access to the railway from within the village, albeit to local trains on the slow lines only. Napsbury station eventually closed in 1959.
- 3.4 The Parish of London Colney was formed in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1935, the land to the south of the River Colne was transferred from Shenley and Ridge Parish Councils to St Peter's Rural Parish Council. In 1948, London Colney Parish Council was formally established due to the abolishment of St Peter's Parish Council. Despite the numerous advancements in rail travel and the road network in the early 1900s, only minor growth occurred up until the Second World War. Following the Second World War, however, London Colney was subject to rapid growth and urbanisation. Figure 4 below highlights how much of this post-1945 growth occurred in the southern parts of London Colney.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.thetrainline.com/stations/radlett>

As highlighted below, 75-90% of the housing estates which form the central part of London Colney today were built after the Second World War.



Figure 4: Proportion of Dwellings Built After 1945 in London Colney (source: CDRC)

- 3.5 The construction of the M25 (and Junction 22 in particular) in the late 1970s (formally opened by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1986)<sup>17</sup> placed further development pressure on London Colney. Following this, as shown in Figure 4, larger 'big box' typology warehouses and distribution hubs were constructed in the south of Neighbourhood Area. This further highlights the significant influence that freight and transportation have had on the built environment in London Colney.
- 3.6 As previously mentioned, it was during this later period of growth that the Napsbury Psychiatric Hospital formally closed and was converted into a new housing development. This transformation is evidenced in Figure 4, as the former hospital building falls within the 'less than 50%' of properties were built before 1945, whereas the newer residential development further west of this area (properties along Beningfield Drive, Rosemary Drive and Farm Crescent) are notably more modern - as these areas fall within the '75-90%' of dwellings built after 1945 category. Areas to the south, including the London Colney Broad

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M25\\_motorway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M25_motorway)

Colney Lakes Nature Reserve and adjacent land (to the north of Sainsburys) and the area surrounding the Pastoral Centre were conserved and maintained as green open spaces.

- 3.7 Since the Local Plan for St Albans City and District was adopted in 1994 it appears that there has been little growth in the area. St Albans City and District Council's most recent updates to the Local Plan was withdrawn from the formal examination process on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 on the grounds that it did not fulfil the Duty to Cooperate and the non-agreement over the future use of the Radlett strategic rail freight terminal.
- 3.8 On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 the City and District Council it was confirmed they would commence work on a new Local Plan, to cover the period 2020 to 2038. The plan-making process will include a Call for Sites 2021, which will be used to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. The Council is therefore now inviting individuals, landowners and developers the opportunity to put forward sites for development over the next 15-20 years for inclusion in its Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). Importantly, the Update states that sites previously submitted to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) will be taken account of.
- 3.9 In recognition of the above, Policy S6 (Broad Locations for Development) of the formally withdrawn Local Plan identified one broad area for development within the Neighbourhood Area: Land West of London Colney (Policy S6 ix). This site sought to provide an urban extension to London Colney and a new secondary school. This site was initially put forward for development in the interim 2009-2016 SHLAA process. The site is 25.81ha in size and is owned by Hertfordshire County Council. Comprising of agricultural land and grassland, the site falls within the Green Belt. Regarding this site, the Council stated<sup>18</sup>:

*"In light of the functions of the strategic parcel, the sub-area is subject to significant urbanising influence. Assessed in isolation, the sub-area to the south and south west of London Colney makes a limited or no contribution towards the primary role of the Green Belt to maintain the local gap between settlements. This is mainly because of the configuration of the urban edge in relation the adjoining Green Belt and the character of the landscape and relationship to the M25, which disrupts the countryside and acts as a major physical barrier. Given the scale and nature of the local gap, which contains the M25, a limited reduction in the size of the strategic parcel would not significantly compromise the physical separation of any settlements or primary role of the Green Belt.*

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<sup>18</sup> [https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SHLAA%20001q%20-%20Individual%20Site%20Assessment%20Forms%20-%20Shortlisted%20%28Potentially%20Suitable%29%20Sites%20%28PDF%20-%209%20mb%29\\_tcm15-56716.pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SHLAA%20001q%20-%20Individual%20Site%20Assessment%20Forms%20-%20Shortlisted%20%28Potentially%20Suitable%29%20Sites%20%28PDF%20-%209%20mb%29_tcm15-56716.pdf)

Development at Napsbury Park to the west of London Colney is recommended for further assessment as a potential boundary adjustment (SA-BA2). Green Belt land has been subject to substantial development and as a result this land no longer contributes towards the 5 Green Belt purposes.”

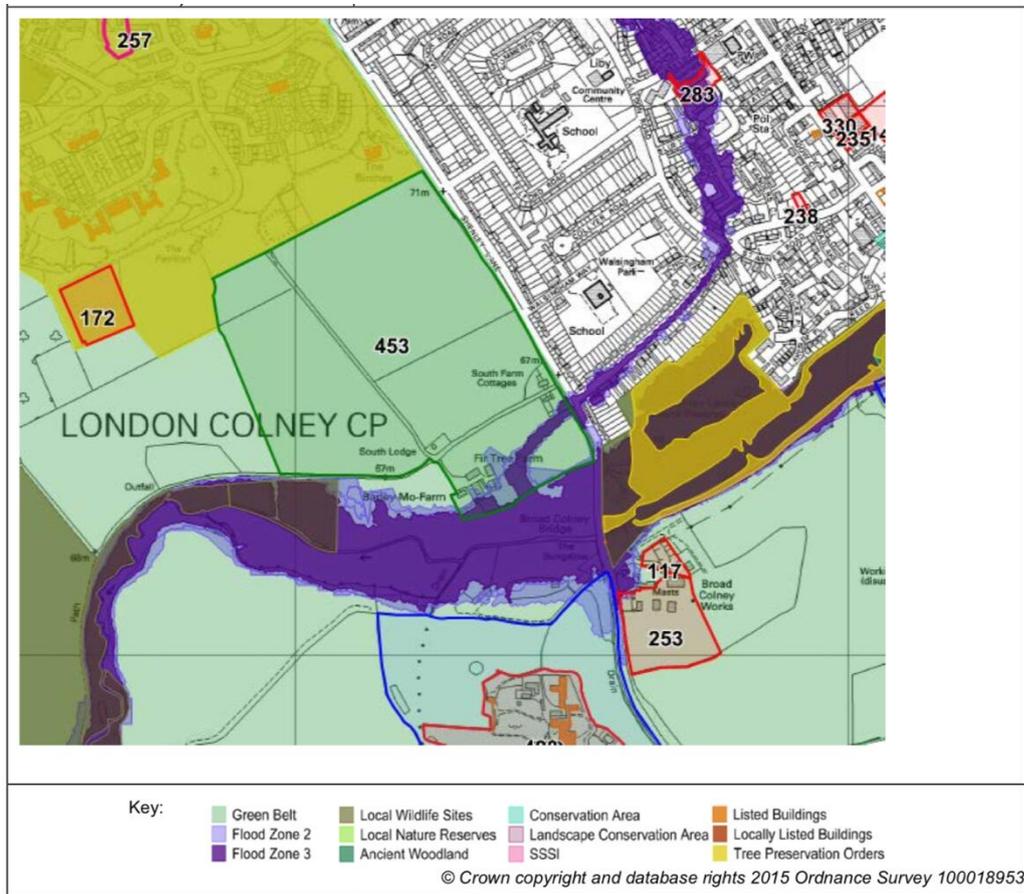


Figure 5: 'Land West of London Colney' site highlighted as site 453 (source: SHLAA 2016 Update Individual Assessment Forms)

3.10 Whilst the 'Land West of London Colney' site can no longer be considered an allocation due to the formal withdrawal of the Local Plan, it goes unsaid that there will continue to be considerable development pressures on this site and across London Colney and its surrounds more generally. This is demonstrated by the ongoing applications being received for development proposals in London Colney. There are seven recent (2019 onwards) entries listed on the St Albans Planning Register of applications in London Colney. These include:

- **271 High Street** (5/2020/2147, live application – decision pending) – demolition of existing buildings and structures and construction of 7 two-bedroom and 3 one-bedroom flats with associated parking and landscaping
- **Ridgeview Lodge, Barnet Road** (5/2020/1910, live application – decision pending) – change of use of site from hostel for homeless people (Sui Generis) to residential (Class

C3) to create 44 new dwellings for temporary housing and private rent, including additional bin and cycle storage for residents

- **The Golden Lion, 111 High Street** (5/2020/0443, conditional planning permission granted on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020) – variation of Condition 2 of planning application 5/2019/1284 (see entry below)
- **London Colney Village Club and Best Friends Childcare Centre, St Annes Road** (5/2020/0510, live application – decision pending) – new club building with associated one-bedroom flat and 9 terraces houses comprising 2 two-bedroom and 7 three-bedroom houses, associated landscaping and parking and new access, following demolition of existing club and nursery buildings
- **Land adjacent Morris Playing Fields, White Horse Lane** (5/2020/0060, planning permission refused on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020) – residential development of up to 30 dwellings with associated public open space, landscaping, access and infrastructure works
- **Former London Colney Recreation Centre, Alexander Road** (5/2019/1799, conditional planning permission granted on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020) – demolition of existing buildings and development of the site for residential, with associated access, parking and open space
- **The Golden Lion, 111 High Street** (5/2019/1284, conditional planning permission granted on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020) – external alterations and refurbishments, demolition of single storey extensions, change of use and alterations to function room to create 2 dwellings and construction of 3 residential blocks consisting of 9 units with associated landscaping and parking

3.11 Given the ongoing submission of planning applications and the absence of a Local Plan it is likely that more speculative applications for development will continue to be received and as such there is a role for the Neighbourhood Plan in addressing matters of design quality, such that new proposals reflect good practice placemaking principles and respond to the key qualities and characteristics of the built and natural environment.

3.12 It should be noted that the Former London Colney Recreation Centre site (5/2019/1799) was granted outline permission on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020 for the demolition of the site and erection of 44 new homes, comprising 26 one- and two-bedroom flats within a three and a four storey block, and 18 2- and 3-bedroom two-storey houses.<sup>19</sup> A proportion of the 1- and 2-bedroom homes will be affordable. Each home will have a garden and off-street parking and garages. Figure 6 shows a rendering of the development proposal.

3.13 Numerous sites close to the boundary of London Colney have been promoted through Hertsmere Borough Council's HELAA process. This includes a considerable amount of

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.perhamway-consultation.co.uk>

land to the south of Junction 22 of the M25. Promoted sites within Hertsmere are shown in Figure 7.

- 3.14 Of particular significance is the Redwell Garden Village site (HELAA references: HEL382C and HEL332, including part of the Tyttenhanger Estate), earmarked for 6,000 homes and supporting infrastructure. The current status of this site is unknown. As of 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021, no planning application had been submitted for this site.



Figure 6: Proposed development at the Former London Colney Recreation Ground site

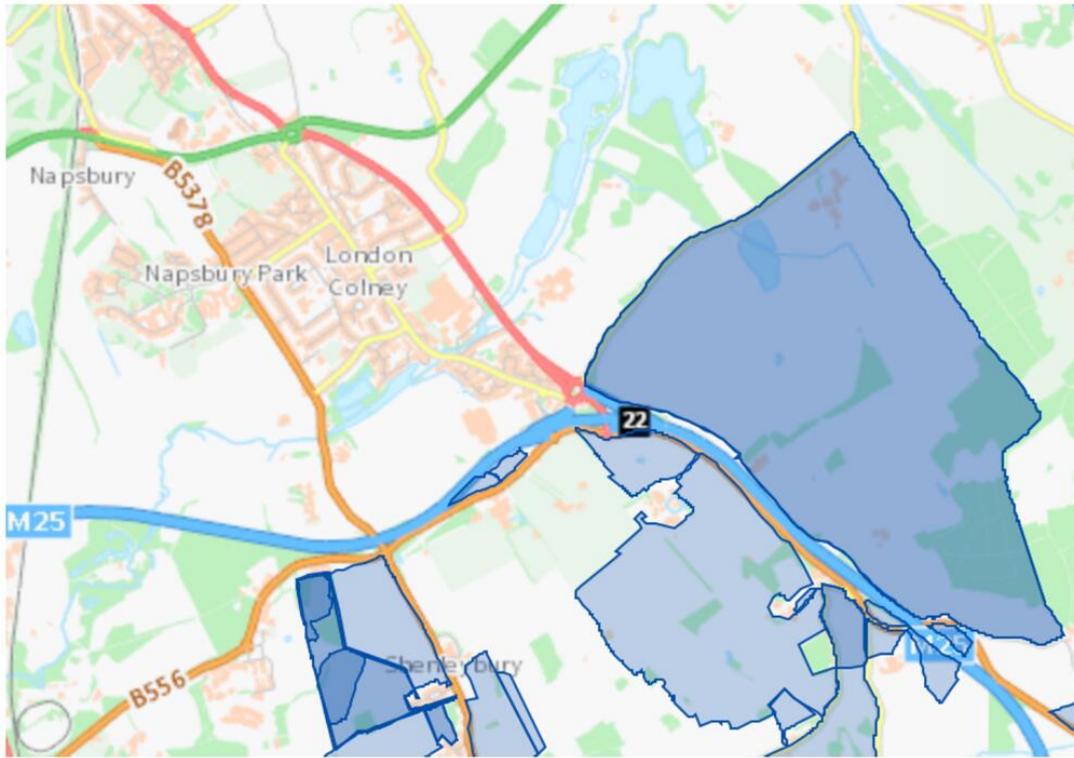


Figure 7: Sites being promoted through the Hertsmere Borough Council HELAA which are in close proximity to London Colney

## 4. Demographics

- 4.1 According to the 2011 census, the Parish of London Colney has a total population of 9,507 people living in 3,906 households<sup>20</sup>. This equates to 2.43 people per household. Most homes are either owned with a mortgage or loan (42.4% of all London Colney Households) or owned outright (24.9% of all London Colney households). Based on the mid-2019 population estimates the population of London Colney had increased to 9,728<sup>21</sup>.
- 4.2 The most prominent housing type in the Parish is a terraced house, comprising 31.7% of the housing stock. This is followed by semi-detached houses which make up 27.4%<sup>22</sup> and purpose-built block of flats or tenements (either flats, maisonettes or apartments) which equate to 25.9% of the total housing stock.
- 4.3 The largest age group in the Parish is the 30 to 44 age group, accounting for 23.8% of the total population of London Colney<sup>23</sup>. Those aged 45-59 formed the second largest age group, making up 19.8% of the total population. Under 18s accounted for 24.3% of the population.
- 4.4 With regard to religion, 56.7% of the population identify as Christian and 6.2% identify as Muslim. Other minority groups within London Colney include Hindus, Jews, Sikhs and Buddhists (each group comprises less than 3% of the total population). 23.6% of the population are not religious.
- 4.5 In terms of educational attainment in London Colney, nearly a third of the population aged 16 and over (32%) have level 4 qualifications and above<sup>24</sup>, which is slightly higher than the national average at 27.2%. The proportion of the population of working age in London Colney is relatively high for St Albans, accounting for around 64% of the population. Around 36.8% of the total number of residents living in London Colney are in full time employment, with the unemployment rate amongst economically active residents just 2.8%; which is well below the UK average of 3.9%. The majority of residents work in either Wholesale, Retail Trade and Repair industries (17.3%), Human Health and Social work (14.5%), Education (9.4%) and Construction (8.4%). Whilst the change in working patterns brought about by Covid may lead to more people deciding to work from home in the future, or closer to home, the main employment sectors outlined above would suggest that many will still need to travel to work.

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<sup>20</sup> [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04004805#section\\_7](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04004805#section_7)

<sup>21</sup> Herts CC, Herts Insight, based on ONS data:

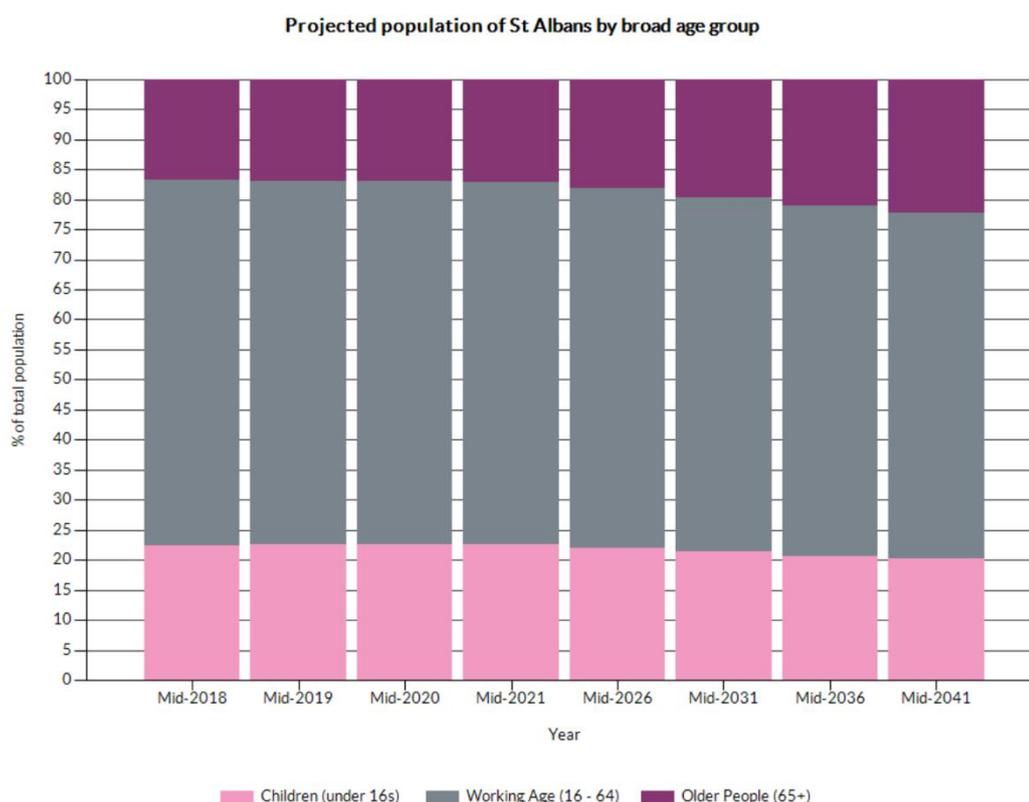
<https://iao.blob.core.windows.net/publications/reports/ffa6fee3aa6544369afc04b1248457e5/E07000240.html>

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04004805#section\\_8\\_5](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04004805#section_8_5)

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04004805#section\\_8\\_5](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04004805#section_8_5)

4.6 Population projections for St Albans District highlight that in 2018 the total resident population was 147,373 persons<sup>25</sup>. The latest estimates (mid-2019) put this figure at 148,452<sup>26</sup>. By 2041, the population is expected to increase to 164,900 persons<sup>27</sup>. It is anticipated that this will result in an ageing population, with the proportion of people aged under 16 or in the 16-64 age groups decreasing and being offset by an increasing in people aged 65+. Indeed, by 2041, 22.2% of the total population of the District is projected to be aged 65+ (see Figure 8). This scale of growth is likely to place additional pressure on land for development as well as a need for supporting infrastructure, but particularly so in responding to the needs of an ageing population, which might need to include provision of a greater range and type of housing products, healthcare facilities and supporting services in close proximity to the home. These are matters that can be considered further through the Neighbourhood Plan.



Source: ONS, 2016-based population projections

Figure 8: The projected population structure for St Albans District from 2018 to 2041 (source: Herts Insight: Population Profile [St Albans])

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Basic%20facts%20about%20St%20Albans%20broken%20down%20by%20Ward.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Herts CC, Herts Insight, based on ONS data:

<https://iao.blob.core.windows.net/publications/reports/ffa6fee3aa6544369afc04b1248457e5/E07000240.html>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



## 5. Movement & Accessibility

### Rail

- 5.1 London Colney is not served by rail. However, the Great Northern and Thameslink link line does pass through the westernmost area of the Neighbourhood Area, and there are direct services from St Albans City Station to Luton, Bedford and Gatwick Airport, Gillingham (Kent), Sutton and Brighton. This is a regular service, with trains departing St Albans City Station every five minutes on average. The southbound service stops at central London destinations including St Pancras, Farringdon, City Thameslink, London Blackfriars and London Bridge, offering numerous route options for onward journeys. The average journey time from St Albans City to London St Pancras is 22 minutes. West of the Neighbourhood Area boundary lies Park Street and How Wood Stations which are operated by West Midland trains, offering local rail services between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey.

### Bus

- 5.2 London Colney is relatively well served by bus, with five bus services operating in London Colney, including the: 84, 200, 338, 357 and 602 bus services. The Neighbourhood Area also includes 35 bus stops in total. The 84 St Albans to New Barnet service stops at two London Colney bus stops, departing every thirty minutes. The 200 Centrebus service has just one daily trip departing in the morning to Essendon Mill. The 338 is operated by Lucketts of Watford and offers hourly and half hourly services to Radlett Railway Station. The 357 Arriva Kent bus departs hourly from four bus stops in London Colney, with destinations such as Elsetree and Borehamwood Station, Shenley, St Albans, Wheathampstead and Harpenden. It is worth noting that Elsetree and Borehamwood Station lies within Transport for London's Zone 6, therefore the 357 bus provides a cost-effective way of commuting into Greater London. The 602 bus is operated by Universitybus Ltd. serving destinations between Hatfield and Watford every 15 minutes on average. Combined, these bus services offer ample opportunity for onward rail travel into London via Watford, St Albans, Radlett and other, more minor stations.

### Highways

- 5.3 Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (2011-2031) highlights that the primary vehicle route network for London Colney is via the A414 and the M25. The A1081 serves as a main distributor road to the east of London Colney, linking Junction 22 of the M25 with the A414 and direct access to the centre of St Albans. The B5378 to the west of London Colney serves as secondary distributor road. Evidence suggests that there are severe link congestion levels at Junction 22 of the M25 up to the A405 westbound and the South Mimms services eastbound. The Hertfordshire Traffic and Transport Data Report (2009) (as cited in the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031) describes this stretch of

road as an area of “serious queueing and congestion on a daily basis with small incidents causing considerable delays. Traffic demand exceeds carriageway capacity”.

- 5.4 The main vehicle route between London Colney and St Albans is via the High Street and A1081 and the separate stretch of the A1081 north of the London Colney roundabout. The main east west route through the Neighbourhood Area is provided by St Annes Road, Haseldine Road, Whitehorse Lane and Kings Road. Much of the key services and facilities (such as the Colney Medical Centre, Caledon Community Centre, Bowmansgreen Primary School and services available on the High Street) can be accessed via these roads.
- 5.5 According to the Hertfordshire County Travel Survey (2009), the three top transport priorities for residents were (in descending order): maintaining existing roads, improving bus and rail facilities and reducing road accidents. Annual automated road condition survey scores for Hertfordshire are presented in Figure 8 below. This presents the annual overall score given to road conditions within Hertfordshire. This data was collected by Highways England and the local authority using automated survey machines which analyse a range of road condition factors. Figure 9<sup>28</sup> shows that the condition of local authority managed A-roads are much the same as they were in 2007/2008, whereas the condition of B- and C-roads has gradually improved over the same period in Hertfordshire. Please note, A-road scoring ranges from 1 (good) to 15 (bad), whereas B- and C- road scores range from 1 (good) to 25 (bad). Raw results are sourced from the Department for Transport’s ‘Road Condition in 2019’ maps<sup>29</sup>

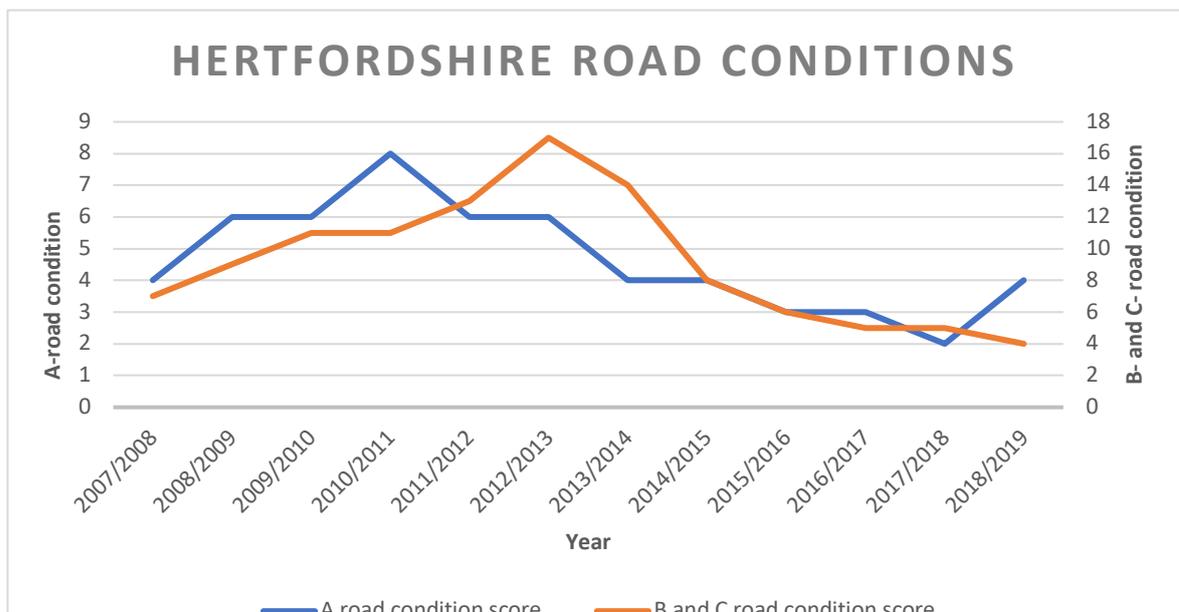


Figure 9: Hertfordshire road condition annual scoring from 2007/2007 to 2018/2019

<sup>28</sup> <https://dft.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=21413a342b9a4598baa41ae7d6fd36ec>

<sup>29</sup> <https://dft.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=21413a342b9a4598baa41ae7d6fd36ec>

5.6 Road safety was also highlighted as a key transport priority within Hertfordshire. Figure 10 shows the location of traffic incidents over the period 2015-2019 in the Parish. This is taken from the online resource 'Crashmap' and is based upon information collected by the police relating to reported injury collisions. Junction 22 of the M25, the A414 and the High Street were witness to the greatest number of incidents over this period, which, for the M25 and A414, is perhaps reflective of the volume and speed of traffic making use of these routes.

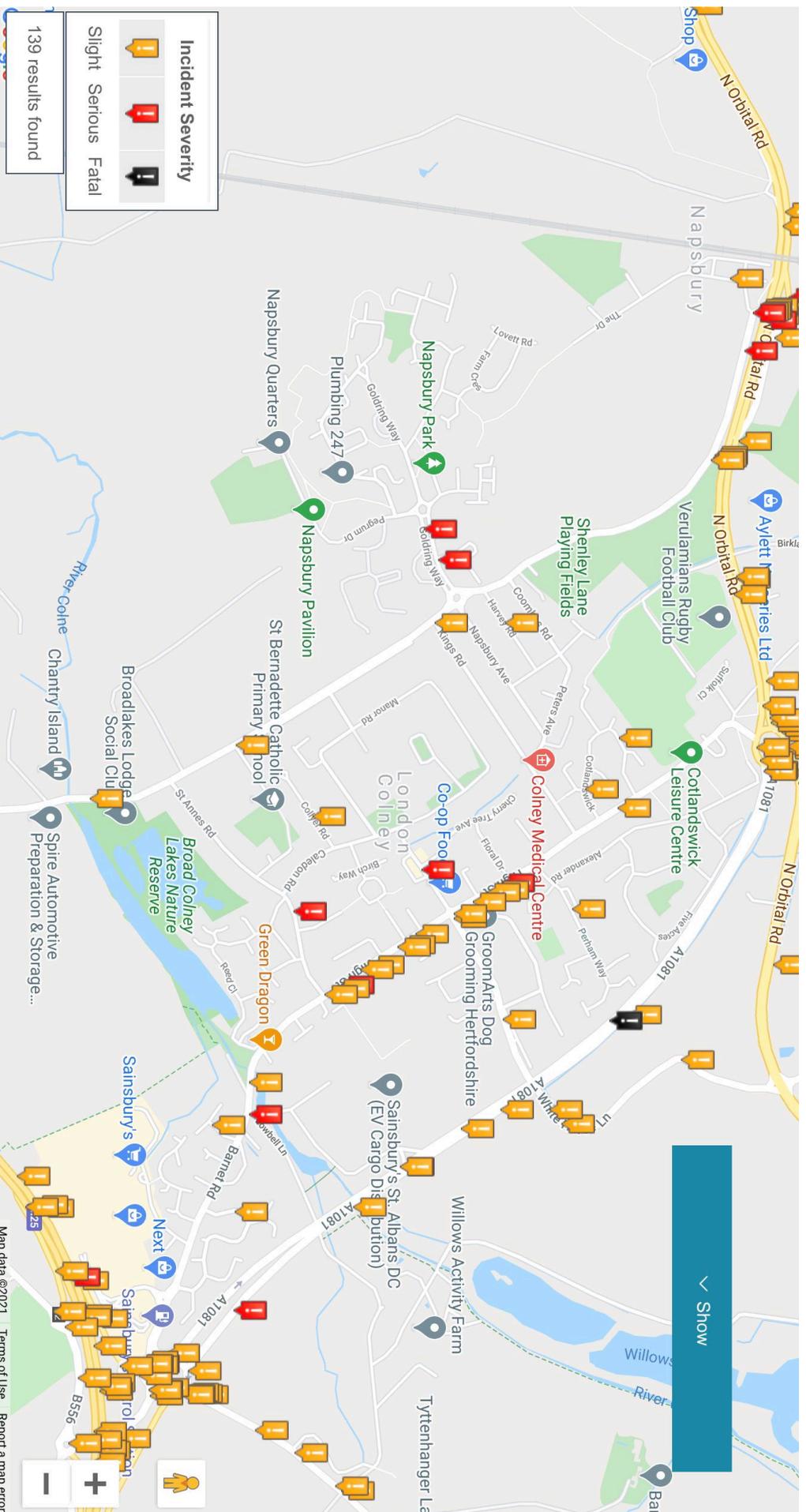


Figure 10: Location of traffic incidents 2015-2019 in London Colney involving all vehicle types (source: crashmap.co.uk)

## Rights of Way

- 5.7 The Neighbourhood Area benefits from an extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) that connects London Colney with nearby settlements including St Albans, Shenley and Colney Heath, providing good accessibility for residents and visitors wishing to travel between them on foot. This network extends east of the Neighbourhood Area, providing easy access for ramblers, dog-walkers and visitors to Tyttenhanger Park. The network is less extensive in areas west of the Neighbourhood Area, as the railway line prevents public footpaths and bridleways from reaching the nearby settlement of Frogmore. Hertfordshire County Council has prepared a Right of Way Improvement Plan<sup>30</sup> which highlights paths and cycleways which currently exist but are not formally recognised as Rights of Way. The Plan sets out how these routes can be improved and formally designated as Rights of Way. Retention and enhancement of the network of public rights of way (where appropriate) is important, providing a connected network of routes for walking and cycling that link London Colney with the surrounding countryside.

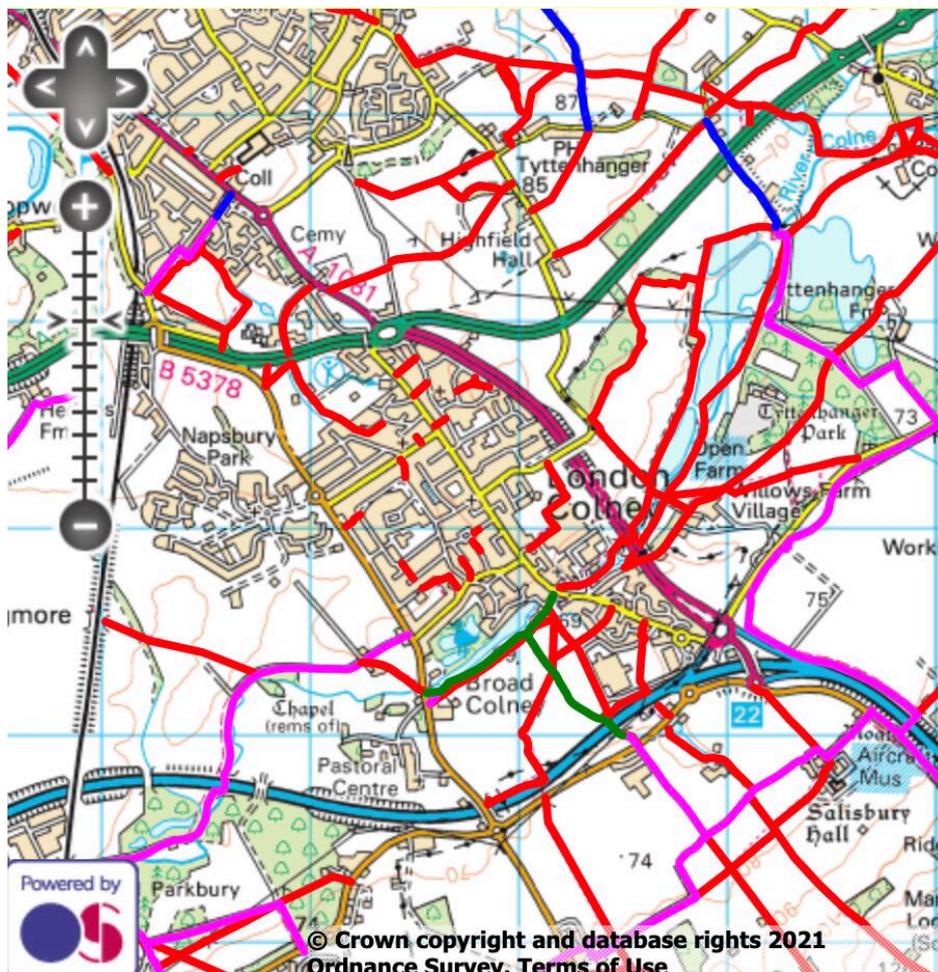


Figure 11: Public Rights of Way (Source: rowmaps.com)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/countryside-access-and-management/rights-of-way/improvement-plans/rights-of-way-improvement-plan-201718-202728.pdf>



## Cycling

- 5.8 With regard to cycling infrastructure, National Cycle Network Routes 61 and 6 circle the Neighbourhood Area – with Route 6 passing through Bricket Wood via Park Street Lane to the west and Route 61 linking St Albans to Hatfield via the Alban Way. Opportunities to depart London Colney on bicycle are, however, limited.
- 5.9 As shown in Figure 12 below, the High Street is the recommended route (suggested by local cyclists) to travel northbound to access the cycle pavement adjacent to the A414 or the cycle pavement along London Route for links to Hatfield and St Albans. St Alban's Travelwise Mode Share Survey<sup>31</sup> – which monitors usage of key cycling routes – found that in 2004/2005 137 cyclists were using the Alban Way cycling track (by Campfield Road) per day (two way). In 2010/2011 this figure had increased to 203 cyclists per day (two way). However, according to the Propensity to Cycle Tool<sup>32</sup> (a tool which establishes the existing cycling activity in the London Colney Area Profile (reference: St Albans 018)), the area has low numbers of commuter cyclists (71 per day, equating to just 2% of the population), whereas car drivers account for 70% of the population (3172 persons per day).
- 5.10 Furthermore, recent analysis highlights that existing cycle routes throughout London Colney are illegible, with intermittent retail uses along the High Street creating disconnect, thus discouraging trips by foot and by bike<sup>33</sup>. The pedestrian bridge over the A414 was also noted as being unattractive and potentially unsuitable for users. The above data points to the fact that, whilst National Cycle Network Routes 6 and 61 lie in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Area, access to these is limited and, in many cases, active travel routes are illegible and unattractive, and do not form an attractive enough proposition for people to change from the car to bicycle, particularly for short journeys.

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<sup>31</sup> [https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc\\_files/travel/St\\_Alban\\_Travelwise\\_Data.pdf](https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc_files/travel/St_Alban_Travelwise_Data.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Propensity to Cycle Tool. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.pct.bike/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s14335/191125%2004c%20Appendix%20C%20Technical%20Report.pdf>

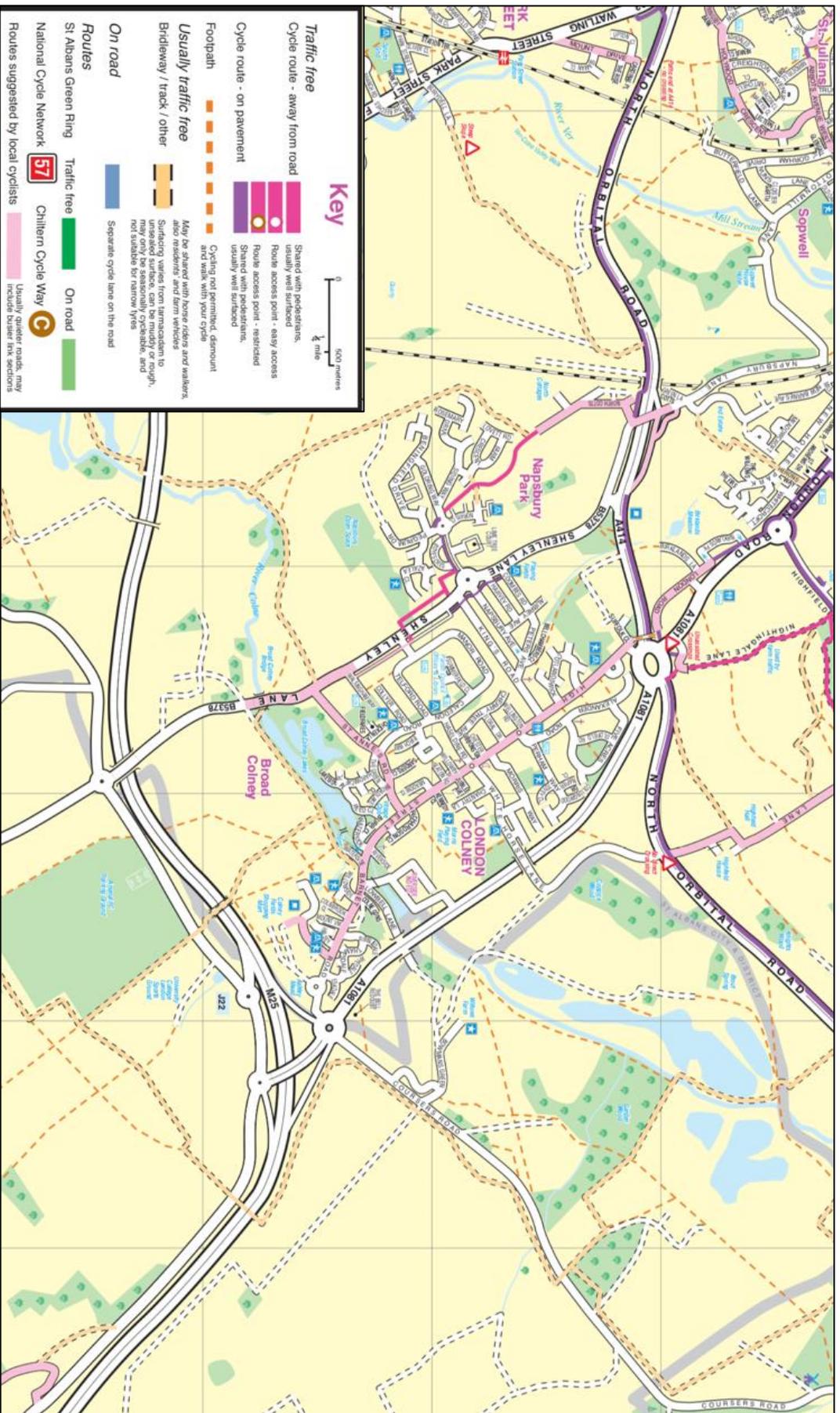


Figure 12.: Cycle route in London Colney (source: <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/St%20Albans%20Cycling%20Route%20Map%202019.pdf>)

5.11 Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (2011-2031) recognises that a key challenge is to *"achieve behavioural change as regards choice of transport mode increasing awareness of the advantages of walking, cycling and passenger transport, and of information on facilities and services available"*. Indicators to measure modal shift include targets for 2020/2021 of 68% of all trips to be made by walking (under 1 mile) and 5% of all trips to be made by cycling (under 3 miles). The Plan states that the above will be achieved through interventions which will address: *"security on the network, improvements to passenger transport, encouraging more physically active travel, safety on the network."*

### **Planned infrastructure upgrades**

5.12 The Local Transport Plan 2011-2031 acknowledges that transport networks in the area are under pressure, affecting local residents and businesses. Widening works on the M25 (Junction 16-23) commenced in 2009. More recently, a Corridor Strategy<sup>34</sup> for the A414 was produced in 2019. This sets out a package of improvements which seek to *"enhance the function of the A414 as a strategic east-west route in south central Hertfordshire through capacity and reliability upgrades"*. Of relevance to London Colney, the following improvements are proposed:

- A414/A1081 London Colney Roundabout Upgrades (transformation of the existing roundabout to a signal-controlled hamburger junction which incorporates an east-west A414 through-link)
- B5378 Active Travel Corridor (upgrades to the existing cycle and pedestrian track between the junction with St Annes Road and the A414 Napsbury Junction)
- A414 cycle/pedestrian Bridge improvements
- A414 sustainable travel bridge (investigate longer term potential of a sustainable bridge which can accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and autonomous mass transit vehicles)
- Improved cycle and pedestrian routes within London Colney and on the High Street (improved footways, cycle routes, crossings, lighting, signage etc.)
- Improved London Colney to St Albans bus services (maintain or improve all bus routes through London Colney including routes 84 and 658 and explore potential new services if development in the northern part of Hertsmere comes forward)
- A414 cycle route upgrade Park Street to London Colney

5.13 The indicative cost range estimate for the above improvements is £8-18 million. Work on an Implementation Plan for the above measures is currently being developed. In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan, additional ideas and movement options might be identified

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<sup>34</sup> <https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s14335/191125%2004c%20Appendix%20C%20Technical%20Report.pdf>

which could be included in the Plan as projects, towards which funding raised from development could be directed. It should be noted that the Parish Council in its representation on the Local Transport Plan did specify that bus links to St Albans via the A414 need to be put in place in order to access Marlborough School (St Albans), Abbey Flyer at Park Street and/or St Albans and Watford. The current bus service to Watford is not direct.

## 6. Local Facilities

- 6.1 The majority of community facilities in London Colney are located in the heart of the settlement and are accessible via the High Street, Barnet Road and Kings Road. Local facilities and their approximate 5-minute walking catchments (equivalent to a distance of 400 metres) have been mapped in Figures 13, 14 and 15 below. These include: three primary schools, two GP surgeries, one leisure centre, one cricket ground, a Post Office, four supermarkets, four churches and two mosques.
- 6.2 As shown in Figures 13, 14 and 15, healthcare and educational facilities, supermarkets, the Post Office and places of worship are broadly with walking distance of all parts of London Colney, given that they are situated in close proximity to one another in the core of the village. It should be noted however that sport and leisure facilities are located in the northern half of the village and therefore these may be less accessible for those in residential areas in southern parts of London Colney. It is also evident that residents living in Napsbury are relatively isolated, as they do not fall within a five-minute walking catchment to schools, healthcare facilities or supermarkets. Residential areas in the south such as Thamesdale and properties along Armstrong Close and Halsey Park are also in less accessible areas, as for many services they too fall outside the five-minute walking catchment. Despite this, the Colney Field Retail Park is regarded as a secondary centre of the village and includes a large Sainsbury's supermarket, Marks and Spencer store and Boots chemist, in addition to a number of other retail chains and coffee shops. The Retail Park does fall within the five-minute catchment area for southern areas of the village. It should also be noted that London Colney is also served by community facilities just over the border in Shenley Parish, including a McDonalds, Holiday Inn and Jewish primary school.
- 6.3 The High Street, Barnet Road and their immediate surrounds are home to a number of public houses, including: The Colney Fox, The Bull, Green Dragon, White Horse and The Golden Lion. The linear distribution of public houses is perhaps a legacy of the village's historic role as a coaching route. The Neighbourhood Area is also served by the London Colney Community Library, which offers self-service access. There are also many open spaces and parks in the local area, including: Napsbury Park, Shenley Lane Playing Fields, the playground and sports pitches at the Cotlandswick Leisure Centre, Morris Playing Field and playground, the Walsingham Way Recreation Ground and the Broad Colney Local Nature Reserve.

6.4 The St Albans District Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>35</sup> states that there are currently deficits of the following in London Colney: clinical spaces, places for free early education in children's centres community, mini rugby pitches and Public Rights of Way and cycling infrastructure.

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<sup>35</sup> [https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/INFR%20001%202018-2019%20Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Plan\\_tcm15-67183.pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/INFR%20001%202018-2019%20Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Plan_tcm15-67183.pdf)

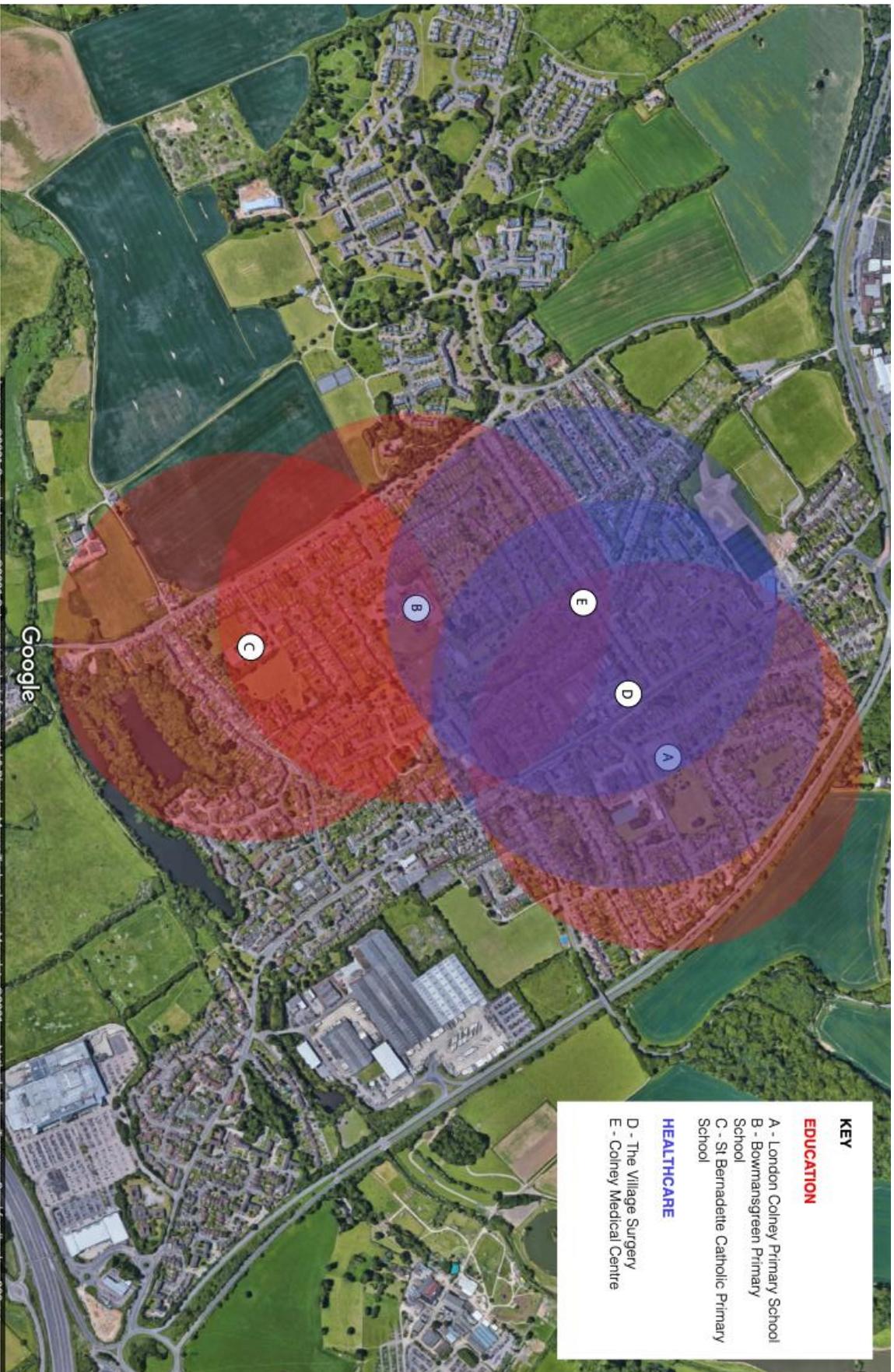


Figure 13: Approximate 'as the crow flies' five-minute walking distances (400 metre) from healthcare and educational facilities in London Colney (source: Google Earth)



Figure 14: Approximate 'as the crow flies' five-minute walking distances (400 metre) from essential services and leisure/sport facilities in London Colney (source: Google Earth)



Figure 15: Approximate 'as the crow flies' five-minute walking distances (400 metre) from places of worship in London Colney (source: Google Earth)

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 London Colney is a historic settlement set within the Vale of St Albans. The area surrounding London Colney has been subject to extensive manmade change, including mineral extractions works and the construction of the Midland Main Line rail service and the M25 motorway. The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Area Statements reiterates this and states that landscaping and woodland planting should be incorporated to provide a buffer between the M25, the A414 and the wider countryside. It adds that any new development should be integrated with the countryside and cause minimal impact.
- 7.2 The London Colney and Napsbury Conservation Areas, are, in essence, assemblages of local history. Whilst the London Colney Conservation Area encapsulates the settlement's historic core, Napsbury Conservation Area emphasises the area's unique role in mental health care through the preservation of the former Middlesex psychiatric hospital and its grounds.
- 7.3 The above points align with our Policy Review findings insofar that new development must respond to local character and distinctiveness. This can be achieved through the Design Code work and resultant policies, as place-making principles will be established to mitigate the impacts of the surrounding road network and conform with historic building design elements.
- 7.4 Based on the findings of this analysis, it is evident that there are a diverse range of facilities within the Neighbourhood Area. Despite this, evidence suggests that these services are less accessible in residential areas in the southern part of the village and Napsbury. Access to/from key facilities may be further limited by the lack of walking and cycling infrastructure within London Colney and its surrounding areas in addition to the availability of car parking. The Neighbourhood Plan process can help to establish which routes are most needed and can develop projects within the Plan to ensure that funding is made available for these. Further work can also be undertaken to determine whether the High Street does cater to resident's needs. Similarly, local green space assessments will help to identify existing deficits in green and open spaces. This work will provide an evidence base upon which the Neighbourhood Plan can develop policies which safeguard these green spaces from future development.
- 7.5 It is also worth noting that the above points generally align with the feedback from the initial Neighbourhood Plan survey, as improving community facilities, preventing poor-

quality housing developments and parking were all highlighted as key areas for improvement within London Colney.

# Appendix: Conservation Areas

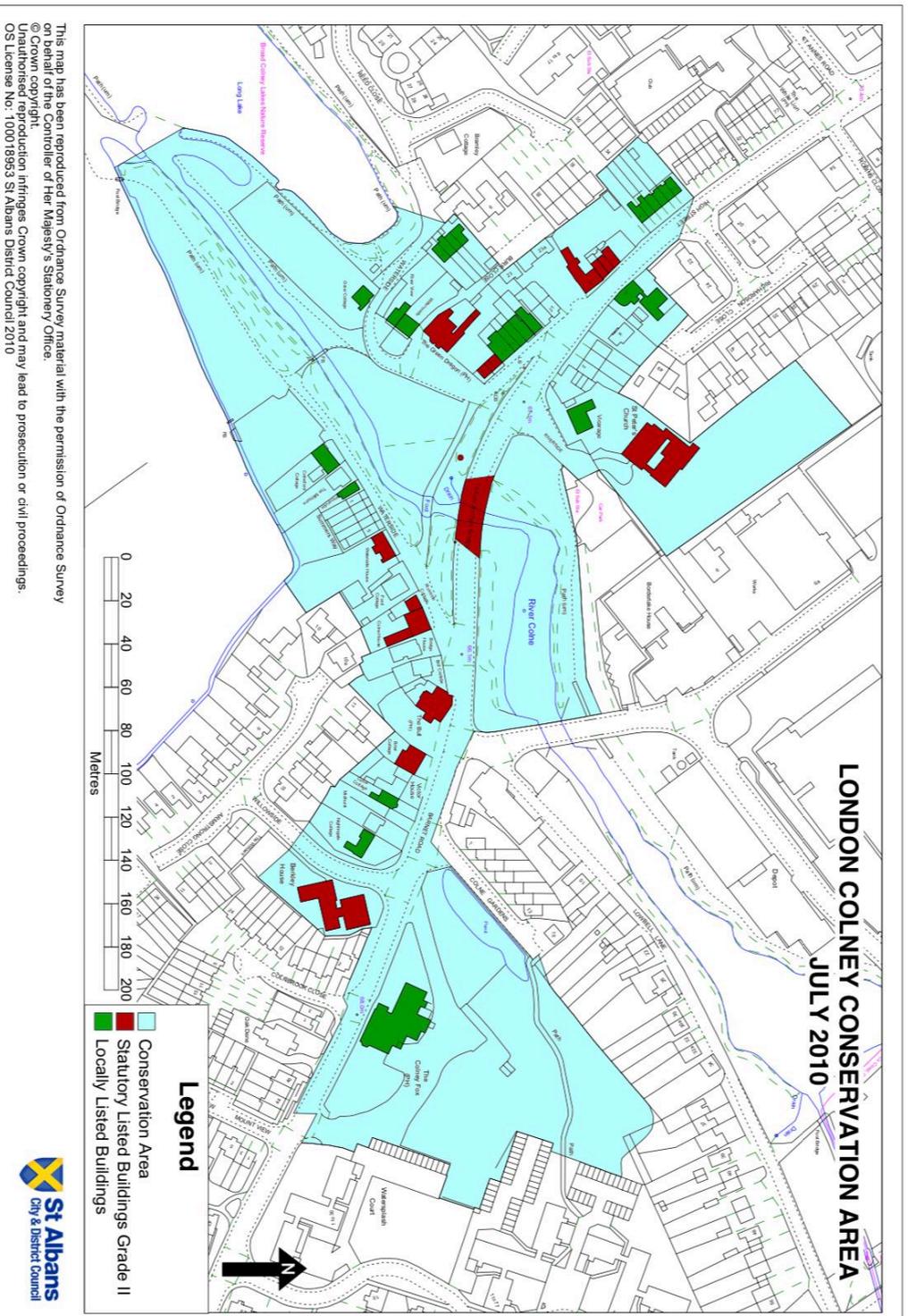


Figure 16: London Colney Conservation Area

LONDON COLNEY CONSERVATION AREA – Listed and  
Locally Listed Buildings

**STATUTORY LISTED BUILDINGS**

**BARNET ROAD**

The Bull P.H.  
Briar Cottage  
Berkeley House

**HIGH STREET/BARNET ROAD**

Telford Bridge

**HIGH STREET**

London Coal Duty Marker  
Numbers 1-5 (odd) - Riverside House  
Number 27  
Number 29  
Numbers 31 and 33

**RIVERSIDE**

St Peter's Church

**WATERSIDE**

Colne House  
The Green Dragon P.H.  
Riverside Cottage  
Waterside House

**LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS**

**BARNET ROAD**

Colney Fox P.H  
Nightingale Cottage  
Colne Cottage

**BURR CLOSE**

Numbers 1-4

**HIGH STREET**

Numbers 7-17 (odd)  
43-53 (odd)  
28 – The Bakery

**RIVERSIDE**

The Vicarage

**WATERSIDE**

Summerville  
Colneford Cottage  
Watermede  
River View  
Osier Cottage

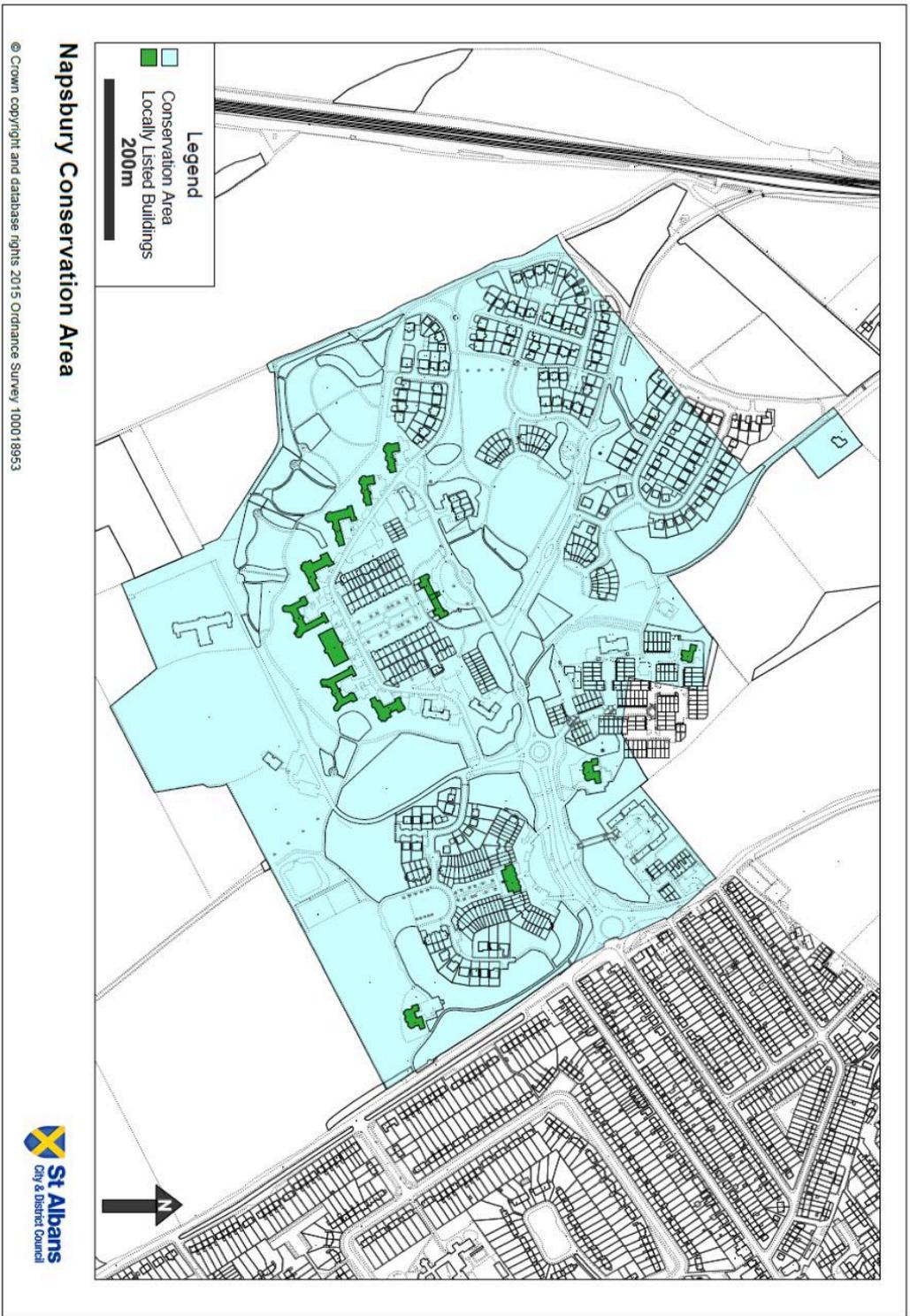


Figure 17: Napsbury Conservation Area

## NAPSBURY CONSERVATION AREA – Listed and Locally Listed Buildings

### **Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings**

- 1-6 Rush Leys Court, Benningfield Drive
- 1-6 Little Croft Court, Benningfield Drive
- 1-10 Great Leys Court, Benningfield Drive
- 1-11 The Brownings, Benningfield Drive
- 1-12 Wilde Court, Benningfield Drive (*previously known as Hawthorn & Hornbeam*)
- 1-37 West Hall, Benningfield Drive
- 1-12 Acorn Court, Benningfield Drive (*previously known as Forsythia & Fir*)
- 1-11 Logan Court, Benningfield Drive
- 1-8 The Clock House, Benningfield Drive
- 1-6 Orchard House, 53 Norris Way
- 1-9 Academy Court, Goldring Way
- 12-19 Boyes Crescent
- 1-9 The Birches, 47 Azalea Close



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