



# Initial Policy Review

London Colney Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan

December 2020

# Contents

<b>1. POLICY POSITION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. TECHNICAL EVIDENCE.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3. POTENTIAL AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN .....</b>	<b>18</b>

# 1. Policy Position

## Status of the Local Plan

- 1.1 For the Neighbourhood Plan to be 'made' it must first demonstrate that it has satisfied the 'Basic Conditions'. These include being in general conformity with the strategic objectives and policies of the Local Plan.
- 1.2 For London Colney, the Local Plan is that adopted by St Albans City and District Council in 1994. A number of specific policies within the Local Plan were 'saved' in 2007. It is therefore considered that any unsaved policies are no longer part of the development plan, and those that were 'saved' can no longer be afforded weight as they have effectively expired, pre-dating publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and subsequent updates to this (most recently in 2019).
- 1.3 St Albans City and District Council was working on a replacement Local Plan and submitted this to the Secretary of State for Examination in March 2019. In January 2020, examination hearings took place on matters including legal compliance, duty to cooperate, the spatial strategy and the Green Belt. On 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020, an Inspectors' letter to St Albans City and District Council set out concerns in relation to a number of aspects of the emerging Local Plan, including the Council's failure to engage constructively with neighbouring authorities on the strategic matters of the Radlett Strategic Rail Freight Interchange proposals and their ability to accommodate St Alban's housing needs outside of the Green Belt, as well as the Council's lack of evidence to justify that exceptional circumstances exist to alter the boundaries of the Green Belt.
- 1.4 A subsequent letter from the Local Plan Inspector dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 reaffirmed the above points, adding that upon reviewing the written evidence, hearing discussions and the Council's earlier response to matters of concern, *"it is clear that the Council has not met the Duty to Cooperate, and, this failure cannot in law now be remedied through the examination process [...]."*
- 1.5 In light of the above the Council was provided the opportunity to withdraw from the examination or receive the Inspectors' report recommending that the Local Plan should not be adopted on the basis that the Council failed to discharge the Duty to Cooperate. On 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 a press release issued by St Albans City and District Council confirmed that the draft Local Plan had been withdrawn during a Council Cabinet meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Work on a new Local Plan will thus now need to take place. Councillor Jamie Day (Portfolio Holder for Planning) noted at the Cabinet meeting that *"[...] by starting anew, we have an opportunity to better address issues which have become ever more pressing since the withdrawn draft was*

*composed*". The Council is committed in developing a new Draft Local Plan to cover the period up to 2036<sup>1</sup>. The timeframes for the different steps in the Plan-making process are not yet known.

- 1.6 In short, there is no up-to-date set of Local Plan policies in place for St Albans (nor, by extension, London Colney), and there is unlikely to be so for some time. Work on the Neighbourhood Plan is thus timely: it can create a set of locally-specific planning policies to help shape and influence future change in London Colney, and against which applications for development will be determined.

## The Withdrawn Draft Local Plan

- 1.7 Although the draft Local Plan has been withdrawn it is helpful to review proposals and policies within this, indicating potential development pressures that may be faced in London Colney and how these might be addressed. Key policies in the now withdrawn Local Plan that were of relevance to London Colney are outlined below:

- **Policy S1 (Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy)** identified London Colney as a Category 1 settlement, defined as *"city, towns – main settlements excluded from the Green Belt"* which are described 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"*.
- **Policy S2 (Development Strategy)** stated that all Category 1 settlements will be expanded at 'Broad Locations' for development.
- **Policy S6 (Broad Location for Development)** identified a series of "Broad Locations" for development to contribute to development needs over the Plan period. Relevant Broad Locations for development are highlighted in Figure 1.
- Of relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan, **Policy S6 ix (West of London Colney Broad Location)** sought to provide an urban extension to London Colney and a new secondary school. **Policy S6 ix** stated that the development would be required to deliver: 440 dwellings (of which at least 40% are affordable); recreation space and public open space; and a site for and contributions towards an eight form-entry secondary school two form-entry primary 'all-through' school (including Early Years provision).
- Despite not being covered by the Neighbourhood Area, **Policy S6 xi (Park Street Garden Village Broad Location)** sought to bring forward a considerable level of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hertsad.co.uk/news/local-plan-withdrawn-1-6938523>

growth within the vicinity of London Colney. **Policy S6 xi** sought to deliver a new Garden Village up to and beyond 2036, which comprised of 2,300 new homes and a wide range of supporting infrastructure, including schools and a country park.

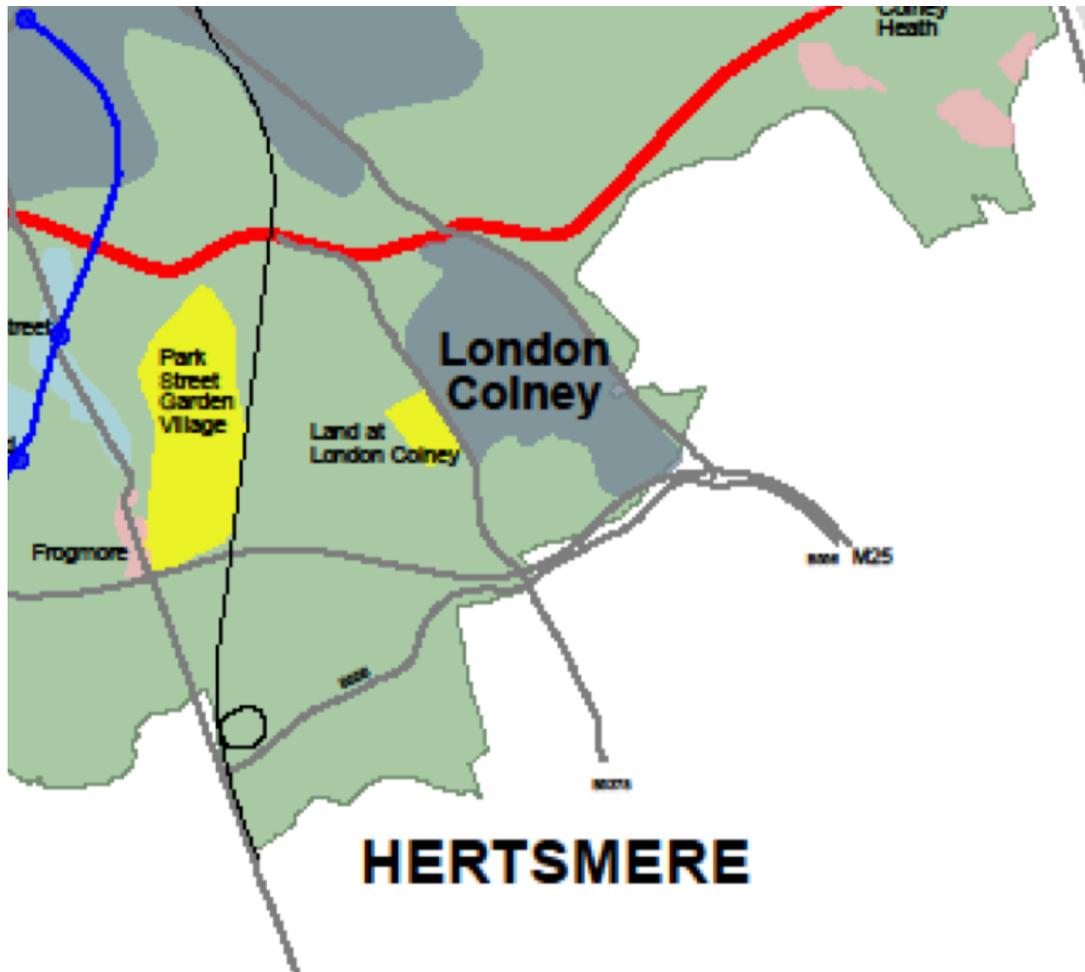


Figure 1: 'Broad Locations' for development identified in the now withdrawn Local Plan that were in the vicinity of London Colney (Broad Locations are highlighted in yellow)

- Beyond the Broad Locations, which were to be released from the Green Belt to allow development, **Policy S3 (Metropolitan Green Belt)** reiterated that “[...] the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open [...]”. The boundaries of the Green Belt were thus to be retained, other than where redrawn to allow major development on allocated sites. We note that St Albans City and District Council is currently in the process of commissioning consultancy advice to review and update the Green Belt study previously undertaken, responding to concerns expressed by the Inspector. Until such time as this is prepared and the District Council considers this as part of the new Local Plan, the Green Belt boundary will remain as currently drawn: that is, tightly around the existing built up area (see Figure 2 below).



Figure 2: Extent of current Green Belt boundary, showing that it is drawn tightly around the extent of the built-up area on London Colney and that both Napsbury and the wider area of land to the west of London Colney subject to a development allocation in the now withdrawn local Plan is washed over by the Green Belt (source: <https://troyplanning.com/green-belt-interactive-map/>, using OS and MHCLG data sources)

- **Policy L12 (Centres for Retail, Services and Leisure)**, which sought to enhance and protect the vitality and viability of town, district and local centres; stated that the policy approach for district centres (of which the centre of London Colney is designated as) is to *“provide food and grocery shopping facilities, supported by a limited range of other shops and non-retail services situated within and serving neighbourhoods in towns”*.
- **Policy L16 (Mixed Use Opportunity Areas)** identified Colney Fields Retail Centre/Ridgeview (London Colney) as an area where *“development and redevelopment for a mix of uses including retail/services uses, offices and residential will be encouraged”*.
- **Policy L18 (Transport Strategy)** reaffirmed that the main transport schemes (to be delivered in association with the Broad Location for development) within London Colney and the wider area include improvements to the Abbey Railway line, improvements along the A414 corridor, improved bus services and additional bus routes at the Broad Locations.
- **Policy L29 (Green and Blue Infrastructure, Countryside, Landscape and Trees)** stated that the Green Infrastructure Network within Category 1 and 2 settlements (of which London Colney belongs) will be protected as Local Green Space. Furthermore, opportunities to support the continued implementation of the Watling Chase Community Forest Plan at the London Colney and Park Street Garden Village Broad Locations will be sought.

### ***Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan***

- 1.8 As previously noted, withdrawal of the Local Plan has created a policy vacuum in St Albans. The Neighbourhood Plan can help to fill this gap by establishing locally significant policies which are relevant to London Colney. Neighbourhood Plan policies can help to shape and influence growth within the area, as well as addressing other areas for concern, including identifying infrastructure projects for example that might be delivered in the area. Policies will need to satisfy the tests of the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and thus conform with the NPPF, demonstrate how they contribute to the delivery of sustainable patterns of development.
- 1.9 The evidence prepared for the Local Plan in respect of matters such as housing growth, and the allocation of land in London Colney for development, indicates that there will be a pressure on land to accommodate new development. Irrespective of the status of the Local Plan it is highly likely that applications will still come forward for development. Indeed, in the policy vacuum that now exists applicants may consider that the conditions are now more favourable to them. The Neighbourhood Plan should be conscious of this, and, whilst it might not necessarily identify sites for growth, it can establish principles for what 'good growth' in London Colney looks like. It is therefore recommended that Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to establish positive design principles through production of a Design Code which all new development should respond to. Production of such a Code will also respond to the emphasis on good quality design and placemaking within the NPPF and in the Planning White Paper, and which recognise the role that communities have in shaping positive change.
- 1.10 It should also be noted the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan will provide a good opportunity to identify other 'non land-use' projects that the community would like to see delivered over the Plan period, including consideration for where funds generated through development (via the Community Infrastructure Levy) can be directed towards.

## The South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan

- 1.11 St Albans City and District Council, alongside four other local authorities (including Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and Watford) are currently in the process of developing a joint strategic plan. This Plan was agreed upon in January 2018. The purpose of the joint strategic plan is to deliver new homes and to adopt joint planning to overcome strategic-level planning and infrastructure issues across the area. To date, the five authorities have undertaken an initial ‘SW Herts, Your Future’ public engagement exercise, which ran between February and May 2020; and all authorities have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to take the work forward. The initial ‘consultation results’<sup>2</sup> found that the top priorities for improving St Albans (the District as a whole) are improved public transport, sustainability and green space.

## Neighbourhood Boroughs – Hertsmere

- 1.12 The Local Plan for neighbouring Hertsmere Borough Council is currently being prepared and this includes, in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), proposals for major development in close proximity to London Colney. These include:
- **Redwell Garden Village** (HELAA references: HEL382C and HEL332) – a site earmarked for a mixed-use new settlement comprising 6,000 homes (with 4,000 homes to be delivered over the Plan period (up to 2034) including supporting infrastructure including primary and secondary schools, sports halls, meeting halls, doctors’ surgeries, clinics and new retail units.
  - **Land South of M25 western site** (HELAA reference: HE374c) and **eastern site** (HELAA reference HE374b) situated between the M25 and B556 roads with a combined site area of 3.1ha
  - **Land South of M25 - Salisbury Hall** (HELAA reference: HEL374a) a 14.1ha site
  - **Tyttenhanger Estate - west of the M25** (HELAA reference: HEL332c) referenced as part of the Redwell Village Garden proposal
  - **Harperbury Hospital** (HELAA references: HEL350a, HEL174a, HEL389a and HEL350d) a 26.4ha site. Research highlights that this site has subsequently been developed into a 206-dwelling residential area

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Documents/09-Planning--Building-Control/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan/SW-Herts-Report-Initial-Engagment-Results.pdf>

- 1.13 Figure 3 highlights all sites promoted as part of Hertsmere Borough Councils' HELAA process that are situated close to London Colney.

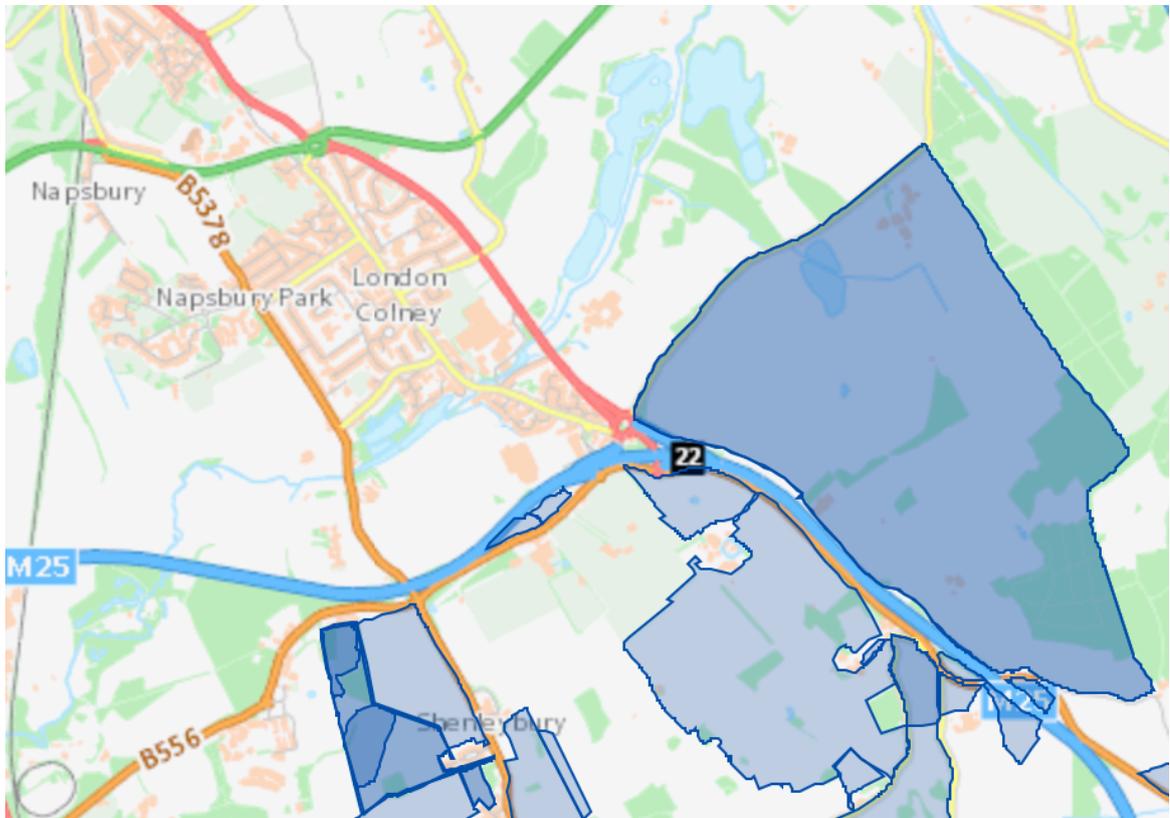


Figure 3: Sites being promoted through the Hertsmere BC HELAA which are in close proximity to London Colney

### ***Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan***

- 1.14 The implications of the above are that, whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot directly address cross-boundary matters, a watching brief will need to be maintained. This may also include a meeting with Hertsmere Borough Council to understand the status of the sites and potential allocations, as it could be the case that the Council suggests connections to London Colney which may of benefit, and which, therefore, we may want to 'safeguard' in the Neighbourhood Plan e.g. improved routes across the A1081 and along the River Colne to support safe access between them.

## 2. Technical Evidence

- 2.1 Although the Local Plan has been withdrawn a series of technical studies were prepared to underpin it and many of the factual messages in these documents remain relevant. Key messages have been extracted and presented below. In many instances, this evidence relates only to district or broader spatial scales than the defined Neighbourhood Area, though does establish the context and broad framework within which planning decisions should be taken.

### Demographic Trends and Housing Need Projections

- 2.2 Policy S4 (Housing Strategy and Housing Requirement/Target) of the draft Local Plan stated that the housing target over the Plan period (2020-2036) for St Albans was 14,608 homes, equating to 913 homes per annum. The draft Local Plan stated that the housing target would be split into three time periods to reflect realistic rates of delivery, being:
- Period 1: 2020-2025 – 565 homes per annum
  - Period 2: 2025-2030 – 1,075 homes per annum
  - Period 3: 2030-2036 – 1,075 homes per annum
- 2.3 The SW Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (2019) states that during the period 2020-2030, the local housing need figure for St Albans is 893 units per annum (based on the capped standard method figure).
- 2.4 Based on the above housing need figure (893 units p.a.), this local housing need would result in an additional 26,128 people in St Albans over the Plan period (2020-2036).
- 2.5 Over the Plan period (2020-2036), 443 households will need affordable housing to rent per annum in St Albans (calculated by adding current need, the need from newly formed households and existing households falling into need, minus supply of rented affordable housing). In addition, there is a need for 385 units of affordable home ownership per annum between 2020 and 2036 in St Albans.

## Housing Mix

2.6 The following table presents the housing mix modelling outputs from the SW Hertfordshire Local Housing Need Assessment (2019) for St Albans over the period 2020-2036 by tenure.

	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Market sector	5%	20%	45%	31%
Affordable home ownership	27%	42%	21%	9%
Social/affordable rented housing	34%	30%	32%	3%

*Table 1: Estimated dwelling requirement by number of bedrooms (2020-2036) in St Albans District*

2.7 In all tenure types, the above figures generally conform with the estimated figures for all other local authorities within SW Hertfordshire as locational differences are not substantial. However, within the market sector, there is a slightly higher need for 4+ bedroom homes in St Albans (as a whole) in comparison to other local authorities.

### **Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan**

2.8 It is important that policies relating to housing in the Neighbourhood Plan respond to the information detailed within the Local Housing Needs Assessment and provide for a range of housing types and tenures. There is also the opportunity to set positive housing design principles which seek to shape the types of development which come forward within the Parish.

## Development Strategy

2.9 Policy S1 (Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy) of the Draft Local Plan (2020-2036) states that London Colney is classified as a 'Category 1 – Cities, Towns – Main Urban Settlements Excluded from the Green Belt', whereby the scale and density of development will generally be higher than any other category of settlements. This is to reflect the broad policy approach to Category 1 settlements, which states that "these are 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".

### ***Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan***

- 2.10 Neighbourhood Plan policies could be tailored to ensure that land use and its associated uses are optimised to ensure that the built environment is fit for purpose and can accommodate residents' needs. This extends to the role and function of the local centre and facilities provided, such that they continue to cater for day-to-day needs, and are accessible to all, but also such that future development responds to the scale and character of the built form.

## **Economic Growth and Housing Need**

- 2.11 The standard methodology approach to local housing need (as set out by the Government and adopted in the SW Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment [2019]), would support 64,844 jobs in SW Hertfordshire over the Plan period (2020-2036), equating to 13,470 new jobs created in St Albans. This figure differs from the SW Herts Economy Study, which states that just 20,553 jobs will be created across SW Herts over the Plan period.

### ***Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan***

- 2.12 Neighbourhood Plan policies could support the provision of particular uses in specific areas which could be beneficial to the local economy. This is likely to be set in the context of changing work patterns in response to the Covid pandemic and could involve consideration of different forms and types of working, including, for example, greater opportunities for home working, potential for locally available office space, and opportunities for a more diverse employment base which supports growth in smaller businesses and start-ups.

## **Infrastructure**

- 2.13 As noted above, the St Albans District and City Draft Local Plan included proposals for 'Broad Locations' for development located West of London Colney and at the Park Street Garden Village. Altogether, these sites promised to deliver 2,740 new homes and associated infrastructure to support the level of growth coming forward.
- 2.14 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) prepared by the District Council as part of the supporting material to the Local Plan evaluated the infrastructure requirements for the proposed 'Broad Locations' for development. It stated that local highway improvements, sustainable public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, a two-form entry primary school, a six-eight-form entry secondary school, early years provision, local open space, 105sqm of on-site healthcare, community facilities, SUDS, renewable energy/energy strategy and digital infrastructure would be delivered as part of the proposed scheme to the west of London Colney.

- 2.15 In terms of current provision of infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Area, the IDP stated that there is an insufficient level of: free early years places available in children's centres, local green spaces and rail connections between Abbey Line station and St Albans.

### ***Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan***

- 2.16 Neighbourhood Plan policies have the opportunity to encourage infrastructure which will help to support the new and existing community if/when development does come forward. The IDP suggests that this might focus on early years provision and green spaces. Consideration could be given to uses that are multi-functional, so that they can provide for different activities, but also such that they are located in places that are accessible to all. The NDP can also identify important local facilities that might warrant further protection or enhancement. Any monies raised through the Community infrastructure Levy from new development in London Colney could be directed towards improvements to these facilities. Matters associated with improved rail services are not strictly land-use related, though can be raised in the NDP as an aspirational project which the Parish / Community will continue to campaign to improve.

## **Retail and Leisure**

- 2.17 The SW Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018) states that within the Study Area (comprising all local authorities in SW Herts), St Albans attracts 12.3% of the overall convenience goods market share and 10% of all Study Area spending.
- 2.18 As stated in the SW Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018), vacancy rates of retail units in St Albans (approx. 7%) are relatively low compared to the UK average (approx. 11%).
- 2.19 Participation levels (% of the population of St Albans) in leisure activities is presented in the table below. Please note, the St Albans area comprises zones 18, 19 and 21 in the SW Herts Retail and Leisure Study, of which London Colney falls within Zone 19. These are the results of a SW Herts-wide household survey. For comparative purposes, the average figures for the whole SW Herts Study Area are also included.

	Indoor health and fitness	Cinema	Restaurant	Pubs/bars/nightclubs	Ten pin bowling	Bingo	Cultural facilities	None mentioned
St Albans	25.0%	58.9%	79.8%	45.4%	14.6%	1.5%	62.9%	9.3%
SW Herts Study Area	27.3%	52.4%	71.5%	43.7%	15.1%	1.5%	54.6%	12.2%

Table 2: Participation in leisure activities (%) across the SW Herts study area

2.20 In addition to the above, the household survey collected information on where residents from each zone usually undertake their chosen leisure activity. Results are presented in the table below. For comparative purposes, the average responses for the whole SW Herts Study Area are also included:

	Indoor health and fitness	Cinema	Restaurant	Pubs/bars/nightclubs	Ten pin bowling	Bingo	Cultural facilities
St Albans	St Albans City Centre	Odyssey, London Rd, St Albans	St Albans City Centre	St Albans City Centre	Hollywood Bowl, Woodside Leisure Park, Watford	Gala, Borehamwood	Central London
SW Herts Study Area	Hemel Hempstead Town Centre	Cineworld, Jarman Square, Hemel Hempstead	Watford Town Centre	Watford Town Centre	Hollywood Bowl, Woodside Leisure Park, Watford	Gala, Borehamwood	Central London

Table 3: Most popular leisure destinations by zone (%) in the SW Herts study area

### Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan

2.21 The above information, although at a broader spatial scale, highlights that the majority of residents in London Colney travel to St Albans City Centre to access key cultural, leisure and entertainment facilities. As the Plan progresses, it will be important to establish how the existing centres of London Colney perform in terms of meeting day-to-day needs, and, in particular, what this means for local retail, social and community facilities..

## Green Belt

2.22 As stated in the Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment (2013), the land west of London Colney was identified as contributing the least towards Green Belt purposes within the vicinity of London Colney. Despite this, the Inspectors' comments on the

approach to the Green Belt in St Albans can no longer be relied upon and until such time St Albans revisits this, the Green Belt will remain as is.

### ***Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan***

- 2.23 Although the above technical information can no longer be relied upon, it is likely that applicants will still bring development forward in these areas and demonstrating that release of their sites satisfies the tests of the Green Belt and thus permission should be granted for development. The Neighbourhood Plan can therefore establish good design principles for any new development.

## **Green Spaces**

- 2.24 In terms of London Colney's existing green spaces, the Detailed Local Plan Technical Report (2016) states that London Colney has:
- Two areas of allotments (equating to 2.3ha). Currently there is a deficit of 1.5ha of allotment space in London Colney;
  - 27.8ha of amenity space, equating to a surplus of 15.4ha (based on the set quantity standard of 15 square metres per person). It is recommended that London Colney Recreation Centre and Walsingham Way should be designated as Local Green Spaces (LGS) due to their high quality and high value;
  - 16.1ha of natural green space, equating to a surplus of 11.9ha based on quantity standards. It is recommended that Village Green and Low Bells Lake should be designated as a Local Green Space (LGS) due to its high quality;
  - There are currently no parks or gardens in London Colney, equating to a deficit of 9.9ha (based on quantity standards);
  - It was recommended for the River Colne (an extensive green corridor) be designated as a local green space in London Colney on the grounds that it is not designated as Green Belt;
  - 0.96ha of children's play area, equating to a surplus of 0.55ha (based on quantity standards), with good accessibility across London Colney for both young and older children;
  - 0.23ha of teenage space, equating to a surplus of 0.08ha (based on quantity standards), with the majority of teenage facilities within the cycling accessibility threshold;
  - A playing pitch strategy forecast for 2013 found that London Colney and its surrounds has a deficit of: .15ha of adult football pitches, 4.0 junior football pitches, 1.9 cricket pitches and 1.2 junior rugby pitches, and a surplus of 1.5ha of adult rugby pitches.

2.25 In terms of multi-functional green space in London Colney, availability and requirement figures (requirements based on local standards) are as follows:

Space type	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)
Amenity green space	123,780	278,151
Natural green space	41,260	48,580
Parks and gardens	99,024	0
Totals	264,064	326,731

Table 4: Breakdown of the green space provision in London Colney

2.26 To summarise the above, the following table shows where deficits currently exist (by green space type).

Allotments	Amenity green space	Natural green space	Parks and gardens	Children’s play areas	Teenage play areas	Playing pitches
Deficit	Surplus	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Surplus	Deficit

Table 5: Summary of green space surplus / deficits in London Colney

**Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan**

2.27 The above technical information provides the basis for supporting Local Green Space designations within the London Colney Neighbourhood Plan. The evidence also suggests that any development which comes forward should provide playing pitches, where priority should be given to those types of pitches listed as having a deficit in the Playing Pitch Strategy Forecast (2013). The Neighbourhood Plan can both (a) designate important Local Green Space in the Plan area, and (b) establish good design principles with regard to the location of new green space and how it should site within areas of new development (e.g.: well overlooked by development, such that it is safe, and accessible to all, etc)

## Heritage

- 2.28 Policy L30 of the Draft Local Plan stated that *“heritage assets will be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Great weight will be given to the conservation of the District’s designated heritage assets. Currently undiscovered / undesignated heritage assets with equivalent interest will be similarly valued and conserved. Heritage assets worthy of conservation include the District’s high level of above and below ground archaeology, locally listed buildings, locally listed historic parks and gardens and other locally recorded features of heritage significance.”*
- 2.29 Historic assets in London Colney are shown in Figure 4. It is worth noting that Napsbury is both a historic park and Conservation Area in its own right. There is an additional Conservation Area which covers numerous properties situated adjacent to the River Colne. The London Colney moated Scheduled Monument site around Colney Chapel is listed as an *“unusual example of a moat with the surviving remains of a chapel”*<sup>3</sup>. Concentrations of Grade II and locally listed buildings are located along Barnet Road, with a cluster of former locally listed former hospital buildings located along Beningfield Drive.

### *Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan*

- 2.30 This evidence supports the inclusion of policies which seek to conserve and enhance London Colney’s rich history. Although statutory designated heritage assets (e.g.: conservation areas and listed buildings) already benefit from policy protection in the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Plan could go further by pulling out the key design features and qualities of these features that should be considered in any new development proposals within their ‘setting’. Furthermore, the Neighbourhood Plan could identify locally important heritage assets and include those in a policy, such that their importance is recognised and proposals respond positively to these.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010718>

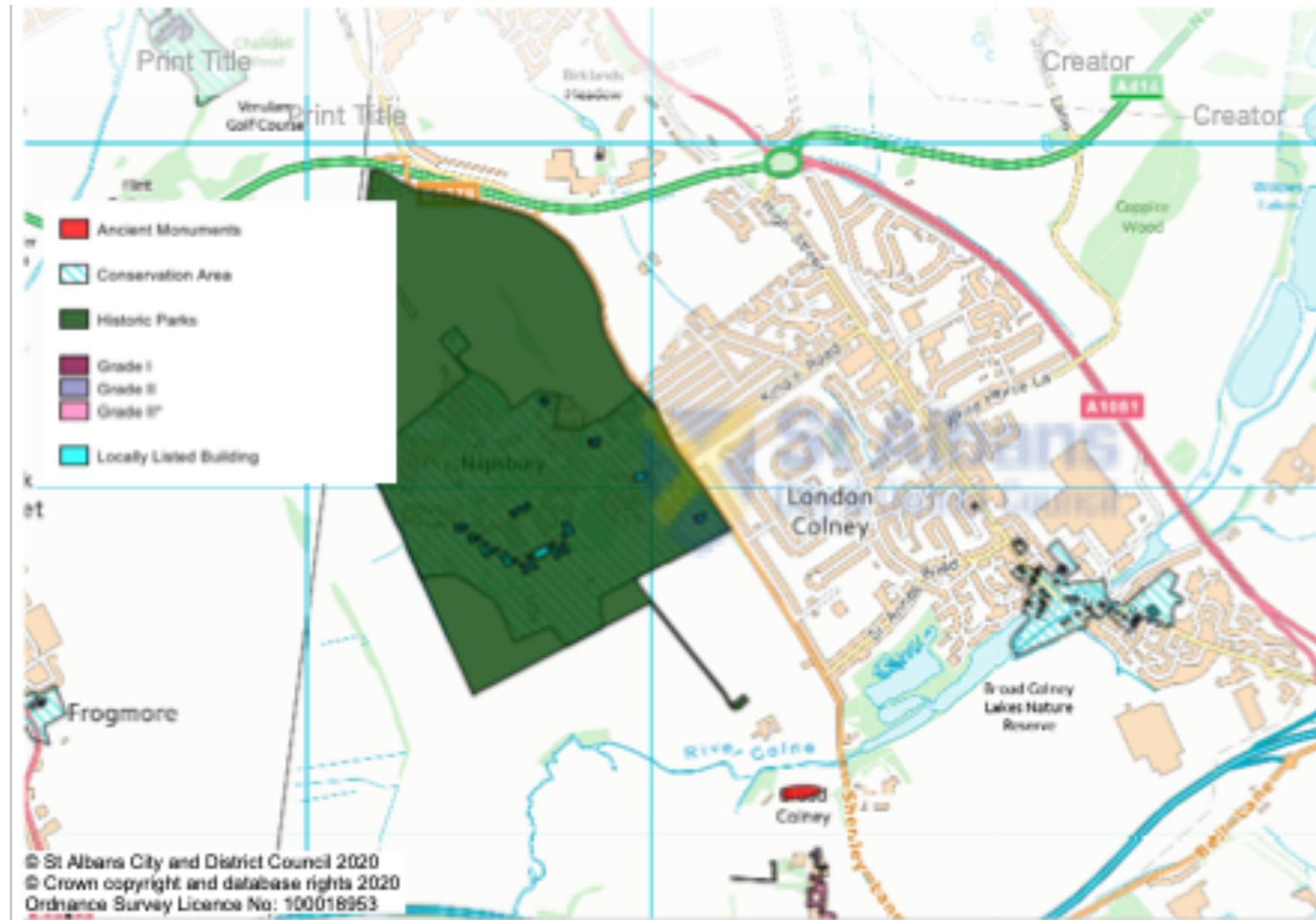


Figure 4: Heritage assets in London Colney (source: <https://gis.stalbans.gov.uk/WebMapLayers8/map.aspx>)

# 3. Potential areas of focus for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 The key driver for the Neighbourhood Plan is to shape a positive future for the Parish, addressing local issues and challenges. To help achieve this, it is important for the Neighbourhood Plan to focus on where positive change can be implemented.
- 3.2 Based on the review of the now withdrawn Local Plan, the supporting evidence to this, and the matters it was seeking to address, there is considerable scope for the Neighbourhood Plan to 'step into' the policy vacuum and make best use of this material to shape up-to-date and locally responsive policies for London Colney. Opportunities are set out below. These will be developed and tested through consultation and generation of supporting evidence, but include:
- Influencing new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area to ensure that they respond to **local character and distinctiveness**. These policies will be informed through the Design Code work which will help to develop good design principles for new developments.
  - Rejuvenating **London Colney's 'High Street'** and local centres to establish them as vital and viable destinations at the heart of the community, providing for day-to-day needs, services and facilities.
  - Protecting **Local Green Spaces** to ensure that these spaces continue to be enjoyed by the local community.
  - Protecting and enhancing London Colney's **heritage assets** and ensuring that any new development aligns with and responds to the local character and form.
  - Improving **access and movement** across London Colney, with strong links to wider areas. In particular, policies could focus on improving walking and cycling infrastructure and providing more legible links to the existing good quality public transport network.

**London Colney Neighbourhood Plan**  
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