

Appendix 14 – Summary of approach to assessing capacity on the Eight Areas Of Search

The Council is working closely with relevant landowners and developers in relation to the eight Areas Of Search. In some cases, landowners and developers have produced or are preparing detailed studies, to show what scale and nature of development could be achieved.

In the assessment below, it is important to consider the relative importance of each factor, as well as the number of factors, when weighing up the merits of each site. A higher number of positives does not automatically mean that a particular site is better overall, and vice versa.

It is acknowledged that large-scale housing developments will have an impact on nearby housing areas. These include short-term impacts during construction and longer-term changes, particularly for those living next to land that was previously open countryside.

All distances quoted in the assessment are approximate and measured from the likely nearest site boundary to the nearest example, as the crow flies. Travel distances, including walking and cycling distances, are often longer, due to roads and other constraints. The information on schools relates only to state sector establishments.

Areas Of Search – Potentially Suitable, Available and Achievable

Area of Search 1 – South West Of St Albans

<p>This area is located north of the A 414 (former M10) and south of the A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road. The potential development area is partly east of Bedmond Lane (south of the Verulam Estate) and partly to the west. The land is mainly farmed.</p> <p>A development scheme could accommodate 1,000-1,200 homes, and associated uses such as a two-form entry primary school and a local shopping centre. There is also scope for significant countryside enhancement and increased public access.</p>	
Positives	Negatives
<p>Development in this area could pay for an improved western orbital route around St Albans. This would include a new road through the Area of Search from the A414 to the Hemel Hempstead Road. It appears that the western orbital route could result in major transport benefits for the City.</p>	<p>Development would result in outward expansion of the City towards Chiswell Green and Hemel Hempstead, but would not result in coalescence of settlements. Development would not extend south of the A414 towards Chiswell Green and a substantial gap between St Albans and Hemel Hempstead would remain.</p>
<p>Accessibility to existing local facilities is not very good. However, a new primary school and local shopping centre could be included in the development and there is scope for improved bus services.</p>	<p>The land immediately south of the A4147 and west of Bedmond Lane is an area of high archaeological importance. It is unlikely that any built development will be acceptable on this land.</p>
<p>Opportunity exists for large new areas of public open space, woodland planting and better access to the countryside to the north and west of the potential</p>	<p>Due to the archaeological constraints, any development west of Bedmond Lane would have to be well south of the A4147, so would not be well located in relation to the existing built up area.</p>

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development – to help meet Watling Chase Community Forest objectives.	
Likelihood of housing being built is high, given that there is one principal landowner, who is working on possible development options for the land.	Park Wood and Birch Wood are designated as County Wildlife Sites and should be protected.
Proposals for this area of search could include a hotel and a mini park and ride car park, close to the junction of the A414 and the possible western orbital road.	The site includes Windridge Farm which has a Grade II Listed farmhouse and several Grade II Listed barns, whose setting will need to be preserved.
	It is uncertain whether the Highways Agency will agree to a new junction on the A414 (nb the Highways Agency is responsible for this section of the A414, which is a trunk road, but it may be detrunked and passed over to Hertfordshire County Council).
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Prae Wood – 600m
Approximate distance to secondary school	Marlborough – 600m
Approximate distance to bus routes	Verulam Estate – multiple stops 100-200m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Verulamium Park – 800m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Abbey Avenue – 400m
<p>Conclusions: There are some clear disadvantages with this location, including the impact on pleasant Green Belt countryside and the archaeological constraints. However, development would enable the provision of the western orbital route. Initial work suggests that this route would result in major transport benefits for the City, which outweigh the disadvantages of developing this land. Other advantages of this area include the potential for a new school, a local shopping centre And substantial woodland planting, public open space and better access to the countryside.</p>	

Area of Search 2 (south west part) – South East of St Albans

<p>This area consists of land between London Road, the A414 and Napsbury Lane. The main components of this area are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overgrown land east of Napsbury Lane, called Napsbury Fields (the largest part of this area). • Ayletts Garden Centre, which fronts the A414. • The commercial site immediately east of Ayletts, containing pet supplies and tropical fish shops and other retail elements.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birklands Meadow (open land, used on a temporary basis as public open space). <p>Depending on how much of the commercial sites is made available, this area could accommodate up to around 400 homes.</p>	
Positives	Negatives
<p>The area is largely surrounded by development and is well related to the existing built up area. In 1983, the Local Plan Inspector recommended that the Napsbury Fields site be released from the Green Belt.</p>	<p>The gap between St Albans and London Colney is narrow - development on this land would increase the degree of coalescence.</p>
<p>The A414 separates the site from open countryside and would form a new defensible long term Green Belt boundary.</p>	<p>Birklands Meadow is available for housing development, but there is uncertainty over the availability of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Napsbury Fields – it has been used informally as an open space for many years and local residents have submitted an application seeking ‘village green’ status. This is opposed by the landowners. If the land is declared a village green, it will prevent development. • Ayletts Garden Centre and the adjoining commercial site – it is uncertain how much (if any) of these sites would be available for housing - the main retail elements would probably remain.
<p>The area contains elements of previously developed land along the A414.</p>	
<p>Opportunity exists for new areas of public open space and landscaping improvements, contributing to Watling Chase Community Forest objectives.</p>	<p>Napsbury Fields is a designated County Wildlife Site – there is a clear presumption in favour of retaining wildlife sites. This presumption should not be over-ridden unless there is a very strong case for development.</p>
<p>This site is in a fairly sustainable location, within walking distance of a local shopping centre, bus routes on London Road and the North Orbital Commercial Park.</p>	<p>Space should be allowed to retain existing trees, orchard (on Birklands Meadow) and hedgerows.</p>
<p>Could accommodate an extension to the North Orbital Commercial Park employment area – this is one of the District’s few realistic opportunities for new employment sites.</p>	<p>There is uncertainty regarding road access to this site, but solutions can probably be found. Hertfordshire County Council is undertaking a study to decide the best approach.</p>
<p>Birklands Meadow is owned by Hertfordshire County Council and could be made available for a primary school, if</p>	

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needed.	
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Cunningham Hill – 1200m
Approximate distance to secondary school	Francis Bacon – 200m
Approximate distance to bus routes	London Road - 50m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Birklands – 100m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Newhouse Park – 250m
<p>Conclusions: There are some points in favour of housing development – the area is well related to the existing built up area, is not open countryside and contains some previously developed land. However, there are major disadvantages with developing this land. The main drawbacks are the increased degree of coalescence with London Colney and Napsbury Field’s status as a County Wildlife Site. Also, there is considerable doubt over whether much of the land would be available for housing – a village green application has been submitted.</p>	

Area of Search 2 (north east part) – South East of St Albans

<p>This part of Area of Search 2 consists of two agricultural fields north east of London Road close to the London Colney Roundabout. The two fields adjoin the cemetery, with the field on the north west side (closest to the city centre) being the larger one.</p> <p>These fields could accommodate about 500-600 homes.</p>	
Positives	Negatives
Both fields are flat and are not of high landscape value, but contain mature trees and hedgerows that should be retained.	The gap between St Albans and London Colney is narrow - development on this land would increase the degree of coalescence.
The location is sustainable – frequent bus services run along London Road, Francis Bacon Secondary School is close and the larger field is within walking distance of the Whitecroft local shopping centre.	To mitigate the impact on the Green Belt, space should be allowed for substantial boundary planting to the east and south and landscaping along London Road.
Housing development on the larger field would be fairly well related to the existing built up area.	The pleasant rural character of Nightingale Lane should be retained.
The likelihood of housing being built is high, given that there is one landowner (Leach Homes), who would like to	Housing development on the smaller field would not be very well related to the existing built up area.

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develop the land for housing or a business park.	
	The site is one of the District's very few opportunities to build a high quality business park, but this would be prevented by housing development.
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Cunningham Hill – 1200m
Approximate distance to secondary school	Francis Bacon – 200m
Approximate distance to bus routes	London Road - 50m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Birklands – 100m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Newhouse Park – 250m
Conclusions: These fields are not of high landscape value and the location is sustainable. An important drawback is that development would increase the degree of coalescence between St Albans and London Colney. Another key issue is whether the land should be used for a high quality business park, rather than for housing.	

Area of Search 3 – West of London Colney

<p>This area of search consists mainly of farmland south of the new Napsbury Park housing development. It also includes farmland north of Napsbury Park and unused land to the west (close to the railway, south of North Cottages).</p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council (owners of the land north and south of Napsbury Park) is carrying out a technical study into possible development options on its land. Subject to the results of this study, Area of Search 3 could accommodate up to about 900 homes.</p>	
Positives	Negatives
At present, Napsbury Park does not have many social and community facilities. Further housing development could increase the population to a level that would support better facilities, such as a local shopping centre and probably a primary school and improved bus services.	Residential development north of Napsbury Park would reduce the already narrow Green Belt gap between London Colney and St Albans. A landscaping screen would be required to mitigate the harm from any development here.
The land to the south of Napsbury is relatively flat and has limited landscape character.	Extensive views southwards from Napsbury Park and views into the area from Shenley Ridge would be harmed by housing development.
Housing development south of Napsbury would not unacceptably reduce the Green Belt gap between London Colney and other settlements.	It seems unlikely that large scale additional housing development can be accommodated, unless significant improvements are made to the local road network (the position will be clearer once the

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.	County Council's technical study is completed).
Opportunity exists for new woodland planting, public open space and better access to the countryside to the south and north of Napsbury Park – to help meet Watling Chase Community Forest objectives.	Development would affect the setting of Napsbury Park, which is designated as a conservation area and a Registered Historic Park and Garden.
The likelihood of housing being built is high, given that the main landowner (Hertfordshire County Council) is working on possible development options for its land. Also, the land west of Napsbury has been marketed as having development potential.	
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Bowmans Green - 250m (St Bernadette RC – 50m)
Approximate distance to secondary school	Francis Bacon – 2km
Approximate distance to bus routes	Shenley Lane – 50m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Broad Colney Nature Reserve – 200m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Haseldine Road – 500m
<p>Conclusions: There are clear disadvantages of housing development in this Area of Search, including the impact on the conservation area and the historic park and garden. Also, significant development to the north would erode the Green Belt gap with St Albans. However, there are advantages, particularly the opportunity to provide improved local facilities and substantial woodland planting, public open space and improved access to the countryside. The outcome of the County Council's technical study is needed before conclusions can be reached about this Area of Search, particularly in relation to traffic issues.</p>	

Area of Search No. 5 – East Of St Albans

<p>There are two separate potential strategic development sites in this Area of Search:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Beaumont School</u> Playing Fields/Winches Farm Drive – The potential housing development area consists of the existing school playing fields off Hatfield Road and an agricultural field north of Winches Farm Drive. The development would also provide new, improved school playing fields north of the new housing, a new school access road off Hatfield Road and some new school buildings. Housing capacity would be about 150 homes. • <u>Oaklands College Smallford Campus, land south of Sandpit Lane</u> – The land in question is farmland located south of Sandpit Lane, west of North Drive, north of the Oaklands
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College buildings and east of Verulam School Playing Fields. There is potential for 800-1,000 homes. The development could also provide local shopping facilities, an expanded Oakwood Primary School, together with significant countryside enhancement and increased public access in adjoining land owned by the College.	
Beaumont School Playing Fields/ Winches Farm Drive	
Positives	Negatives
New and much improved educational facilities at Beaumont School and an improved road access.	Localised traffic impacts upon Hatfield Road.
This is a very accessible, sustainable location, on land well related to the urban area which contributes relatively little to the Green Belt.	Hedgerows and adjoining woodland will need to be protected.
The area is close to local facilities such as shops and schools and there are regular bus services to St Albans city centre and Hatfield via Hatfield Road.	
Likelihood of housing being built is high, given that there are two landowners, who are working on proposals for school improvements and housing.	
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Oakwood – 400m
Approximate distance to secondary school	Beaumont – 50m
Approximate distance to bus stops	Hatfield Road – 50m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Longacres recreation ground – 100m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Hatfield Road – 100m
Conclusion: This is an accessible, sustainable location for housing. The land is well related to the built-up area and contributes little to the Green Belt. Significant key benefits are the new and improved educational facilities at Beaumont School and improved road access to it.	
South of Sandpit Lane/North of Oaklands College buildings	
Positives	Negatives
The site is well related to the built up area and development would not reduce the gap between St Albans, Smallford and Hatfield.	Access to some facilities, such as shops is not very good – but local shops could be provided in the new development.
The landscape quality of the land is not	Traffic implications on Sandpit Lane – junction

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particularly high, but benefits from established trees and hedgerows, with ancient woodland nearby.	improvements likely to be required. Also, further consideration should be given to a possible eastern distributor road, linking Sandpit Lane to Hatfield Road and London Road. The possible transport benefits of a distributor road need to be weighed against the environmental impact.
The development would fund the expansion of Oakwood Primary School. This may require a small part of the adjoining Verulam School Playing Fields. If so, Verulam School may need some land to replace its lost playing field area.	Space should be allowed within the site to retain existing trees and hedgerows and for new planting along Sandpit lane and the new Green belt boundary.
There are regular bus services along Sandpit Lane. It may be also be possible to introduce a new St Albans-Hatfield route via Sandpit Lane.	
Opportunity exists for large new areas of public open space and woodland planting to the east and south of the potential development – to help meet Watling Chase Community Forest objectives.	
Likelihood of housing being built is high, as there is one landowner (Oaklands College), who is working on possible development options for the land.	
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Oakwood – 100m
Approximate distance to secondary school	Beaumont – 50m
Approximate distance to bus stops	Sandpit Lane – 100m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Longacres recreation ground – 600m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Hatfield Road – 500m
Conclusions: There do not appear to be any major drawbacks to developing this land. This area is well related to the existing built up area, the landscape quality is not high and the gap between St Albans and nearby settlements would be maintained. Housing development could offer some advantages, including expansion of Oakwood Primary School, a local shopping centre and substantial woodland planting and public open space; possibly also a new St Albans-Hatfield bus route.	

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Area of Search 6 – Smallford

<p>This area of search comprises a number of sites in Smallford, including three horticultural sites containing large glasshouses (i.e. Glinwell, Radio and Chester nurseries), Notcutts Garden Centre, a concrete formwork depot and large residential gardens. Together, these sites have the potential to significantly enlarge the village.</p> <p>If all the sites came forward for development, total housing capacity of the area would be about 750 homes.</p>	
Positives	Negatives
<p>Area of Search 6 is Green Belt, but not open countryside. The glasshouses are large, intrusive structures, which detract from the openness of the Green Belt. The area contains elements of previously developed land, including the garden centre and the concrete depot.</p>	<p>Project 23 and its preamble in the 1994 Local Plan stated that the Council's main aim was to secure a major enhancement of the whole area, consistent with its Green Belt status. Landscaping improvements and increased public access were sought, to help meet the Watling Chase Community Forest objectives. The 1994 Plan recognised that some enabling development was necessary to bring this about.</p> <p>It now appears that, due to the high existing use values, the landowners will not make their land available for housing unless the Council accepts development on most if not all of their land. Therefore, it seems that the major enhancement envisaged in the 1994 Plan is not achievable.</p>
<p>There are frequent bus services to St Albans and Hatfield and jobs nearby at Oaklands College and the employment area off Hatfield Road.</p>	<p>The Green Belt gaps between St Albans and Smallford and between Smallford and Hatfield are narrow and fragile. If the Council accepts the large scale of development necessary to encourage landowners to make their land available for housing, it would urbanise Smallford and reduce the perception of a countryside gap between the settlements.</p>
<p>Housing development would enable more facilities to be provided, probably including a larger convenience store and a community centre. This would make Smallford more of a self-contained village.</p>	<p>Housing development would result in a considerable loss of existing jobs, particularly at Glinwell Nurseries. As a result, the case for new employment development in the Green Belt would be increased.</p>
<p>Project 23 in the 1994 Local Plan envisaged some development, to replace the glasshouses and concrete depot south of Hatfield Road.</p>	<p>Even if around 750 new homes were built, it would not be sufficient to provide a wide range of local facilities. For example, it is unlikely that a primary school or a full local shopping centre would be built.</p>
<p>The likelihood of housing being built is high if the Core Strategy proposes</p>	<p>Hatfield Road is congested at peak hours – improvement of the Hatfield Road/Station</p>

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around 750 homes at Smallford. Most of the key landowners are acting as a consortium and are working on possible development options for their land.	Road/Oaklands Lane junction would be required and possibly other measures.
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Colney Heath – 1.2km
Approximate distance to secondary school	Beaumont – 1.7km (Nicholas Breakspear RC – 1.2k)
Approximate distance to bus routes	Hatfield Road – 50m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Oaklands Lane – 100m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Station Road – 50m
<p>Conclusion: There are some clear advantages to developing here. In particular, the land is not open countryside and there are large intrusive structures and elements of previously developed land. However, it is very important to protect the narrow Green Belt gap that separates St Albans and Hatfield and avoid coalescence. It seems that most of the potential land will not be brought forward for housing development, unless the Council accepts large scale development, which would urbanise Smallford and reduce the perception of countryside between the settlements.</p>	

Area of Search 7 – North of St Albans

<p>This area of search covers farmland to the east of Harpenden Road (rear of Texaco filling station), west of the railway line and north of the Porters Wood employment area. Most of the area is owned by St Albans School.</p> <p>The site could accommodate 600-1,000 homes. It could also provide local shopping facilities and possibly a food superstore, a primary school and an extension to the Porters Wood employment area.</p>	
Positives	Negatives
Depending on the precise extent of new development, the Green Belt gap between St Albans and Harpenden would either be maintained or reduced by only a small amount.	Development would involve the loss of attractive unspoilt countryside, with some long distance views. Screen planting would be required to mitigate this harm.
Currently, road access to Porters Wood employment area is poor, but the development would provide a new, improved access from Harpenden Road.	Might add to traffic congestion at the Ancient Briton and King William IV junctions – but it appears that the development would fund improvements to these junctions.
Could accommodate an extension to the Porters Wood employment area – this is one of the District's few realistic opportunities for new employment sites.	Space should be allowed to retain Porter's Wood.
Located close to frequent bus services	

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on Harpenden Road and there may be scope for a new local bus route into the city centre.	
Could accommodate a new food superstore, if the Council decides that this would be appropriate.	
Would provide new local shopping facilities and some landscaped public open space.	
Could meet the identified need for a new secondary school to serve the north of St Albans. Could also accommodate a new primary school.	
The likelihood of housing being built is high, as both the landowners are working on possible development options for their land.	
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Margaret Wix – 500m
Approximate distance to secondary school	Townsend – 500m
Approximate distance to bus routes	Harpenden Road - 50m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Beech Road - 800m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Beech Road – 800m
Conclusions: There would be an adverse impact on attractive Green Belt countryside. However, this area has significant potential for residential or mixed use development. Potential benefits of development include local shopping facilities, public open space, a new access to the Porters Wood employment area and possibly new primary and secondary schools, an extension to the employment area and a food superstore.	

Area of Search 8 (south east part) – North of Harpenden, Luton Road/Ambrose Lane

This site consists of an agricultural field, bounded by Luton Road, Cooters End lane, Ambrose Lane and the rear of the properties in Bloomfield Road. About 300 homes could be accommodated.	
Positives	Negatives
The site is well related to the existing built up area and the landscape quality is not high.	Traffic impact – the A1081 Luton Road is congested. Further consultation needed with Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Highways, but the principle of housing development is unlikely to be ruled out on traffic grounds.

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Cooters End Lane and Ambrose Lane would form a new defensible long term Green Belt boundary and housing development would not reduce the Green Belt gap between Harpenden and Luton.	Local schools are full – further discussions needed with Hertfordshire County Council on possible ways of increasing capacity.
The site is in a sustainable location, close to bus routes and a local centre and within walking distance of schools and Harpenden town centre.	The site adjoins the Grade II Listed Cooters End Farm - the setting of this listed building will need to be protected.
Housing development would help to support local shops on Luton Road.	Space should be allowed for screen planting along Cooters End Lane.
This Area of Search is one of only two potential strategic housing sites in the north of the District and provides a rare opportunity to secure a significant amount of affordable housing in this part of the District.	
The likelihood of housing being built is high, given that there is one landowner who is working on possible development options for the land.	
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Roundwood – 600m
Approximate distance to secondary school	Roundwood Park – 600m
Approximate distance to bus routes	Luton Road – 50m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Rothamsted Park – 1.2km
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Luton Road – 100m
Conclusions: There are concerns about traffic and education issues, which need further investigation. However, this is a sustainable location for housing and the site is well related to the existing built up area. The landscape quality is not high and the gap between Harpenden and Luton would be retained. This site gives a rare opportunity for a large housing development (including affordable housing) in the north of the District.	

Area of Search 8 (north west part) – North of Harpenden, north west of Cooters End Lane

This site consists mainly of farmland, north east of Luton Road and north west of Cooters End Lane. The land extends up to the boundary with Bedfordshire.

About 400 homes could be accommodated.

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Positives	Negatives
Housing development would not reduce the Green Belt gap between Harpenden and Luton.	The site is attractive open countryside and is not very well related to the existing built up area. It is mainly rural in character , rather than urban fringe, with large fields and some trees and hedgerows along boundaries.
The site is in a fairly sustainable location, close to bus routes and within walking distance of schools and a local shopping centre.	The land is very open and there are long distance views which would be affected by development. The County boundary is not defined on the ground by any physical features and would not form a defensible new Green Belt boundary. Extensive landscaping would be needed to mitigate the harm and establish a strong new Green Belt boundary that would endure.
This Area of Search is one of only two potential strategic housing sites in the north of the District and provides a rare opportunity to secure a significant amount of affordable housing in this part of the District.	Traffic impact – the A1081 Luton Road is congested. Further consultation needed with Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Highways.
	Local schools are full – further discussions needed with Hertfordshire County Council on possible ways of increasing capacity.
	The site includes the Grade II Listed Cooters End Farm - the setting of this listed building will need to be protected.
	The likelihood of housing being built is uncertain – landowners and developers have not contacted the Council about possible housing development.
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Roundwood – 600m
Approximate distance to secondary school	Roundwood Park – 700m
Approximate distance to bus routes	Luton Road – 50m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Rothamsted Park – 1.6km
Approximate distance to convenience retail	Luton Road – 500m
<p>Conclusions: The case for housing development in this part of Area of Search 8 is much weaker than with the land south east of Cooters End Lane. The site is not very well related to the existing built up area and development would cause the loss of attractive, rural countryside. Other concerns include traffic and education issues and the lack of a natural new defensible Green Belt boundary.</p>	

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Areas Of Search – NOT Suitable, Available and Achievable

Area of Search 4 – South Of London Colney

<p>This 44 hectare site is bounded by the River Colne to the north, Colney Fields Retail Park to the east, the M25 to the south and Shenley Lane to the west. Most of the land is a restored sand and gravel site and is used for low intensity grazing. There is a small element of previously developed land (containing storage uses) adjacent to Shenley Lane.</p> <p>The various constraints (see below) would restrict the housing capacity, probably to about 500 homes.</p>	
Positives	Negatives
The eastern part of this Area of Search is fairly well related to the existing built up area.	The River Colne and Broad Colney Nature Reserve mean that the western part of this Area of Search would be poorly related to the existing built up area.
Housing development on the eastern part of the area would be sustainable, with good accessibility to the Colney Fields shops, buses in Barnet Road and jobs on the Riverside employment area.	Housing development on the western part of the area would be a considerable distance from most local services and facilities, so would not be very sustainable.
Housing development south of Napsbury would not unacceptably reduce the Green Belt gap between London Colney and other settlements.	Close proximity to the M25 and its associated noise and pollution issues.
Opportunity exists to use part of this area for public open space and major landscaping improvements, particularly close to the M25 – to help meet Watling Chase Community Forest and TAP (Trees against Pollution) objectives.	Road access would probably have to be via Shenley Lane, which means an indirect route to facilities in the Barnet Road area. Also, the Bell Lane/Shenley Lane/Harper Lane roundabout would probably have to be improved.
	The northern part of the site is in an area with a high risk of flooding. If the Council decides to pursue the possibility of development, it would be necessary to carry out a level 2 strategic flood risk assessment.
	Development close to the River Colne would harm the amenity of Broad Colney Nature Reserve and the setting of London Colney Conservation Area. Landscaping would be needed to mitigate the impact.
	It is understood that further tipping on the former

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	sand and gravel land would be required before any building could take place. The tipping would have an adverse environmental impact and would delay the start of building works.
	Space should be allowed to retain existing trees and hedgerows and the planting in the south of the site.
	The current planning application for a strategic rail freight interchange on the Radlett Aerodrome site proposes a country park, including part of Area of Search 4 (i.e. the former sand and gravel land), to mitigate the impact of the freight depot. As a result, this land is not currently available for built development. Furthermore, there has been no interest shown by the landowners (Lafarge) in residential development here.
Distance to local facilities	
Approximate distance to primary school	Bowmansgreen – 700m (St Bernadette RC – 500m)
Approximate distance to secondary school	Francis Bacon – 2.5 km
Approximate distance to bus routes	Barnet Road – 200m
Approximate distance to publicly accessible amenity space	Broad Colney Nature Reserve – 50m
Approximate distance to convenience retail	London Colney Retail Park – 50m
<p>Conclusion: There are few points in favour of housing in this Area of Search. In contrast there are several disadvantages. These include the poor relationship between the western part of the area to the existing built up area, M25 noise, the potential harm to the nature reserve and conservation area and the need for further tipping prior to built development. Also, the main part of the site may not be made available for housing development.</p>	

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Capacity Summary For the Eight Areas Of Search

Areas Of Search	Dwelling capacity (Mid-estimate figures)
No. 1 (South West of St Albans)	1,100
No. 2 (South East of St Albans)	950
No. 3 (West of London Colney & south of Napsbury site)	900
No. 4 (South of London Colney)	0
No. 5 (East of St Albans)	1,050
No. 6 (Smallford)	750
No. 7 (North of St Albans)	800
No. 8 (North of Harpenden)	700

Other Options for Strategic Housing Sites in the Green Belt

Apart from the Areas Of Search assessed above, the Council has considered whether there are any other locations where existing settlements might be expanded significantly. The Council's conclusion is that there are no other acceptable locations for major development. The table below sets out the main reasons for this conclusion, on a settlement-by-settlement basis.

Towns and potential direction of growth	Why development should not be proposed
St Albans	
North	Covered partly by Area of Search 7 (assessed earlier in this appendix). Elsewhere, the landscape quality is generally high and contains Childwickbury Conservation Area. Major northwards expansion would erode the Green Belt gap between St Albans and Harpenden.
North east	There is a need to maintain separation between St Albans and Sandridge. Development beyond House Lane would be visually intrusive in the countryside and distant from the city centre.
East	Covered by Areas Of Search 5 and 6 (assessed earlier).

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South east	Covered partly by Area of Search 2 (assessed earlier). Further to the east, major development would raise issues of possible coalescence of St Albans with Colney Heath and Tyttenhanger. Also, Highfield Park forms a clear-cut barrier to outward expansion of the urban area.
South	The environmental quality of the Ver Valley, Verulam Golf Course and Sopwell Conservation Area is a strong constraint to development. Further to the west, the main concern is to avoid coalescence between St Albans, Park Street and Chiswell Green.
South west	Covered by Area of Search 1 (assessed earlier).
West	This is not a feasible area for development, due mainly to the major constraints caused by scheduled ancient monuments and Verulamium Park.
North west	Batchwood Golf Course, Batch Wood and Townsend School are major constraints and the landscape quality is high. Also, the southern part of Batchwood Drive forms a strong physical edge to the built up area and there are important views of the City's historic skyline.
Harpenden	
North	Partly covered by Area of Search 8 (assessed earlier). East of the railway, development would adversely affect an area of high landscape quality including the Lea valley. Development would be distant from the town centre and have poor access to services.
North east	The land south of Bower Heath Lane is an area of high landscape quality, forming part of the Lea valley slopes.
East	Development eastwards in the Lea Valley would adversely affect a high quality landscape and raise issues of coalescence between Harpenden, Mackerye End and the Lea Valley Estate.
South east	This is an area of high landscape quality. Other constraints are the presence of Aldwickbury Golf Course and the need to avoid coalescence between Harpenden, Wheathampstead and Amwell.
South	Major development is ruled out, as Harpenden Common and Harpenden and Childwickbury Conservation Areas are major constraints. Other important factors include the high quality landscape and the need to maintain a substantial Green Belt gap between Harpenden and St Albans.
South west	South of Redbourn Lane, important constraints include Harpenden Golf Club, the need to retain a substantial gap between Harpenden and Redbourn and the distance from the town centre and local services.
West	Partly covered by the potential Rothamsted Research expansion. Elsewhere, Rothamsted Park is Harpenden's principal public park and

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North west	<p>Rothamsted Research needs to retain an extensive area for its important long term agricultural experiments. Retention of a substantial Green Belt gap between Harpenden and Redbourn is also an issue, whilst the setting of the Grade 1 listed Rothamsted Manor House must be protected.</p> <p>To the north of the Nickey Line footpath/cycleway, major development would be unsustainable as it would be distant from shops, services and employment. Also, road access to this area is poor. Further north, Kinsbourne Green Common is a major constraint to development.</p>
London Colney	
North	The land between High Street and Shenley Lane is important in maintaining a degree of separation between London Colney and St Albans, and providing for recreational activities. However, an indoor leisure centre is proposed on a small part of this area.
East	The bypass represents a clear physical boundary and some of the land beyond the bypass is in Hertsmere Borough.
South	Covered by Area of Search 4 (assessed earlier).
West	Covered by Area of Search 3 (assessed earlier).
Bricket Wood	The village is tightly constrained by the Abbey railway line and Bricket Wood Common (woodland and Site of Special Scientific Interest) to the east and south east. To the south is the Building Research Establishment (assessed earlier). The A405 forms a strong boundary to the west and development beyond this road would erode part of the important Green Belt gap between Watford, Bricket Wood and Chiswell Green. The M25 forms a very strong boundary to the north.
Chiswell Green	The land north of Ragged Hall lane and Greenwood Park (east and north east of the village) plays an important role in preventing coalescence between Chiswell Green and St Albans. The A405 forms a clear edge to the village on the south and south east side. Land west of Chiswell Green to the south of Chiswell Green Lane have been assessed as individual SHLAA sites. Major development north of Chiswell Green Lane would encroach into pleasant countryside and be distant from services and facilities.
How Wood	The danger of coalescence with Park Street is a major issue to the north. Along the east side of How Wood, the Abbey railway line forms a clear settlement edge. The M25 and Black Green Wood (ancient woodland) are important constraints to the south. Woodland (including Birch Wood) provides a clear settlement edge on part of the west side and any development would be distant from services and facilities.
Park Street and Frogmore	To the north, the A414 is a strong barrier and prevents coalescence with St Albans. The Abbey railway line and the River Ver check outward expansion to the east and north east. To the south east is the former

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	<p>Radlett Aerodrome site, where the Council is resisting proposals for a strategic rail freight interchange on Green Belt and other grounds. To the south west, the River Ver and Moor Mill lakes are major constraints. Development to the west would cause Park Street and How Wood to coalesce. North easterly development would erode the fragile Green Belt gap between Park Street, Chiswell Green and St Albans.</p>
Redbourn	<p>Development to the north would be an unacceptable encroachment into open countryside and would be distant from services and facilities. There is scope for several hundred homes on land north east of the village up to the bypass, but this scale of growth would be too large for the village to absorb. It would change Redbourn's character, but would probably be too small to justify provision of a new primary school and more shops. Land east of Redbourn to the south of Harpenden Lane has been assessed earlier. To the south, the bypass forms a strong village boundary. The land west of the village is not a sustainable location for major development, being some distance from the village centre. Noise from the M1 is also a problem.</p>
Wheathampstead	<p>Wheathampstead is surrounded by land of high quality landscape quality, so major growth would not be acceptable. Other important factors include the River Lea and its floodplain in the north and north east of the village, Devil's Dyke ancient monument to the east, the need to avoid development extending further over the skyline to the south east and the danger of coalescence with Amwell to the south west.</p>