St Albans City and District
Local Plan
2020 to 2038

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Consultation Draft

(January 2021)

Contents

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This report

1.1 This document (the Scoping Report) is the consultation draft for the scoping stage of a Sustainability Appraisal. The Sustainability Framework set out in this document will be used for the Sustainability Appraisal of the new St Albans City and District Local Plan (the new Local Plan).

1.2 We have sent this Scoping Report to the three Consultation Bodies for their comments as required by law. These are:

- Historic England
- Natural England
- Environment Agency

1.3 It is also being published on the Council's consultation portal to allow environmental organisations across the district, neighbouring local authorities and town and parish councils to make representations. Comments are also welcomed from members of the public or other interested parties. These will be accepted via the Council's consultation portal, email address: planning.policy@stalbans.gov.uk or via post.

1.4 If you have any queries about this document, please contact the Spatial Planning Team.

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1.5 The consultation period runs from **25 January 2021** to **8 March 2021**

Aim of Sustainability Appraisal

1.6   The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process seeks to ensure that sustainable development principles are fully integrated into the preparation of development plan documents. It is an iterative process, appraising emerging options against the three sustainability elements of social, environmental and economic. It assists in selecting the most sustainable policy and site allocation options (when assessed against all reasonable alternatives) and suggests mitigation where significant negative effects cannot be avoided. We are preparing this SA not just because the law requires us to but we also see this report as helping the council provide an appropriate planning response to the Climate Emergency we have declared.[1]

1.7   The process for preparing an SA associated with the new Local Plan takes place at a time when the Local Plan making process is in a state of unprecedented flux for three reasons. First, the UK has left the European Union and while EU directives are still enforced in the UK at the time of writing this report, no replacement legislation has been enacted. Second, the UK government has announced reforms to the English planning system in its White Paper "Planning for the future"[2]. This White Paper seeks to simplify the plan making process and the format of Local Plans including how Local Plans would have to meet a new sustainability goal. Again, at the time of writing no legislation or reforms to government advice (for example, the National Planning Policy Framework[3] or NPPF or its Planning Practice Guidance[4]) have been announced. For these two reasons the sustainability appraisal process for this Local Plan will continue along the lines of current EU and UK legislation and will be revised if and when the law and national policy is changed.

1.8   The third reason – that may have other effects on spatial planning in St Albans – is Covid 19. The negative health and economic impacts of the current coronavirus pandemic are likely to be localised and severe in the short term[5]. It also has other short term impacts for the spatial planning system as set out by a number of recent "deregulating" planning reforms[6]. Some of the annual baseline data on government websites has been delayed from release[7] and other baseline data, for example, in employment is likely to worsen in the short term. However, its potential longer term impacts could be profound, particularly in the area of work patterns including the further rise of the "gig economy" and changing travel patterns - especially of office-based

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[1] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sustainable-council

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance

[5] https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy-summary-and-minutes/2020/august-2020 - the Bank of England anticipate a drop of 20% in GDP between Q4 2019 and Q4 2020 and a rise in unemployment to 7.5% nationally by the end of 2020.

[6] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-update   - the introduction of the E and F Use Classes will, for example, deregulate activity in town centres but also allow out-of-town offices to convert to retail thereby undermining long established town centre policy to promote them in town centres first

[7] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/coronavirusandtheeffectsonuklabourmarketstatistics/2020-05-06

workers [8]– as well as shopping patterns in the district's centres[9]. Baseline data and studies for both sectors collected before Covid 19 showed a very tight office market and low vacancy rates in the district's centres. This may change over time.

The Local Plan area, current Local Plan and the proposed new Local Plan

The Local Plan area

1.10   The City and District of St Albans is located in Hertfordshire north of London and within the East of England region. It covers an area of 161 sq km and borders the local authority areas of Welwyn Hatfield, North Hertfordshire, Dacorum, Three Rivers, Watford, Hertsmere and Central Bedfordshire.

1.11   Over 80% of the district is in the Metropolitan Green Belt that protects London from inappopriate development. Much of the countryside in the district is located within the Watling Chase Community Forest area, one of twelve, cross local authority afforestation and countryside promotion initiatives set up in the 1990s by the Forestry Commission and the former Countryside Agency in partnership with relevant local agencies to secure increased woodland cover and environmental regeneration.

1.12   The district has an estimated population (2018) of just over 147,000[10] people which is mainly concentrated in St Albans and Harpenden – both buoyant centres - with smaller settlements at Redbourn, Wheathampstead, London Colney, Chiswell Green, Bricket Wood, How Wood, Park Street and Sandridge. It is a largely affluent district with one of the highest housing affordabiltiy ratios outside of London reflecting its good quality of life (ninth highest quality of life in the UK in 2016[11] and best in the South East in 2020[12]).

1.13   The district has good regional transport connections with rail links connecting St Albans[13] and Harpenden with Luton Airport and Bedford in the north and with London St Pancras (and onward international Eurostar services), Gatwick Airport and Brighton in the south. A branch line connects St Albans Abbey Station with a number of local stations in the district to Watford Junction which provides onward connecting train services to London Euston, the Midlands, the north west of England, Wales and Scotland. The district is on the strategic road network too with the M25 running through the district as well as the M1 and A1(M) (see Figure 1 overleaf). There are bus services and limited cycle routes that link the various settlements within the district with one another.

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[8] https://www.economist.com/briefing/2020/09/12/covid-19-has-forced-a-radical-shift-in-working-habits
[9] https://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/government-public-sector/local-government/insights/return-to-high-street-reopening-of-town-and-city-centres.html
[10] Source: Office for National Statistics
[11] https://www.hertsad.co.uk/property/st-albans-named-as-one-of-the-uk-s-best-places-to-live-1-5867404
[12] https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/st-albans-hertfordshire-best-places-to-live-in-the-uk-2020-57p3n6bdg
[13] St Albans City Station has over 7 million passengers a year, on par with many suburban London stations

Figure 1 Overview of the City and District of St Albans
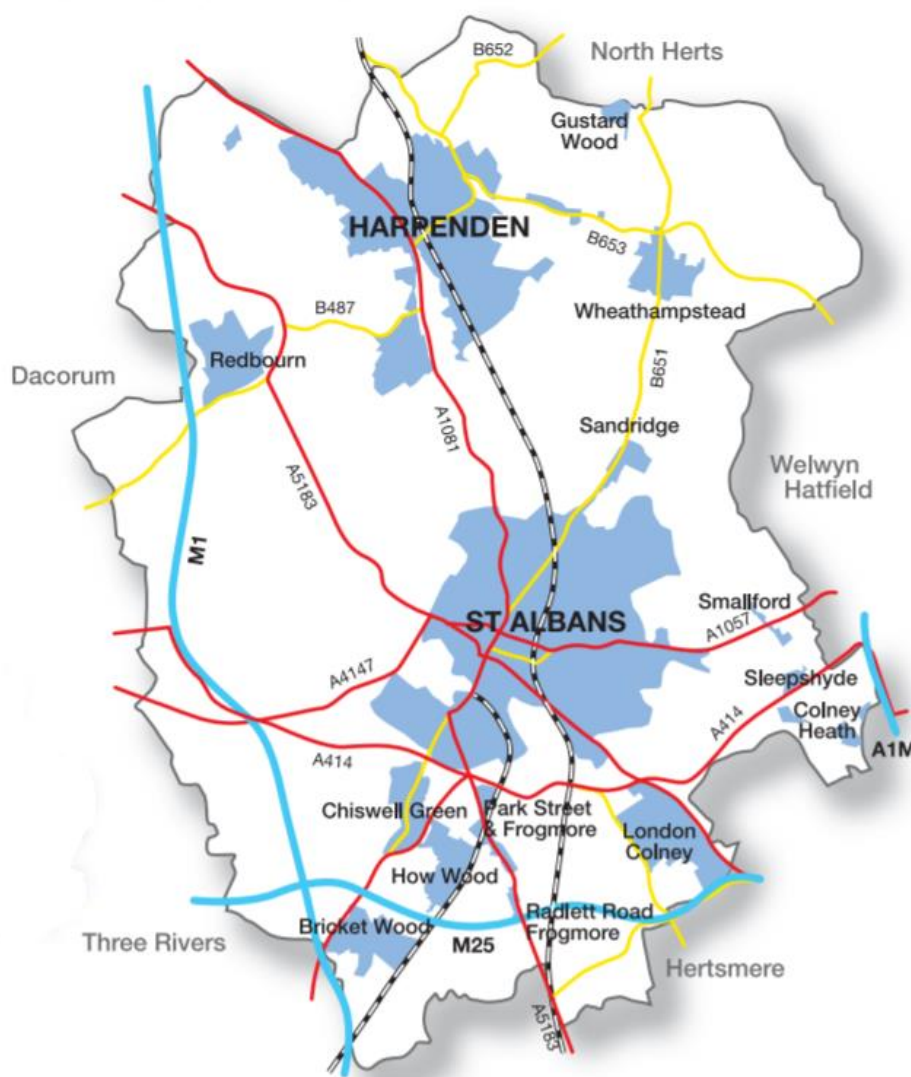
The existing Local Plan for the district

1.14 The Local Plan for the district is the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. A number of its policies were "saved" following a direction from the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in 2007. The council is obliged by law to review all Local Development Documents every five years[14].

1.15 The council submitted a draft Local Plan for examination in March 2019. Following receipt of a letter from the examining inspectors confirming that in their view the council had not complied with its duty to cooperate set out in the Localism Act 2011, the council withdrew that Local Plan. It is now proposing to produce this new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will cover the period 2020 (the date when work on this new plan began) until 2038. It will clearly dovetail with other plan making work that the council is carrying out with its neighbours in the South West Hertfordshire area (Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and

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[14] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1244/made

Watford) – including the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan that will cover the growth and development of the area from 2036 to 2050[15].

The New Local Plan

1.16   The new Local Plan will cover the whole of the district for a period of 18 years and is intended to cover all subjects that a district council is obliged to take account of in its role as the local panning authority having regard to the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance. This includes strategic matters such as housing, employment, retail, leisure, infrastructure, community facilities and the conservation of the natural, built and historic environment. However, it will not cover policies associated with waste or minerals which are county council matters. It will also cover a range of non-strategic policies that set out more detailed policies for different types of development including design principles, as well as policies to conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment and other development management policies. In addition it will identify broad locations and/ or site allocations to meet the district's future needs (for example, for housing and employment). These will be shown on a supporting Policies Map. The final scope and format of the new Local Plan may change depending on which, if any, of the proposed reforms in the Government White Paper are enacted or adopted as government policy.

The need for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

1.17   All Local Plan documents must currently be subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (see below). The original SA for the former draft Local Plan submitted in 2019 was initially prepared by TRL in 2006. Given this time lag, it is appropriate that the council develop a new SA framework for this new Local Plan. Accordingly, this Scoping Report considers the context and scope of an SA for the new Local Plan and establishes an assessment process to ensure that the policies and site allocations in the new Local Plan can be assessed against the three elements of sustainability (social, economic and environmental). All documents produced as part of the new Local Plan will be evaluated in accordance with the SA framework set out in this Report. This SA appraisal has had regard to previous advice given to the council by TRL[16] for the draft Local Plan examined in 2019 and 2020.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

1.18   Strategic Environmental Assessment considers only the environmental effects of a plan, whereas sustainability appraisal considers the plan's wider economic and social effects in addition to its potential environmental impacts.

1.19   Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, sustainability appraisal is mandatory for Development Plan Documents such as the new

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[15] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/south-west-herts-joint-strategic-plan

[16] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/CD%20010%20St%20Albans%20Local%20Plan%20Sustainability%20Appraisal%20Report%202018%20Appendices_tcm15-67028.pdf

Local Plan. It is also necessary still to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC (the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive).[17]

1.20   The objective of this Directive is

> "*to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment".*

1.21   The Directive was incorporated into UK law by The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.22   Although the requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, the Planning Practice Guidance advocates a single integrated SA process is sufficient to comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive[18]. This is the process that is being undertaken here in St Albans and all references to 'SA' in this document should be taken to mean 'SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive.'

1.23   Table 1.1 below shows how this SA and new Local Plan processes meet the requirements of the SEA Directive. It will be updated to illustrate continued compliance as the Local Plan documents arising from the new Local Plan are prepared. Each Local Plan document will be subject to the SA process outlined in this Scoping Report and the results will be set out in an accompanying Interim or Final SA Report.

The need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and other assessments

1.24   The council is currently legally required to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) on the new Local Plan to determine any "likely significant effects" on European Sites of importance for nature conservation from the Local Plan, either alone or in combination with other Local Plans or projects. There are no European Sites within the district. The closest such site is the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), approximately 7km from the district boundary at its closest point. The HRA will be undertaken as a separate process to the SA, and reported separately. However there are links between the two assessments and one will inform the other.

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[17] This directive still applies even though the UK has left the European Union. The SA will be revised if the law changes on the subject.

[18] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal

1.25 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will also be carried out as part of the preparation of the New Local Plan. As with the HRA, the EqIA can inform the SA.

Table 1.1 Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive

SEA Directive Requirements	Where met?
Article 5 (1)	
Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated.	The Final SA Report for the new Local Plan will constitute the Environmental Report and will accompany the Publication (Regulation 19) draft of the New Local Plan
Annex I	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	New Local Plan documents and this Scoping Report: **Chapter 1.16 above**
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	This Scoping Report: **See Table 3.11 below**
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	New Local Plan
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC (*the Birds Directive*) and 92/43/EEC *(the Habitats Directive);*	New Local Plan documents and the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA).
e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	This Scoping Report: **See Chapters 2 and 3 below**

SEA Directive Requirements	Where met?
f) The likely significant effects* on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. * *These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects*	Interim SA reports will be produced for each consultation stage of the New Local Plan unless the law and national policy changes
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Interim SA reports will be produced for each consultation stage of the New Local Plan process.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Interim SA reports will be produced for each consultation stage of the new Local Plan process.
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10.	Final SA report
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Final SA report
Article 5 (2)	
The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment.	This Scoping Report and the Final SA Report will adhere to this requirement.
Article 5 (4)	
The authorities referred to in Article 6 (3) shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report**.**	Consultation with the relevant authorities (see below) is being undertaken in relation to this Scoping Report between **18th January 2021 and 1st March 2021.**

Stages of sustainability appraisal

1.26   National Planning Practice Guidance currently defines five different stages for the sustainability appraisal process (see Figure 2). This Scoping Report presents the findings of Stage A of the SA process and sets the framework for tasks relating to Stages B to E.

Figure 2 Sustainability Appraisal stages [19]

Sustainability appraisal process

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
1. Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives
2. Collect baseline information
3. Identify sustainability issues and problems
4. Develop the sustainability appraisal framework
5. Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the sustainability appraisal report

Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
1. Test the Local Plan objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework
2. Develop the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives
3. Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives
4. Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
5. Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan

Stage C: Prepare the sustainability appraisal report

Stage D: Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public

Stage E: Post adoption reporting and monitoring
1. Prepare and publish post-adoption statement
2. Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan
3. Respond to adverse effects

Local Plan preparation

Evidence gathering and engagement

Consult on Local Plan in preparation (regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). Consultation may be undertaken more than once if the Local Planning Authority considers necessary.

Stage C: Prepare the publication version of the Local Plan

Seek representations on the publication Local Plan (regulation 19) from consultation bodies and the public

Submit draft Local Plan and supporting documents for independent examination

Outcome of examination Consider implications for SA/SEA compliance

Local Plan Adopted

Monitoring Monitor and report on the implementation of the Local Plan

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[19] This figure has been taken from the Planning Practice Guidance
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/580027/sea1_013.pdf

Structure of this Scoping Report

1.27   This chapter of the Scoping Report describes the background to Sustainability Appraisal.

1.28   Table 1.2 below shows how the tasks identified under Stage A have been completed in the remainder of this Report.

Table 1.2 Stage A Tasks completed in this Scoping Report

Stage A:	Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope	
Task A1	Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives	**Chapter 2**
Task A2	Collecting baseline information.	**Chapter 3**
Task A3	Identifying sustainability issues and problems	**Chapter 4**
Task A4	Developing the SA framework	**Chapter 5**
Task A5	Consulting on the scope of the SA	**Chapter 6**

1.29   Chapters are structured by topic consistent with the format set out in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 as follows:

(a)   biodiversity;
(b)   population;
(c)   human health;
(d)   fauna;
(e)   flora;
(f)   soil;
(g)   water;
(h)   air;
(i)   climatic factors;
(j)   material assets;
(k)   cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage;
(l)   landscape.

1.30   In the interests of brevity and to avoid repetition of plans and baseline data, topics (a) biodiversity (d) flora and (e) fauna have been combined to form one topic.

Consulting on the SA

1.31   There are two stages in the SA process where consultation on the SA is required:

   • Stage A
   • Stage D.

Stage A consultation

1.32　Task 5 in Stage A requires the council to consult the consultation bodies (Article 6 (3) of the SEA Directive) on the scope of the SA Report. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 - Regulation 4 (1) defines the consultation bodies as:

- Historic England
- Natural England
- Environment Agency

1.33　The required time for consulting the above bodies is set in Regulation 12 (6) as a period of five weeks beginning with the date on which the consultation body receives the initiation to engage in the consultation. This current consultation comprises Task A5. It is set out in Chapter 6 and summarised in the Introduction (above). Over and above this minimum consultation period, the council proposes to consult other local experts and its neighbouring local planning authorities. The SA may change as a result of input from others.

Stage D consultation

1.34　All of the new Local Plan documents produced for public consultation will be accompanied by an Interim SA to show how the requirements of Stage B have been met. Each Interim SA will not itself be consulted on but the Final SA report (the Environmental Report) will be open to consultation with the consultation bodies and the public to fulfil the requirements of Stage D.

1.35　The council must take into account the representations received on the SA during the Stage A and Stage D consultation phases and will make amendments where appropriate.

Chapter 2. Identify other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability

Objectives (Task A1) and identify sustainability issues and problems (Task A3)

2.1   The SEA Directive requires the council to review other plans, policies and programmes in order to identify those sustainability objectives at an international and national level which are relevant to the new Local Plan. These will help to set the context for the SA and define the scope of the SA framework.

2.2   The plans, policies and programmes reviewed as part of the Task A1 that are pertinent to planning for the City and District of St Albans are set out below. They are organised by the topics set out in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The implications for the SA are given for each plan, policy or programme considered and a short summary of the issues for each topic is included after the relevant table (Task A3). A number of international and national plans (for example, the UN Sustainability Development Goals and the NPPF) cover more than one topic area and this report identifies the relevant section in each topic.

2.3   In preparing this Scoping Report, the SA must also have to a number of overriding SA programmes. The Aarhus Convention (2001)[20] is the most pertinent international one. This binds public authorities to give everyone the right to receive environmental information held by public authorities, to allow public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters. Nationally, the NPPF has a number of implications for the new Local Plan as does the updated council Corporate Plan 2019 to 2025 [21] - which sets the following four priorities:

   - The climate emergency
   - The shortage of social housing
   - Improved community facilities
   - Creating a business friendly council

2.4   Footnotes to the next two sections of the report therefore show sources for the documents quoted and sources for the baseline data are shown in Section 3 of the report. UK primary and secondary legislation referred to below can be viewed online at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ . The council is seeking views on whether the review of relevant plans, programmes and policies is fair and if the baseline data is correct or if it could be improved.

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[20] https://www.unece.org/env/pp/treatytext.html

[21] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/St%20Albans%20City%20and%20District%20Council%20Corporate%20Plan%202019-2025%20%28Undesigned%29%20-%20approved%20by%20Council%2026%20February%202020%2C%20subject%20to%20some%20minor%20additions%20%28website%29_0.pdf

2.5   The council is aware that, following the decision to leave the EU, a number of
        EU Directives may no longer apply to the UK in due course. It may be
        necessary to revise the plans and policies referred here in later iterations of
        the SA.

Table 2.1 (a) biodiversity (d) flora and (e) fauna

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
UN Sustainability Development Goals [22] - especially Goal 15	Reduce degradation of natural habitats, impact of invasion of alien species. Integrate biodiversity aims into the New Local Plan
The Birds Directive (2009) [23]	Protect birds and habitats
The Habitats Directive (1992) [24]	Protect European species and habitats
National and Regional	
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment[25]	Recognise and protect value of the natural environment locally
Natural Environment White Paper 2011 (updated in 2013 and 2014)	Recognise how the value of the natural environment
Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)	Protect plants, animals and sites of special scientific interest (SSSI)
Protection of Badgers Act 1992	Protect mammal present in the county
Hedgerow Regulations 1997	Ensure protection of hedgerows more than 20m long
Countryside Rights of Way Act (CROW) (2000)	Enhance access to the countryside while protecting wildlife
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) (2006)	Implement the duty to conserve biodiversity
Government Woodland and Forestry Statement 2013 [26]	Conserve and enhance trees, woodlands and forests
NPPF 2019 and Planning Practice Guidance	Conserve and enhance the natural environment

[22] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/ Goal 15 seeks to Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
[23] References to EU directives have been referred to until relevant and replacement UK legislation has been enacted.
[24] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm
[25] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
[26] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221023/pb13871-forestry-policy-statement.pdf

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan[27]	Identify and protect key habitats and species in partnership with other organisations
Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust – How to build a Living Landscape[28]	Identify how towns could be made to work for wildlife
Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy (2020)[29]	Help the county council promote biodiversity and support voluntary and others groups
Watling Chase Community Forest[30]	Restore degraded land, encourage tree and wood planting and promote community access to open space and newly forested areas
Local	
St Albans Tree Policy and Action Plan[31]	Maintain a varied and sustainable tree population including sustainable management practices. Keep existing woodlands as sustainable resource for the future
St Albans Pollinator Policy	Address decline in honey bee habitat
Summary of issues	
Protect birds, habitats, plants, animals, designated sites, trees, woodlands, forests and biodiversity and address historic significant post WWII decline in extent and quality of habitats Recognise the value of the natural environment Restore biodiversity and seek to conserve and enhance remaining ecological resource Enhance access to the countryside such as the Watling Chase Community Forest initiative Enhance the natural environment in towns and urban areas for wildlife and encourage new habitat creation/ appropriate management	

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[27] http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity_vision/index.htm

[28] https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-12/HMWT%20Living%20Landscapes%20web%20v2.pdf

[29] https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s16858/Late%20Report-Item%204-App%20A-Sustainable%20Hertfordshire%20Strategy%202020.pdf

[30] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/countryside-management-service/walking-and-cycling-routes/watling-chase-timberland-trail.pdf

[31]
https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Tree%20Policy%20and%20Action%20Plan%20Review%202015-2016_tcm15-56105.pdf

Table 2.2 (b) population

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe [32]	Promote sustainable transport and combat poverty
World Health Organization - Collaboration Between the Health and Transport Sectors in Promoting Physical Activity 2006	Promote sustainable modes of transport, particularly walking and cycling
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006[33] and UN Sustainability Goals – Goals 5 and 10	Aim to promote health, gender equality and reduce inequalities
National and Regional	
NPPF 2019 and Planning Practice Guidance	Promote sustainable transport and provide a wide choice of high quality homes.
Self -Build and Custom House Building Act, 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016)	Provide a range of housing options by broadening mix and choice
Nationally Described Space Standard, March 2015 [34]	Provide good quality housing
Building Regulations - Part M[35]	Consider setting optional standards for housing for people with mobility needs
Equality Act 2010	Identify people with protected characteristics and advance equal opportunity among them and the wider community
Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016 to 2020) [36]	Improve health and wellbeing, tackle social determinants of health and narrow the gap between groups
Hertfordshire LEP: Perfectly Placed for Business: The refreshed Strategic Economic Plan: 2017–2030 July 2017[37] and Hertfordshire LEP Recovery Plan (2020) [38]	Encourage a strong and diverse economy and promote economic recovery as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic
South West Herts Economic Study Update (2019)[39]	Address scarcity of industrial and office accommodation

[32] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/sustainable-development/SDGs/index_en.htm
[33] https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/87499/E90144.pdf   Goal 5 is to pursue gender equality. Goal 10 is to promote inequality within and among countries
[34] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard
[35] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m
[36] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/partnerships/health-and-wellbeing-board/hertfordshire-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2016-%E2%80%93-2020.pdf
[37] https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/5417/hertfordshire-lep-sep-report-interactive.pdf
[38] https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/8346/hertfordshire-recovery-plan-august-2020.pdf
[39] https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3014/south_west_herts_economic_study_2019

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
England's Economic Heartlands Draft Transport Plan [40]	Contribute to the decarbonisation of the transport network over the next 30 years and promote more active travel
Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 (2018)[41]	Promote alternatives to the car as the county's population grows
South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020)	Meet housing needs of different households
HCC Primary and Secondary School Monitoring Reports (2018/9)[42]	Ensure children have convenient access to existing/ new schools required to meet needs of population
Local	
St Albans Corporate Plan 2019 to 2025 [43]	Address shortage of social housing Deliver improved community facilities
St Albans Inclusion Strategy	Demonstrate understanding of local community.
Neighbourhood Planning (NP) in St Albans – one made NP at Harpenden and a number of emerging plans	Ensure community engagement and that NPs align with new Local Plan
St Albans Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2019[44]	Identify land to meet existing short and medium term needs of a marginalised group
St Albans Self Build Register	Provide opportunities for self build and custom built housing to diversify the market for new housebuilding
Summary of issues	
Promote sustainable modes of transport, particularly cycling and walking Reduce inequalities and improve safe access to services Provide a wide range of good quality housing to meet the diverse needs of the community	

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[40] http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Documents/Draft%20Transport%20Strategy.pdf

[41] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/ltp4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf

[42] Meeting the Demand for School Places: Summer 2018/19 and Meeting the Demand for School Places: Summer 2018/19
[43] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/St%20Albans%20City%20and%20District%20Council%20Corporate%20Plan%202019-2025%20%28Undesigned%29%20-%20approved%20by%20Council%2026%20February%202020%2C%20subject%20to%20some%20minor%20additions%20%28website%29_0.pdf

[44] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/St%20Albans%20Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Assessment%20Update%20Final%20Draft_tcm15-66976.pdf

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
Encourage a strong and diverse economy and respond to the challenges of Covid 19	

Table 2.3 (c) human health

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006[45] and UN Sustainability Goals – Goal 3	Reduce inequalities including health inequalities
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe	Reduce threats to human health
WHO Collaboration Between the Health and Transport Sectors in Promoting Physical Activity 2006 [46]	Increase physical activity levels
WHO Health Effects of Transport-Related Air Pollution 2005[47]	Reduce all forms of pollution
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008[48]	Reduce inequalities
National and Regional	
Sustainable Energy Act 2008	Reduce the number of people living in fuel poverty
NPPF 2019	Promote healthy communities
Public Health England 2020 to 2025 [49]	Keep people safe, prevent poor health, narrow health gaps, promote a strong economy
Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016 to 2020)	Improve health and wellbeing, tackle social determinants of health and narrow the gap between groups
South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020)	Meet forecast growing need for assisted housing options for a larger elderly population and people with long term disabilities

[45] https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/87499/E90144.pdf   Goal 3 is to ensure health for all people at all ages

[46] https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/107827/E90144.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[47] https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/74715/E86650.pdf

[48] https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

[49] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831562/PHE_Strategy_2020-25.pdf

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
Local	
St Albans City and District Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021 (revised 2020)[50]	Support initiatives to improve physical health including obesity and improve mental health
Summary of issues	
Reduce health inequalities. Reduce all forms of pollution Use the natural environment to deliver mental and physical health benefits and encourage community participation in activities that promote wellbeing. Increase physical activity levels	

Table 2.4 (f) soil

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
National and Regional	
Government Woodland and Forestry Statement 2013	Conserve and enhance soil resources
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment[51]	Manage soil sustainably
NPPF 2019	Recognise wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services including "best and most versatile agricultural land"
DEFRA Regional Agricultural Land Classification Map[52]	Identify land grades 1 to 3a and recognise the value of "best and most versatile agricultural land"
Summary of issues	
Conserve and enhance soil resources Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land	

Table 2.5 (g) water

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
The Floods Directive, 2007	Reduce flood risk.
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	Protect and enhance water quality.
The Nitrates Directive (1991)	Protect water quality
The Industrial Emissions Directive (2010)	Reduce water pollution levels

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[50] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/St%20Albans%20City%20%26%20District%20Health%20%26%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202018-2021_REVISED-2020.pdf

[51] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

[52] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/127056

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
National and Regional	
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	Reduce flood risk
Meeting our Future Water Needs: a National Framework for Water Resources (2020)[53] (Environment Agency)	Ensure resilient water supplies to meet the needs of all in the future • Restore, protect and improve water sources
NPPF 2019	Anticipate consequences of climate change for water supply Steer development away from areas prone to high risk of flooding and ensure sequential test applied to development in all areas of risk of flooding
Building Regulations Part G[54]	Consider optional water restriction requirement to 110 l/ per person per day
Flood and coastal erosion risk management Policy Statement 2020 [55]	Demonstrate resilience against higher risks of flooding as a result of climate change
Water stressed areas – final classification July 2013[56] (Environment Agency)	Respond to fact that St Albans is likely to suffer increased water stress as a result of climate change and an increase in population
Water for people and the environment 2018 (Environment Agency) [57]	Reduce water consumption and protect water resources
The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection[58] (Feb 2018 Version 1.2)	Prevent pollution of groundwater and protect it as a resource
Hertfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Study [59]	Address and mitigate flood risk including through adoption of sustainable drainage systems

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[53] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/873100/National_Framework_for_water_resources_summary.pdf

[54] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanitation-hot-water-safety-and-water-efficiency-approved-document-g

[55] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903705/flood-coastal-erosion-policy-statement.pdf

[56] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/244333/water-stressed-classification-2013.pdf

[57] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/709924/State_of_the_environment_water_resources_report.pdf

[58] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692989/Envirnment-Agency-approach-to-groundwater-protection.pdf

[59] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/water/flood-risk-management/lfrms-for-hertfordshire-full-report.pdf

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
Thames Basin River catchment plan[60]	Protect water quality and flow including from pollution/ physical modification/ changes to natural flow (eg abstraction) including groundwater
Affinity Water Resources Plan (2020) [61]	Address balance between demand for and supply of water
Hertfordshire Water Study 2017[62]	Need to deliver water to meet growing population needs
South West Herts Strategic Flood Risk Assessment[63]	Minimise flood risk and allocate new land for housing away from high and medium flood risk areas
Summary of issues	
Reduce water pollution levels Reduce flood risk Reduce water consumption Protect and enhance water quality and the condition / flow of water and river courses	

Table 2.6 (h) air

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
Air Quality Directive 2008	Improve air quality
Collaboration Between the Health and Transport Sectors in Promoting Physical Activity 2006 [64]	Reduce air pollution
Health Effects of Transport-Related Air Pollution 2005 [65]	Reduce all forms of pollution including air
The Industrial Emissions Directive (2010)	Reduce air pollution levels
National and Regional	
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	Legally binding targets to reduce emission of damaging air pollutants. End sale of petrol/ diesel cars by 2030

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[60] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan
[61] https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/corporate/plans/water-resources-plan
[62] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/INFR%20002n%202018-2019%20Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Plan%20Appendices%20-%20Part%2012_tcm15-67197.pdf   See Appendices 46 to 48
[63] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/South%20West%20Hertfordshire%20Strategic%20Flood%20Risk%20Assessment%20-%20Report%20-%20Final%20Draft_tcm15-66972.pdf
[64] https://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/collaboration-between-the-health-and-transport-sectors-in-promoting-physical-activity.-examples-from-european-countries
[65] https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/74715/E86650.pdf

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
	Improve industrial emissions through good practice/ regulatory framework
Clean Air Strategy 2019[66]	Improve air quality especially around AQMAs in the district
NPPF 2019	Sustain and contribute to national objectives for pollutants taking account of AQMAs
Government Woodland and Forestry Statement 2013	Conserve and enhance air quality
Local	
LAQM Status Air Quality Management Report 2019[67]	Address sources of poor air quality caused by motorised traffic Encourage greener forms of transport including in St Albans City Centre
Summary of issues	
Conserve and enhance air quality Reduce air pollution levels Protect people and the natural environment from air pollution	

Table 2.7 (i) climatic factors

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe	Reduce climate change
Energy Efficiency Directive (2012)	Increase energy efficiency
International Energy Agency 2020 programme [68]	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. Increase energy efficiency and the amount of energy from renewable sources
National and Regional	
Climate Change Act 2008	Reduce carbon emissions
The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019[69]	Help reduce the net UK carbon account in the year 2050 by 100% compared to 1990 emissions

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[66] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019

[67]
https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Environmental%20Services/Air%20Quality%20Annual%20Status%20Report%202019.pdf

[68] https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2020

[69] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-becomes-first-major-economy-to-pass-net-zero-emissions-law

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
Planning Act 2008	Mitigate and reduce climate change
NPPF 2019	Mitigate the impacts of climate change
UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy: Securing the Future 2011[70]	Mitigate and reduce climate change
Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022[71]	Need to address climate change
Sustainable Energy Act (2008)	Improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions
Water for people and the environment 2009	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from water use
Hertfordshire LEP: Perfectly Placed for Business: The refreshed Strategic Economic Plan: 2017–2030 July 2017	Acknowledge the need for business to address climate change in the medium to long term
Local	
St Albans Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy[72]	Address drive for zero carbon as an organisation (SADC) and as a local authority
Summary of issues	
Reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions Mitigate and reduce climate change Promote mitigation and adaptation to climate change Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the amount of energy from renewable sources	

Table 2.8 (j) material assets

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
European Sustainable Development Strategy[73]	Promote better management of natural resources
UN Sustainability Development Goals [74] - especially Goal 12	Ensure sustainable use of natural resources
The Landfill Directive (1999)	Increase recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill

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[70]

[71] https://www.theccc.org.uk/publications/third-uk-climate-change-risk-assessment/

[72] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/FINAL%20SADC%20Sustainability%20and%20Climate%20Crisis%20Strategy.pdf

[73] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/sustainable-development/SDGs/index_en.htm

[74] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/ Goal 12 seeks to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC	Promote the sustainable use of materials and conserve natural resources
The Industrial Emissions Directive (2010)	Prevent generation of waste
National and Regional	
UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy: Securing the Future 2011 [75]	Protect natural resources
Building Regulations 2010 (as amended)	Promote buildings which use fewer resources
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	Work towards zero waste
National Planning Policy for Waste 2014 [76]	Promote the re-use of materials and recycling and reduce the amount of waste generated.
NPPF 2019	Promote development on previously developed (brownfield) land Facilitate the sustainable use of materials including recycling of minerals. Do not sterilise minerals
A framework for enhancing the importance and role of geodiversity [77]	Acknowledge geodiversity in influencing planning policy
Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan Review 2007 [78][79] and Waste Plan Site Allocations DPD	Encourage efficient use of minerals and promote recycling Safeguard mineral resources and waste infrastructure identified in these plans Minimise impact of mineral extraction on environment and people
Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP) annual reports	Help the HWP reduce waste and increase recycling rates

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[75] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/securing-the-future-delivering-uk-sustainable-development-strategy
[76] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-for-waste
[77] http://ukgap.org.uk/media/8544/ukgap.pdf
[78] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-in-hertfordshire/minerals-planning/minerals-local-plan-2002-2016/mineral-local-plan-review-2002-2016-adopted-march-2007.pdf
[79] This is currently being reviewed https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/environment/proposed-submission-minerals-local-plan-consultation.aspx

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
	Help HWP find appropriate sites for waste transfer in the district
Summary of issues	
Protect and conserve natural resources Promote better management and efficient and sustainable use of natural resources Reduce both the amount of waste generated and the amount sent to landfill Increase the re-use and recycling of materials No long term site in the county for handling residual waste Do not sterilise minerals. Promote prior extraction if necessary	

Table 2.9 (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, (Valletta, 1992)[80]	Protect archaeological heritage
National and Regional	
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	Protect buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979	Protect ancient monuments
Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act, 1983	Protect and conserve Registered Parks and Gardens
The Heritage Statement 2017 [81]	Acknowledge importance of the district's heritage assets including their economic and social value
NPPF 2019 and Planning Practice Guidance	Conserve and enhance the historic environment including non-designated heritage assets
Local	
Conservation Area statements – various[82]	Ensure site allocations preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas

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[80] https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/143

[81] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664657/Heritage_Statement_2017__final_-_web_version_.pdf

[82] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/conservation-areas

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
Summary of issues	
Protect designated and non-designated heritage assets Conserve and enhance the historic environment	

Table 2.10 (l) landscape

Plan, policy or programme	SA should aim to:
International	
European Landscape Convention[83]	Conserve landscape character and promote landscape management
National and Regional	
Countryside Rights of Way Act (CROW) (2000)	Promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs
Government Woodland and Forestry Statement 2013	Conserve and enhance landscape character
Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1983	Protect and conserve Registered Parks and Gardens
Natural England National Character Assessments 110 Chilterns[84] and 111 North Thames Basin[85]	Identify features of interest to be preserved
Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessments[86] - 18 applicable to St Albans	Identify features of interest
Hertfordshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan (2011) [87]	Respond to its core actions including improved access to infrastructure
Summary of issues	
Conserve and enhance landscape character including features of interest Promote access to strategic green infrastructure	

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[83] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/236096/8413.pdf
[84] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4977697
[85] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4721112340496384
[86] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/landscape/landscape-character-assessment.aspx - see also Landscape East categorisation of landscapes http://landscape-east.org.uk/east-england-landscape-typology
[87] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/biodiversity/2011-strategic-green-infrastructure-plan-for-hertfordshire-greenarc.pdf   being reviewed in 2020

Chapter 3. Collect baseline information (Task A2) and identify sustainability issues and problems (Task A3)

3.1   Task A2 involves identifying the current situation in the City and District of St Albans with respect to the topics set out in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This baseline information allows the social, environmental and economic effects of the new Local Plan to be predicted and monitored. A description of the baseline situation also enables the identification of sustainability issues (Task A3). These then set the context and define the scope for and of the SA framework.

3.2   The current 1994 Local Plan did not have an SA. However, substantial work was carried out with regard to the Local Plan submitted in 2019 for examination including a number of drafts of an SA. The following tables review and, where necessary update this recent SA work. A summary is provided below. This describes the baseline for each topic with appropriate dates) and identifies pertinent sustainability issues. The data collected sets out the current or recent position of St Albans in the context of Hertfordshire, the East of England region and/or England[88] and where a meaningful trend has been identified. Some data sources (e.g., NOMIS Labour Statistics use Great Britain as a default comparator rather than England).

3.3   The baseline review below attempts in summary form to use the most up-to-date data so, for example, it has deferred to Office for National Statistics data on population (2018) rather than rely on the Census 2011 data that TRL's work has relied on. Other policies and plans referred to by TRL (for example, former district Energy Plans) have been superseded by the council's Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy[89].

3.4   Appendix A provides a lengthier and more qualitative review of the baseline position. It draws on TRL's previous research and updates it (with some corrections where necessary) to enable trends to be identified over a longer period.

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[88] And sometimes Great Britain (for example, on incomes) or the United Kingdom (for example, on renewable energy) where a satisfactory England baseline position could not be identified.
[89]
https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/FINAL%20SADC%20Sustainability%20and%20Climate%20Crisis%20Strategy.pdf

Table 3.1 (a) biodiversity (d) flora and (e) fauna

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Number of international or European protected sites	St Albans does not contain any international or European designations (Ramsar sites, SPAs, SACs). The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is 7km north-west of the district.
Number and area of SSSIs	Two SSSIs in the district - Bricket Wood Common (designated for its 'Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland – lowland' and 'Dwarf shrub heath – lowland' habitats) and Moor Mill Quarry West (designated as an 'Earth heritage' site)
Condition of SSSIs	Both SSSIs are designated as partly or wholly in unfavourable condition.
Key indicator species and priority habitats	There are seven major habitat types in the county (Woodland, Wetlands, Heathland and acid grassland, Neutral grassland, Chalk grassland, Farmland, Urban) and 19 Species Action Plans identified in the revised Hertfordshire BAP 2006.
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	There are six LNRs in St Albans (Batford Springs, Colney Heath, Marshalls Heath, The Wick Wood, Watercress Wildlife Site, and Wheathampstead).
County wildlife sites	There are 187 county wildlife sites in St Albans covering an area of 1414.28 ha. The district has 11% of all wildlife sites (1812) in the county.
Woodland cover	Hertfordshire has an estimated 15,503 ha of woodland, covering 9.5% of the county, above the UK average of 7.7%. There are no disaggregated figures for St Albans.
Issues	
The two SSSIs are partially or wholly in unfavourable condition. More needs to be done to improve the condition and management of local sites in the district and across the county.	

Table 3.2 (b) population

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Population structure	
Current population	The St Albans' population (2018) (147,373) is estimated to have increased by about 9% since 2008, marginally faster than the rate for East of England (8.5%) and England (8.8%).
Diversity of Population	11.6% of the St Albans population identify themselves as being from a non-white ethnic background, a higher proportion than for the East of England (9.2%) but a lower level than the rest of England (14.6%).

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Age structure of St Albans population	Changes in the age structure of St Albans' population are in line with national changes as the population ages. As of 2018, an estimated 17.1% of the St Albans population is 65 year old or over, compared with 19.9% in the East of England and 18.3% for England. ONS projections suggest the district's population will age with an estimated increase in households headed by someone in 65-74 age cohort in the period 2020 to 2036 of 33%.
Crime	
The number of recorded offences per 1000 people	St Albans's recorded 61.02 crime per 1000 people in 2020, below the Hertfordshire rate of 71.30
Deprivation	
Index of Deprivation	St Albans ranked 306th out of 317 local authority areas in England in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings (a rank of 1st being the most deprived). This compares to a ranking of 286/354 in 2010, 317/354 in 2007 and 333/354 in 2004. The neighbouring authorities in South West Hertfordshire had the following ranks: Dacorum 240/317 (286/354 in 2010), Hertsmere 224/317 (219/354 in 2010), Three Rivers 291/317 (250/354 in 2010), and Watford 195/317 (221/354 in 2010)
Economy	
New business start- up and closure rates	The rate of new business formation in the district accords broadly with the rate for Hertfordshire
Gross weekly pay	The recorded median weekly pay in St Albans (2019) £636 is substantially higher than the median for Hertfordshire (£555.80), the East of England (£496) and England (£482). Mean weekly income for St Albans (£821.90) was markedly higher.
GVA per head	St Albans's GVA per head (£29,130) was the sixth of ten districts in Hertfordshire.
Small and medium enterprises than 10 people	91.8% of St Albans registered businesses employee fewer than 10 employees, a marginally higher rate than the East of England area 90%.
Education	
Academic performance at local schools	Ten of the twelve secondary schools in the district score well above average or above the average for England at Key Stage 4.
Schools provision	There is currently a surplus of primary school places in the district and a shortage of secondary school places.

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Level of qualification of working age (16 to 64) residents qualified to at least NVQ level 4	A much higher percentage of St Albans residents (58.5%) are qualified to NVQ level 4 or above than in the East of England (26.8%) or England (40.3%). By contrast, the Census 2011 shows that only 12.9% of the 16 to 64 age group do not have any qualifications, in contrast with 22.5% for the East of England.
Percentage of economically active people of working age (16 to 64)	The percentage of economically active people in St Albans (81.5% in March 2020) is higher than for the East of England (80%) and Great Britain (79.1%).
Proportion of 16-64 year olds claiming out of works benefits	The proportion of claimants in St Albans (4.3% in August 2020) is lower than the rate for the East of England (5.7%) and Great Britain (6.6%). The equivalent figure for March 2020 (pre Covid 19) for St Albans was 1.6%. There has been a recent rise in unemployment as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.
Employee job growth	The number of jobs in St Albans over the period 2015 to 2018 fell marginally from an estimated 76,000 to 75,000, a decline of 1.3%. By contrast, job numbers in the East of England and Great Britain grew over the same period (by 5.8% and 3.6% respectively)
Employment structure	The two biggest sectors of local jobs in the district in 2018 are administrative and support service activity (20% compared to 10.6% in the East of England and 9.1% in England) and professional scientific and technical activities (16% in the district compared with 9.8% in the East of England and 9.1% in England). The district has a job density of 1.02 and therefore is a marginal net importer of labour.
Housing	
Total Households	St Albans households comprise 2.3% of the households in the East of England. There are over 60,000 households in the district.
Net housing completions	The council has delivered on average 463 homes a year over the last five years (2015/16 to 2019/20). This is below the Government set standard methodology for housing need.
Statutory homelessness: eligible homeless people not in priority need per 1,000 households	St Albans recorded a rate of 0.91 households per 1,000 households in the district assessed as homeless compared to 1.56 in England in the period January to March 2020.

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Affordable housing completions	The council secured 31 units (7%) of all new housing completions (475) in 2019/20, a fall from 115 units (or 16%) of all completions (616) in 2018/19.
Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs	The district needs to plan for 65 additional pitches for the period 2018 to 2033 for Gypsy and Traveller households meeting the Government's "planning" definition.
Property prices	The median house price in St Albans for 2019 was £530,000. Housing affordability pressures have substantially increased over the last 10 years (the housing affordability ratio has risen from 10.05 to 16.09).
Self build housing register	450 successful applicants on the register (1 January), 63% of all applicants across the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan area
Monthly rent for housing accommodation	The lower quartile average rent of a property for accommodation in St Albans was £950 pcm in September 2019.
Transport and accessibility	
Percentage of households connected to superfast broadband	The percentage of households connected to superfast broadband in St Albans is 97.75%
Average distance travelled to work	The average distance travelled to work in St Albans in 2011 (15.6km) is marginally higher than the average commute for the East of England (15.5 km) and the England average (14.5km)
In and out commuting levels	St Albans exports a lot of its local labour reflecting its links to London and the completion of the Thameslink project in 2010 that has improved connectivity from Bedford to Brighton. St Albans City station had an estimated 7.56m users in 2018/9, a rise of over 20% since 2010/11. An estimated 3.37m passengers used Harpenden Station in 2018/19. The district recorded some of the highest levels of rail commuting in the England's Economic Heartlands study area.
Percentage using car as main means of getting to work	The number of people who travelled to work by car (as a driver or passenger) in St Albans has marginally decreased (1.1%) in the period 2015 to 2018 and has decreased significantly since 2001.
Car ownership	The Census 2011 showed that 86.5 % of households own a car, a markedly higher percentage than the national average (74.2%) and that more households have two or three cars.[90]

[90] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs416ew

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
	There has been a decrease in the percentage of households without a car since 2001 which follows regional and national trends.
Rate of people killed or seriously injured on the roads	The incidence for St Albans in the period 2016/18 was 39.4 per 100,000 people, compared to 46.7 in the East of England and 42.6 in England.
St Albans city and town centre viability	
Vacancy rates in St Albans city centre and Harpenden town centre	St Albans - 8% (July 2019) and Harpenden - 4% (July 2019), substantially better than the Great Britain pre Covid 19 average rate of 12%.
Vacancy rates in other district centres	The mean vacancy rate for Southdown, Harpenden; Verulam Estate, St Albans; Fleetville, St Albans; The Quadrant, Marshalswick, St Albans; and London Colney was 6% (July 2019)
Issues	

Levels of recorded crime are low in St Albans.

On the one hand, rates of business start ups and closure are close to the county average and GVA rates are at a similar level. On the other hand, weekly pay and other indicators (house prices, academic qualifications and second car ownership) demonstrate that St Albans is significantly more affluent than the rest of the county, the region and England with many people of employment age commuting to well paid jobs outside of the district. The high employment rate is a potential signal of a tight labour market locally.

Although the proportion of people who are unemployed or claiming out of work benefits is lower in St Albans than regionally or nationally, the percentage of people claiming benefits has risen since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic. There are housing affordability pressures especially for people on low incomes.

The district has access to high speed broadband and may be able to adjust to changing working patterns as a result of Covid 19.

The city, town and district centre appeared resilient pre Covid 19 but there are indications of a worsening of viability, measured by vacancy rates.

Table 3.3 (c) human health

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Life expectancy at birth	Female and male life expectancy (85.3 years and 82.7 years respectively) in St Albans s markedly higher than that for the East of England (83.7 and 80.3 years) or England (83.2 and 79.6 years). Life expectancy in St Albans has risen over the last ten years consistent with the regional and England average.
Mortality rate from causes considered preventable	St Albans residents have lower mortality rates from preventable causes than people in either the East of England or England
Health Deprivation and Disability	The percentage of people living in health deprivation and disability is much lower in St Albans than in the East of England or England.
Fuel poverty	The proportion number of households experiencing fuel poverty in St Albans (6.9%) is lower than the rate for the East of England (9.4%) or England (10.3%).
Percentage of people using outdoor space for exercise/health reasons	A higher percentage of St Albans's population use outdoor space for exercise or health reasons than in the East of England or England.
Issues	
St Albans residents live longer than their counterparts in the region and across England Proportionately fewer people live in health and disability deprivation in St Albans than in the region or England. Fuel poverty rates in St Albans are lower than the region and national rates. People in St Albans are more physically active than in the East of England or England.	

Table 3.4 (f) soil

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Soil quality	Comparative data for soil is not available. Most of the agricultural land in the district is Grade 3 (good to moderate) but some of it is Grade 2 (very good).
Issue	
Most of the district's agricultural land is Grade 3 but it is unclear if this is Grade 3a or 3b. Land that is graded 3a is considered to be "best and most versatile agricultural land". Some of the district's agricultural land is Grade 2.	

Table 3.5 (g) water

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Proportion of the district at high flood risk	The district is covered by the Rivers Lee, Ver, Colne and Ellen Brook and their tributaries. An estimated 500 to 1000 households would be affected by a 1 in 100 year flood risk event, a relatively low figure compared to other areas but climate change is likely to see this figure increase. There are local flood risk hotspots in the district[91].
Number of planning applications granted contrary to Environment Agency objections on flood risk grounds	0 (zero) planning applications were granted contrary to EA objections on the grounds of flood risk in St Albans in 2019/20.
Water consumption	People in Hertfordshire use more water than any other county in the UK (8% above the national average). The average unmetered usage of water in Hertfordshire was 170 litres per person per day in 2014. Unmetered water usage has decreased since 2004 from a high of 188 litres per person per day.[92] Affinity Water identifies restrictions in supply to follow without intervention.
Water extraction	The district is located over the Mid-Chilterns Chalk, a Drinking Water Protected Area which is currently at poor chemical status and contains a number of Source Protection Zones (SPZ) which are areas designated for the abstraction of clean drinking water. Availability of water for licencing in the Hertfordshire and North London area can be classed as restricted. Some catchments are closed to new consumptive licences[93]. High levels of water extraction have also affected the ecological values of chalk streams in the Thames Valley Basin during recent drought periods [94] [95]

[91] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/South%20West%20Hertfordshire%20Strategic%20Flood%20Risk%20Assessment%20-%20Appendix%20A%20St%20Albans%20-%20Final%20Draft_tcm15-66973.pdf

[92] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/building-futures/a-sustainable-design-toolkit/technical-modules/water/water-facts.aspx#:~:text=The%20average%20unmetered%20usage%20of,litres%20per%20person%20per%20day.&text=Hertfordshire's%20population%20is%20expected%20to%20rise%20by%2012%25%20by%202035.

[93] Source???

[94] https://www.therivertrust.org/media/2019/06/Chalk-streams-dossier_June-2019_FINAL_FINAL-1.pdf

[95] https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/search?type=placename&k=ST.%20ALBANS&q=http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/so/Town/st-albans   Colne catchment: https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Percentage of water bodies affected by water management issues	All water courses fail EU standards.
Status of groundwater	Poor. River catchment plans show extensive water extraction.
Issues	
Flood risk is not a major concern in St Albans for now but the Local Plan must anticipate increased risk of flooding Water consumption needs to be reduced and there is pressure on the district's water resources. The district's status as a source protection zone needs to be protected. There is a need to improve the quality of rivers and watercourses across the district and the buffer zones/ habitats they support.	

Table 3.6 (h) air

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) for nitrogen oxide (NO^2)	There are three AQMAs in the district. One is in the city centre of St Albans. No new AQMAs have been added in recent years.
Air pollution $\mu g/m^3$ measured by fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	In 2017, St Albans was recorded to have a mean reading of 10.3 $\mu g/m^3$, higher than both the average for the East of England (9.7 $\mu g/m^3$) and England (8.9 $\mu g/m^3$)
Issues	
The St Albans' Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) have annual average nitrogen dioxide levels above the legal minimum. Air pollution – measured by $PM_{2.5}$ - is slightly higher for the district than for other comparator parts of England.	

Table 3.7 (i) climatic factors

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Estimated per capita emissions (tonnes) of carbon dioxide (CO_2)	The district is estimated (2018) to have emitted 564.42 ktCO$_2$ in 2018, a fall of 33% since 2006, a decline reflected across the the UK (34.7%).[96]. Emission rates per person remain the second highest in the county, a phenomenon in part attributed to road traffic. This reflects the presence of the M1 and the M25 in the district running through the district.
Estimated carbon dioxide emissions per sector (kt CO$_2$)	There appears to be a decrease in total carbon dioxide emissions in St Albans across all sectors. Domestic energy is the sector estimated to be emitting the most CO$_2$ in St Albans (41%). In 2018, road transport is estimated to have contributed nearly 60% of the district's emissions.
Total installed capacity of renewable energy installations by type (kWh)	Data for 2018 shows that there were 1,185 renewable energy installations in the district. No data is available on the amount of energy these installations produce.
Percentage share of total renewable energy generated by type	Photovoltaic energy generation is by far the greatest source of renewable energy in St Albans (1183/1185) as it is regionally and nationally. There are, however, no major sites in the district for renewable energy production. No data is available on the amount of energy these installations produce.
Issues	
St Albans appears to emit lower levels of carbon dioxide per capita than England. It has also seen a decrease in total carbon dioxide emissions across all sectors. Domestic energy continues to be the energy use sectors responsible for the most carbon emissions locally. Photovoltaic energy generation is by far the greatest source of renewable energy in St Albans as it is in the region and in England.	

[96] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/790626/2018-provisional-emissions-statistics-report.pdf

Table 3.8 (j) material assets

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Proportion of new homes created on previously developed land usage category.	In the financial year 2019/20, 84% of new homes were built on previously developed land, a reduction from the average (from 2001 to 2020) of 88%. This is a significantly higher figure than the rate across England (53% in 2017/18)[97]
Total waste generated	In 2019/20, District households produced 50,390 tonnes of waste. 31,732 tonnes of this (62.97%) was recycled, composted or sent to an anaerobic digestion plant to produce energy. The remaining 18,658 tonnes were disposed of. 90% was incinerated to create energy, and the remaining 10% was buried in landfill outside of Hertfordshire.
Recycling rates of household waste	More of St Albans household waste collected in 2018/19 (62.1%) was recycled compared to the East of England (48.5%) and England (43.5%) average. The district has the fifth highest recycling rate in England.
Renewable energy[98]	The district produced an estimate 4578 MWh of renewable energy in 2018, an increase of 43% since 2014. By contrast renewable energy across the UK increased by 70% over the same period.
Geodiversity[99]	There are two Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGs) in the district at Potterscrouch Section (0.18ha) and Redbournbury Chalk Pit (0.78ha) [100]
Aggregates and minerals	The county's Local Aggregate Assessment (2019)[101] confirms the county's mineral resources in Hertfordshire include sand and gravel with smaller deposits of chalk and brick clay. There are extensive sand and gravel resources in the south of the county and one quarry in the district extracting sand and gravel at Tyttenhanger Quarry, London Colney.
Average electricity consumption	Energy consumption in the district has fallen from 561.1 GWh to 483.9 GWh in the period 2007 to 2017, a fall of 18% in line with regional and national trends
Average gas consumption	Energy consumption of gas in the district has fallen from 1403.7 GWh to 1159.2 in GWh the period 2007 to 2017, a fall of 17% broadly in line with regional and national trends

[97] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805435/Land_Use_Change_Statistics_England_2017-18.pdf

[98] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics
[99] That is, the variety or rocks, fossils, minerals, natural processes, landforms and soils
[100] https://www.hertsgeolsoc.ology.org.uk/rigs.htm
[101] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-in-hertfordshire/minerals-planning/hcc-laa-2018-final.pdf

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Issues	
A higher percentage of new development has taken place on previously developed land relative to the national average. Need to protect two RIGs sites from inappropriate development and protect existing mineral resources The amount of waste generated in St Albans decreased by just under a third between 2008 to 2019.	

Table 3.9 (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Number of Historic England designated heritage assets	There are 857 Grade I, II* and II listed buildings, registered parks and scheduled monuments. This amounts to 9% of all assets in the county. There are no World Heritage Sites in the district.
Number of conservation areas and undesignated heritage assets	There are 19 conservation areas in the district. The council maintains and reviews an extensive schedule of locally listed buildings. No comparative regional or national statistics are available to review.
Number and type of designated assets at risk	Only two of the Historic England designated heritage assets in St Albans are at risk.
Issues	
The district contains 9% of the county's listed buildings, registered parks and heritage assets. Reflecting the district's heritage, much of the built up urban area and villages in the district are covered by conservation areas and controls and development will need to take account of their heritage status.	

Table 3.10 (l) landscape

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Metropolitan Green Belt	Over 80% of the district is in the Metropolitan Green Belt[102]. While not a landscape designation as such, it is necessary to have regard to the five purposes of the Green Belt, the most important of which is its openness.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	The district is not covered by any AONB designation. The nearest AONB is the Chilterns in Dacorum, close to the St Albans City and District municipal boundary.

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[102] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/district-local-plan-review-1994/District%20Local%20Plan%20Review%201994.pdf

Dataset	Baseline, comparison and trends
Landscape Character	Natural England identifies the district as falling within two distinct landscape character areas (110 Chilterns[103] and 111 North Thames Basin[104]).
	Hertfordshire County Council has prepared more detailed assessments of 18 landscapes[105]. Generally, landscapes in the north of the district are in a better condition and strength of character than those in the south.
Issues	
Any expansion onto Green Belt land will need to take account of the harm to its openness and any other harms.	
Any extensions to urban settlements will also need to have regard to local landscape characteristics and potentially their impact on the Chilterns AONB, especially in the west of the district.	

Likely evolution of the baseline without the new Local Plan in relation to each sustainability topic

3.5 Analysis of the baseline information has revealed a number of sustainability issues facing the district. It has also identified challenges in assessing baseline issues as a result of Covid 19 and very recent changes in town planning legislation. Identification of the key sustainability issues and consideration of how these issues might develop over time if the new Local Plan is not prepared, help meet the requirements of Annex 1 of the SEA Directive to provide information on:

> "*the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan; and any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan.*"

3.6 Table 3.11 below summarises the likely evolution of the baseline without the plan in relation to each of the key sustainability issues. In general, current trends in relation to the various social, economic and environmental issues affecting the district would be likely to continue without a new Local Plan. However, the current Local Plan dating back to 1994 was written in an era when environmental matters did not receive the importance that they do today.

3.7 In most cases, the new Local Plan offers opportunities to influence existing trends in a positive way, through an up-to-date plan that reflects the requirements of the NPPF and other relevant strategies and plans identified in this scoping review and baseline evidence.

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[103] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4977697
[104] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4721112340496384
[105] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/landscape/landscape.aspx

Table 3.11 Evolution of baseline without the new Local Plan

Topic	Evolution of the baseline
(a) biodiversity (d) flora and (e) fauna	Without a new Local Plan, habitat and biodiversity may be at risk from poorly planned development and their conditions could theoretically degrade, notwithstanding the policies of the NPPF and primary legislation. A new Local Plan will bring existing "development management"-type policies in the current Local Plan up-to-date by addressing gaps in the policy framework.
(b) population	Without a new Local Plan, opportunities for growth would be restricted. On the one hand, this would reduce take up of scarce resources including water. However, on the other hand, it would also result in an even greater shortage of housing that would affect young families wanting to get on the housing ladder as well as affordable housing to meet the needs of lower income groups and other groups such as gypsies and travellers, the elderly and other groups wishing to build their own homes. A new Local Plan presents an opportunity to allocate more employment land that would theoretically reduce out commuting from the district and increase GVA in the district. Without a Local Plan with employment land allocations, employment opportunities could go to other districts in Hertfordshire or elsewhere. A new Local Plan would positively plan for community and other social infrastructure that existing and new communities will need, especially in the context of a forecast ageing population. It will also allow the council to plan a positive response to current challenges such as Covid 19 and longer term changes in retail and commuting patterns that may follow.
(c) human health	A new Local Plan would provide opportunities to deliver more public open space, cycling routes and other interventions to help keep the population physically active in a manner that the current Local Plan does not provide for.
(f) soil	A plan led approach through a new Local Plan would ensure that the "best and most versatile" agricultural land is protected in the first case against unplanned growth.
(g) water	Without the new Local Plan, new housing would continue to be built but without the opportunity to require water saving features to be put in place under the Building Regulations (Part G(2)) to reduce demand on increasingly scarce water supplies in time to come. There may be a risk of increased pollution of local water courses.

Topic	Evolution of the baseline
(h) air	Without the new Local Plan, transport related emissions are likely to continue to rise.
(i) climatic factors	The NPPF and Buildings Regulations will continue to set minimum standards for energy efficiency and carbon reduction requirements on developments. However, without the new Local Plan, there would be less opportunity to adopt a co-ordinated, spatial approach that would help to secure higher energy efficiency and environmental standards. The status quo with regard to emissions would continue.
(j) material assets	Existing mineral assets are likely to be protected by the NPPF and the Hertfordshire Minerals Plan. However, a plan led approach would ensure that new growth is directed away from mineral safeguarded areas or further ensure that such assets are excavated before new housing or other development proceeds. Without the new Local Plan, there would be no opportunity to plan for new and expanded low carbon and renewable energy production locally.
(k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	Heritage assets are likely to be protected because of other policy requirements in the NPPF and primary legislation. However, without a plan led approach local approach to development, heritage assets and their settings may be at risk from poorly planned development especially if the council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. A new Local Plan will provide an opportunity for framing new policy around the future management of clusters of heritage assets such as St Albans city centre.
(l) landscape	The new Local Plan would provide a plan-led approach to growth minimising impacts on nationally and locally important landscapes through unplanned for development. It would also provide an appropriate policy framework for assessing any development in the countryside

Chapter 4. Summary of issues (Task A3)

4.1 This section summarises the issues identified in Task A1 and Task A2. It follows the same topic order as Chapters 2 and 3.

Table 4.1 Issues identified for (a) biodiversity (d) flora and (e) fauna

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Protect birds, habitats, plants, animals, designated sites, trees, woodlands, forests and biodiversity
Recognise the value of the natural environment
Restore biodiversity
Enhance access to the countryside such as the Watling Chase Community Forest initiative
Enhance the natural environment in towns and urban areas for wildlife and encourage new habitat creation/ appropriate management wildlife
Baseline information
The two SSSIs are partially or wholly in unfavourable condition
More needs to be done to improve the condition and management of local sites in the district and across the county.

Table 4.2 Issues identified for (b) population

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Promote sustainable modes of transport, particularly cycling and walking
Reduce inequalities and improve safe access to services
Provide a wide range of good quality housing to meet the diverse needs of the community
Encourage a strong and diverse economy and respond to the challenges of Covid 19
Baseline information
Levels of recorded crime are low in St Albans.
On the one hand, rates of business start ups and closure are close to the county average and GVA rates are at a similar level. On the other hand, weekly pay and other indicators (house prices, academic qualifications and second car ownership) demonstrate that St Albans is significantly more affluent than the rest of the county, the region and England with many people of employment age commuting to well paid jobs outside of the district. The high employment rate is a potential signal of a tight labour market locally
Although the proportion of people who are unemployed or claiming out of work benefits is lower in St Albans than regionally or nationally, the percentage of people claiming benefits has risen since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic. There are housing affordability pressures especially for people on low incomes.
There are housing affordability pressures especially for people on low incomes and a need for more housing for gypsies and travellers.

The district has access to high speed broadband and may be able to adjust to changing working patterns as a result of Covid 19.
The city, town and district centres in St Albans appeared resilient pre Covid 19 but there are indications of a worsening of viability, measured by vacancy rates

Table 4.3 Issues identified for (c) human health

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Reduce inequalities.
Reduce all forms of pollution.
Use the natural environment to deliver mental and physical health benefits and encourage community participation in activities that promote wellbeing.
Increase physical activity levels
Baseline information
St Albans residents live longer than their counterparts in the region and across England
Proportionately fewer people live in health and disability deprivation in St Albans than in the region or England.
Fuel poverty rates in St Albans are lower than the region and national rates.
People in St Albans are more physically active than in the East of England or England.

Table 4.4 Issues identified for (f) soil

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Conserve and enhance soil resources
Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land
Baseline information
Most of the district's agricultural land is Grade 3 but it is unclear if this is Grade 3a or 3b. Land that is graded 3a is considered to be "best and most versatile agricultural land". Some of the district's agricultural land is Grade 2.

Table 4.5 Issues identified for (g) water

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Reduce water pollution levels
Reduce flood risk
Reduce water consumption
Protect and enhance water quality and the condition of water resources
Baseline information
Flood risk is not a major concern in St Albans at the moment but the Local Plan must anticipate increased risk of flooding
Water consumption needs to be reduced and there is pressure on the district's water resources.

The district's status as a source protection zone needs to be protected.
There is a need to improve the quality of rivers and watercourses across the district. and the buffer zones/ habitats they support

Table 4.6 Issues identified for (h) air

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Conserve and enhance air quality
Reduce air pollution levels
Protect people and the natural environment from air pollution
Baseline information
Three of St Albans's Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) have annual average nitrogen dioxide levels above the legal minimum but the total number and location of AQMA has not changed.

Table 4.7 Issues identified for (i) climatic factors

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Continue to reduce greenhouse gas and carbon emissions
Reduce climate change
Promote mitigation and adaptation to climate change
Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the amount of energy from renewable sources
Baseline information
St Albans appears to emit lower levels of carbon dioxide per capita than England. It has also seen a decrease in total carbon dioxide emissions across all sectors. Domestic energy continues to be the energy use sectors responsible for the most carbon emissions locally.
Photovoltaic energy generation is by far the greatest source of renewable energy in St Albans as it is in the region and in England.

Table 4.8 Issues identified for (j) material assets

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Protect and conserve natural resources
Promote better management and efficient and sustainable use of natural resources
Reduce both the amount of waste generated and the amount sent to landfill
Increase the re-use and recycling of materials
Do not sterilise minerals. Promote prior extraction if necessary
Baseline information
A higher percentage of new development has taken place on previously developed land relative to the national average.
Need to protect two RIGs sites from inappropriate development and protect existing mineral resources
The amount of waste generated in St Albans decreased by just under a third between 2008 to 2019.

St Albans residents and businesses have been using less electricity and gas over recent years.

Table 4.9 Issues identified for (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Protect designated and non-designated heritage assets
Conserve and enhance the historic environment
Baseline information
The district has a wide mix of heritage assets.
Very few heritage assets are at risk in St Albans.

Table 4.10 Issues identified for (l) landscape

Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
Conserve and enhance landscape character
Promote landscape management
Baseline information
Any expansion onto Green Belt land will need to take account of the harm to its openness and any other harms.
Any extensions to urban settlements will also need to have regard to local landscape characteristics and potentially their impact on the Chilterns AONB, especially in the west of the district.

Chapter 5. Develop the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (Task A4)

5.1   This section sets out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework which will be used to test new Local Plan against sustainability considerations. The key feature of the SA Framework is a series of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Objectives relating to the topics set out in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and used throughout this report.

5.2   The SA Objectives have been developed from the issues identified in sections 2 and 3 of this report (Task A3) These were identified from an analysis of the relevant plans, policies and programmes (Task A1: section 2) and the collection of baseline information (Task A2: section 3).

SA Objectives and Indicators

5.3   The SA Objectives are not intended to be a statement of policy. Rather, their purpose is to appraise the new Local Plan documents against a series of sustainability considerations. Table 5.1 below shows the draft SA Objectives.

5.4   The appraisal of the new Local Plan will give a clear indication whether or not it is being prepared with sustainable development as its key driver. Because the appraisal process is incremental and carried out alongside the preparation of the Plan, the use of the SA Framework at each stage provides opportunities for alterations to be made to the Plan in order to prevent or mitigate any predicted negative sustainability impacts.

5.5   Each SA Objective has a series of supplementary questions setting out the key considerations that will be taken into account as part of the assessment (Table 5.2). These add useful detail to the broader SA Objectives and will aid in providing a rigorous and consistent evaluation.

5.6   The SA Objectives are also accompanied by indicators drawn from the baseline assessment. They will also form the basis of the new Local Plan's monitoring indicators that will be picked up in the council's Authority Monitoring Report. Most of the indicators will be assessed from a review of planning applications annually. Others will require a review of external bodies' databases (for example, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on house prices and affordability, the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on energy (BEIS) and NOMIS on the labour market). We are specifically seeking the views of statutory consultees on this matter.

Table 5.1 Draft Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

Topic	SO Number	Sustainability Appraisal Objective
(a) biodiversity (d) flora and (e) fauna	SO1	Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity in the district.
(b) population	SO2	Encourage a strong and resilient economy across the district including in key sectors in St Albans city centre and other centres with an appropriate long term response to Covid 19
	SO3	Provide a sufficient amount of good quality housing which meets the needs of all sections of society in sustainable locations
	SO4	Promote access to community infrastructure for all sections of society in sustainable locations
	SO5	Encourage the use of active and sustainable means of transport and reduce the need for people to travel
(c) human health	SO6	Support active and healthy communities
(f) soil	SO7	Minimise development on best and most versatile agricultural land and minimise the degradation/loss of soils due to new developments
(g) water	SO8	Conserve and enhance water quality and flow in St Albans and reduce the risk of water pollution
	SO9	Minimise the risk of flooding
(h) air	SO10	Achieve good air quality across the district
(i) climatic factors	SO11	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
	SO12	Promote adaptation and mitigation to climate change
(j) material assets	SO13	Promote efficient use of natural resources and protect existing material assets and geodiversity
	SO14	Prioritise locating new development on previously developed land first
(k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	SO15	Preserve and enhance heritage assets
(l) landscape	SO16	Maintain and enhance the quality of the countryside and landscape

Table 5.2 Supplementary questions for SA Objectives and indicators

SO Number	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Supplementary questions (will the policy?)	Indicators and when measured
SO1 (a) biodiversity, (f) flora and (g) fauna	Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity in the district.	Avoid harm to protected, priority, key or indicator habitats, plants, animals or birds Increase the distribution of key or indicator plants, animals and birds in St Albans Increase the extent of protected or key habitats in St Albans Improve the condition of key habitats in St Albans	Are the SSSIs considered in favourable or unfavourable condition (recovering condition) – (Natural England) - annual Populations of key/indicator species and priority habitats (Hertfordshire BAP or equivalent) – annual where possible Area of new native habitat created (ha) – annual
SO2 (b) population	Encourage a strong and resilient economy across the district including in key sectors in St Albans city centre and other centres with an appropriate long term response to Covid 19	Provide opportunities to create more local jobs and training locally Ensure an appropriate and balanced supply of employment land Maintain and support existing businesses and the vitality of the district centres	Number of jobs in the district (NOMIS) - annual New business start- up and closure rates (as % of active businesses) measured against the county and national average (NOMIS) - annual Funding for employment training course secured through s106 agreements or community infrastructure levy - annual

SO Number	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Supplementary questions (will the policy?)	Indicators and when measured
			In and out commuting levels (railway station data – Office of Road and Rail annual statistics) New build employment land – Use Classes B2, B8, E and sui generis (ha) – annual Vacancy rates in primary and secondary frontages in St Albans city centre, Harpenden town centre and combined rate for six lower rung centres - annual
SO3 (b) population	Provide a sufficient amount of good quality housing which meets the needs of all sections of society in sustainable locations	Meet evidenced housing needs Reflect the requirements of all sections of society in terms of location and affordability as well as adaptability for an ageing population Help to meet the needs of priority households	Net housing completions - annual Affordable housing completions - annual Delivery of affordable housing as a proportion of all new homes – annual. Number of new Use Class C2 units completed - annual Change in mean / median house price affordability ratio as measured by the ONS - annual. New gypsy and traveller pitches completed – annual

SO Number	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Supplementary questions (will the policy?)	Indicators and when measured
SO4 (b) population	Promote access to community infrastructure for all sections of society in sustainable locations	Enhance access to playing pitches and outdoor spaces Access to social and community infrastructure (eg schools, doctors surgeries, Post Offices, shops) Sufficient school places to meet local and projected school population	Area of accessible open space created (ha) - annual Number of new community infrastructure facilities created - annual Numbers of new school places created – annual Triannual assessment of school needs – (HCC)
SO5 (b) population	Encourage the use of active and sustainable means of transport and reduce the need for people to travel	Maintain or improve access to public transport Enable more walking or cycling	Percentage using car (driver or passenger) as main means of getting to work (Census or Hertfordshire Travel Study) - Census data in 2021 and Hertfordshire Travel Study every three years Kms of cycle routes created/ upgraded - (LCWIP)[106] Percentage using bicycle or walking to work (Census or Hertfordshire Travel Study)

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[106] LCWIP is the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan which is scheduled to be completed in 2021.

SO Number	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Supplementary questions (will the policy?)	Indicators and when measured
SO6 (c) human health	Support active and healthy communities	Promote opportunities for greater physical activity in new settlements and community integration Site new development close to existing community infrastructure	Provision of new play spaces (number and sqm created) - annual New community infrastructure (Use Class F1) (sqm) - annual
SO7 (d) soil	Minimise development on best and most versatile agricultural land and minimise the degradation/loss of soils due to new developments	Protect St Albans's best and most versatile agricultural land Reduce the amount of contaminated land	Percentage of planning permissions (housing and other land uses) granted on brownfield land - annual
SO8 (g) water	Conserve and enhance water quality and flow in St Albans and reduce the risk of water pollution	Protect existing water resources from harmful pollutants and inappropriate development	Percentage of water bodies affected by water management issues (EA) Status of groundwater (EA) Status of surface water (EA)
SO9 (g) water	Minimise the risk of flooding	Locate development in areas of lowest flood risk	Number of planning applications granted contrary to Environment Agency objections on the grounds of flood risk – annual

SO Number	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Supplementary questions (will the policy?)	Indicators and when measured
SO10 (h) air	Achieve good air quality across the district	Support the improvement of air quality in the district's AQMAs in the spatial planning process	Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) for NO2 - annual
		Protect existing air quality outside AQMA from harmful pollutants	Annual average of NO2 in AQMAs - annual
SO11 (i) climatic factors	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Promote energy efficiency Reduce energy consumption Increase the provision of energy from renewable sources	Estimated per capita emissions (tonnes) of carbon dioxide Estimated carbon dioxide emissions per sector Number of Energy Performance Certificates lodged on the Register by Energy Efficiency Rating (based on fuel costs) Average (mean) gas consumption (kWh) Average (mean) electricity consumption (kWh) (ONS and BEIS) - annual
SO12 (i) climatic factors	Promote adaptation and mitigation to climate change	Provide new habitats, particularly woodland and wetland	Area of new habitat gained/ lost as a result of development (ha) - annual
		Improve connectivity of existing habitats	
		Support or maintain a balance between water supply and need	New houses fitted with water saving devices – annual

SO Number	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Supplementary questions (will the policy?)	Indicators and when measured
SO13 (j) natural resources	Promote efficient use of natural resources and protect existing material assets and geodiversity	Increase re-cycling and use of secondary resources	Percentage of waste being recycled - annual
		Number of RIGs in the district	Number of RIGs in the district protected - annual
		Mineral safeguarding areas protected	Planning allocations not on safeguarding areas or else guidance prepared to ensure resource extracted prior to the start of development – annual
SO 14 (j) natural resources	Prioritise locating new development on previously developed land first	Encourage the use of previously developed land	Proportion of new homes and commercial units on previously developed land by Use Class - annual
SO15 (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	Preserve and enhance heritage assets	Avoid harm to the significance of heritage features or their setting	Number of designated assets at risk (Historic England) - annual
		Promote management of designated or non-designated heritage features	Number of conservation area statements - annual

SO Number	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Supplementary questions (will the policy?)	Indicators and when measured
SO16 (l) landscape	Maintain and enhance the quality of the countryside and landscape	Prevent adverse visual impacts to existing landscapes Respect local distinctiveness	Land retained in the Metropolitan Green Belt (measure against new Local Plan revised baseline) - annual Planning applications on new development sites in the Green Belt with landscape impact assessments that show ways of landscape impact mitigation – annual Number of planning applications approved in the Metropolitan Green Belt on the basis of very special circumstances – annual

Compatibility of the sustainability objectives

5.7 Figure 3 below shows how potential compatible these proposed Sustainability Appraisal objectives are with one another. It also identifies where there are potential conflicts between the objectives and are potentially incompatible.

5.8 Where objectives show 'no links' it is considered that they have no obvious direct or strong relationship with each other. That does not mean that there are no links at all.

Figure 3 Compatibility of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

Legend:
- Green = Potentially compatible
- Red = Potentially incompatible
- `-` = No obvious direct or strong links

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1																
2	Red															
3	Red	Green														
4	-	Green	Green													
5	Green	-	Green	Green												
6	-	Red	Green	Green	Green											
7	Green	-	Green	Green	-	-										
8	Green	Red	Red	-	-	Green	Green									
9	Green	-	-	-	-	-	Green	Green								
10	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	-	-							
11	Green	-	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	-	-	Green						
12	Green	-	Red	Green	-	Green	Green	Green	Green	-	Green					
13	Green	Green	Green	Green	-	Green	Green	Green	Green	-	Green	Green				
14	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	-	Green	Green	Green	Green			
15	-	-	Red	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Green	Green	-	-		
16	Green	Red	Red	-	-	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	-	

5.9 In most cases the SA Objectives are considered to be compatible with each other. There are particularly strong positives between the biodiversity, soil, air, water and climatic factor objectives (SO1 and SO8 to SO13) and those seeking changes to transport patterns and to promote good health (SO5 and SO6).

5.10 Potential conflicts are identified between the population objectives (SO2 and SO3) and the environment-based objectives. Encouraging a strong and

sustainable economy throughout St Albans and providing a sufficient amount of good quality housing could be in tension with protecting the range of plants and animals and the quality and extent of wildlife habitats and to a lesser extent with conserving and enhancing features and, possibly, areas of heritage value although appropriate mitigation tools such as heritage impact assessments will review and analyse the actual impact.

Using the Sustainability Objectives to assess policies

5.11   The SEA Directive requires an assessment of '*the likely significant effects on the environment'* and these should include '*secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects'.*

5.12   It is intended that the policies in the new Local Plan will be assessed using the criteria set out in Table 5.3 overleaf. These include considerations of:

- The predicted significance of the effect;
- The potential secondary effects of each policy;
- The potential cumulative effects of a combination of policies;
- The probability of the predicted effect; and
- Any assumptions or uncertainties such as the likelihood of delivery

Table 5.3 Assessment criteria and timescale

Significance of effect	
++	Strongly positive effect
+	Minor positive effect
0	Neutral
-	Minor negative effect
- -	Strongly negative effect
?	Unknown

Timeframe of effect		Description
S	Short -term	Likely to last for 0-5 years
M	Medium-term	Likely to last for 6-10 years
L	Long-term	Likely to last beyond 10 years

Defining significant effects for policies

5.13   To comply with Article 5 (1) of the SEA Directive[2], strongly positive or strongly negative effects will be classed as significant. However, where negative or strongly negative effects are recorded, then mitigation measures will be proposed in line with Annex 1 of the SEA Directive which requires '*measures ….. to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme'* (

Using the sustainability objectives to assess policies and sites for allocation

5.14   The new Local Plan will identify strategic policies and is also likely to allocate land for housing, employment including offices and main town centre uses such as shopping as well as other uses within Use Classes E and F of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (England) Order 1987 (as amended in September 2020).

Proforma for recording effects on policies

5.15   The Council proposes to complete the following form (refer Table 5.4) to review the issues and options for the topic and for each policy in the new Local Plan policy to assess its compliance with the final SA Objectives (SO) have been assessed.

Table 5.4 Evaluation of new Local Plan policies

Policy xxx				
SO	S	M	L	Commentary
One line for each SO	significance score	significance score	significance score	Text setting out: Reasoning for significance scores. Timescales of effects Description of significant effects. Mitigation measures for any negative or strongly negative effects.

Chapter 6. Consultation (Task A5) and next steps

6.1   This Scoping Report is being sent to the three Consultation Bodies for their comments:

- Historic England
- Natural England
- Environment Agency

6.2   It is also being published on the Council's consultation portal to allow environmental organisations across the district, neighbouring local authorities and town and parish councils to make representations. Comments are also welcomed from members of the public or other interested parties. These will be accepted via the Council's consultation portal, email address: planning.policy@stalbans.gov.uk or via post.

6.3   Please ensure that the subject line in any email or letter includes the phrase 'SA Scoping Report Consultation'. Is also helpful if comments refer to the relevant paragraphs or table numbers in this Scoping Report.

6.4   The consultation period runs from **25 January 2021 to 8 March 2021.**

6.5   Once the consultation period has closed, the council will consider all responses and make any appropriate changes to the document. The finalised Scoping Report will then be placed on the council's website.

6.6   The Sustainability Appraisal Framework set out in the finalised Scoping Report will be used to assess all new Local Plan consultation documents. Interim SA Reports will be published alongside each new Local Plan document.

6.7   The Final SA Report (the Environmental Report described in Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive[2]) will comply with heading (h) in Annex 1 of the Directive and set out '*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information'.* The Final SA Report will also contain '*a non-technical summary of the information provided under the headings above'* (a to i). This summary is necessary to comply with heading (j) in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive.

6.8   Clearly, if the law changes on sustainability appraisal, this environmental information will be presented in an alternative format to reflect any such changes.

Appendix A. Review of baseline situation in the City and District of St Albans

A0.1 This Appendix outlines sets out in more detail the baseline analysis carried out to support this Sustainability Appraisal. It is structured along the following broad topics:

- Topics (a) biodiversity, (d) flora, and (e) fauna
- Topic (b) population
- Topic (d) human health
- Topic (f) soil
- Topic (g) water
- Topic (h) air
- Topic (i) climatic factors
- Topic (j) material assets
- Topic (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; and
- Topic (l) landscape

A0.2 It focuses on the characteristics of the district and surrounds and, where appropriate, draws on trends and other data sources recorded in TRL's research for the last version of the St Albans Local Plan. Relevant sources have been identified.

A1 Topics (a) biodiversity, (d) flora, and (e) fauna

A1.1 There are no international or European designations (Ramsar sites, SPAs, SACs) in the district, the closest being Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, which is 7km to the north-west of the district boundary in Dacorum. There are two Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) covering 73 hectares within St Albans. These are Bricket Wood Common (which is designated for its 'Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland – lowland' and 'Dwarf shrub heath – lowland' habitats) and Moor Mill Quarry West (designated as an 'Earth heritage' site). Generally, the natural environment is of good quality and includes some very attractive countryside, though habitats are generally fragmented and some areas within the Watling Chase Community Forest area in the south of the district have been affected by poor restoration following mineral extraction.

A1.2 Natural England maintains statistics on the condition of all SSSIs in England. As of October 2020, 91.83% of SSSIs were either in a "favourable" or "unfavourable recovering" condition. The comparative figure for Hertfordshire at the same time was 97.42%[107]. This is a considerable increase from a level of 66% in 2004[108] and an improvement from 96.87% in 2012. In St Albans as

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[107] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteSearch.aspx
[108] Hertfordshire Environmental Forum (2010) "Quality of Life Report 2010", available at http://enquire.hertscc.gov.uk/qol/

of 2020, 63.7% of the area of SSSI meets the PSA target[109][110], again a considerable increase from a level of 10.8% in 2004.

A1.3   Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), as designated by Natural England (under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), comprise land which is nationally important in terms of flora, fauna and geology. Table A1 shows the sites within St Albans which have been designated as SSSIs.

Table A1 SSSIs within or partially within the district

Site name	Interest	Area	Condition[5]
Bricket Wood Common	Biological	72.48 ha	63.7% Unfavourable-Recovering 36.3% Unfavourable – No change
Moor Mill Quarry West	Geological	0.17 ha	100% Unfavourable- No change

A1.4   Wildlife Sites are the most important places for wildlife outside legally protected land such as Nature Reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. In 2010 there were almost 2,000 Wildlife Sites in Hertfordshire, totalling 17,215ha, and covering over 10% of the county. They include meadows, ponds, woodland, urban green space and geological sites. There are 197 Wildlife Sites within the district, totalling over 2,027 hectares.

A1.5   There are also a number of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in Hertfordshire (see Figure A1). These are nationally identified sites of global significance and represent an important approach to addressing biodiversity conservation at the site scale.

A1.6   There are no National Nature Reserves (NNR) in St Albans.

A1.7   There are six Local Nature Reserves in St Albans. These will need to be taken into account in the new Local Plan.

- Batford Springs (3.51 ha);
- Broad Colney Lakes ((21.46 ha);
- Marshalls Heath (3.99 ha);
- The Wick Wood (3.39 ha);
- Watercress Wildlife Site (1.2 ha) and;
- Wheathampstead (7.01 ha).

A1.8   St Albans District contains at least 18 ha of Ancient Woodland.

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[109]

https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?SiteCode=S1000694&ReportTitle=Bricket%20Wood%20Co mmon%20SSSI   last survey reported in November 2010

[110] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportSiteExport.aspx?countyCode=21&ReportTitle=HERTFORDSHIRE. Accessed 11 March 2017.

A1.9 St Albans has four of the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) identified by the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. These are as follows:

- (20) Upper Colne Valley (wetlands and heath) – partially in the Hertsmere Borough Council area;
- (21) Bricket Wood/Moor Mill (wetlands, woodlands and heath);
- (22) River Ver/Gorehambury (wetlands and woodlands); and
- (23) Upper Lea Valley (wetlands, woodlands and heath) – partially in the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council area.

Figure A1 Key biodiversity areas in Hertfordshire (Source: Hertfordshire BAP)
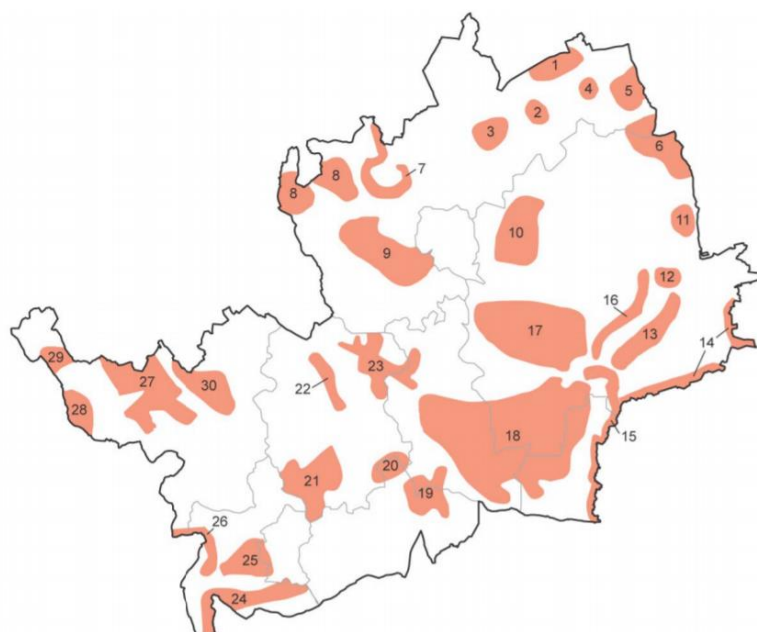
Nature conservation

A1.10 The UK Government 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) recognises that nature conservation efforts have focused on safeguarding the most precious species. While nationally the condition of protected sites has started to improve over the last decade, many formerly native species have been lost. The Plan therefore seeks to reintroduce new species and develop a code, building on International Union for Conservation of Nature guidelines, to make sure proposals provide clear economic or social benefit and are alive to any risk to public, the environment or to business. Natural England will continue to work with partners and local communities on species reintroduction and recovery projects that support nature conservation and help towards meeting economic and social goal and supporting wider ecological networks.

A1.11 Within Hertfordshire the 'Ecological Networks' project confirms the national picture of poor overall habitat network connectivity that threatens the ecosystem integrity and resilience.

"Hertfordshire has very little semi-natural habitat remaining and that existing habitat networks are highly fragmented and failing. Woodland makes up about 10% of the county area, which is over half the total

remaining area of all habitats. However, even woodland networks are highly fragmented and only a small proportion of those sites are classed as ancient – those of the highest value. Heathland is our most threatened habitat, with only 13 ha remaining from roughly 5,000 ha in existence as recently as 175 years ago. Remaining fragments are now so small and fragmented that this unique habitat is in danger of being lost from Hertfordshire entirely."[111]

A1.12 In St Albans, priority habitats for which action plans have been prepared include, amongst others ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows, chalk rivers, fens, reed beds and a variety of lowland habitats. The river catchment areas of the Lea and Colne cover the north and south of the District respectively and both are chalk streams, which are a globally rare habitat.

Species

A1.13 A number of national species of conservation concern are found in Hertfordshire. These include the following UK priority species (short and middle list[112]) where Hertfordshire can contribute to the achieving national target because these species are characteristic of the area:

Brown Hare	Turtle Dove	Stone Curlew*
Otter*	Stag Beetle*	Corn Bunting
Water Vole*	Thatch Moss	Reed Bunting
Grey Partridge	Cornflower*	Tree Sparrow*
Song Thrush*	Dormouse*	Great Crested Newt*
Bullfinch	Pipistrelle	White-clawed
Linnet	Bittern*	Crayfish*
Spotted Flycatcher	Skylark	Shepherd's Needle
		Corn Cleavers

A1.14 Species which are locally rare, declining, threatened and are either high profile and/or locally distinctive are as follows:

Natterer's Bat*	River Water-dropwort*	Duke of Burgundy
Nightingale	Narrow-fruited Corn Salad	Silver-washed Fritillary
Water Rail	Great Pignut*	Corn Buttercup
Kingfisher	Green-winged Orchid	Corn Gromwell
Palmate Newt	Long-eared Owl	Ivy-leaved Water Crowfoot
Brown Hairstreak	Pochard	Pasqueflower*
Chalkhill Blue*	Hawfinch	Petty Whin
Grizzled Skipper*	Snipe	Snakes-head Fritillary
Corn Parsley	Small Blue	

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[111] Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (2014) Hertfordshire's Ecological Networks
http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/Mapping%20project%20report%20-%20Final.pdf
[112] Short list species are the top priority species for conservation in the UK as identified in the UK Steering Group Report. Middle list species are of lesser, but still national conservation priority.

A1.15 Species marked with asterisks have Species Action Plans within Hertfordshire[113].

Woodland cover

A1.16 Hertfordshire and North London has a total area of woodland of 35,172 ha covering 11% of its area. This is slightly above the UK average of 7.7% but well below the overall woodland coverage in continental Europe of 30% [114][115]. Some 2% of the woodland in the Hertfordshire and North London area is under Forestry Commission ownership or management.

A1.17 Quantified figures for woodland cover were not available for St Albans. However, parts of the authority are covered by Watling Chase Community Forest which aims to combine the sustainable production of timber with wildlife conservation and environmental enhancements.

A1.18 There are 3,280 hectares of ancient semi natural woodland over 0.25 hectares in size in Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP))[116]. In St Albans District, the Woodland Trust has been running the 'Heartwood Forest' project, the largest planting of the largest new native forest in England since 2009 (348 ha). During this time, more than 600,000 native trees have been planted[117].

Green Infrastructure

A1.18 Green infrastructure can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies. References to green infrastructure in this guidance also apply to different types of blue infrastructure where appropriate. It is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services [118].

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[113] http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity_vision/chapter_03_habitat.pdf Accessed 20/06/16

[114] https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/national-forest-inventory/how-our-woodlands-might-change-over-time-8211-nfi-forecast-reports/nfi-forecasts-customised-reports/nfi-statistics-for-aligned-areas-in-england/

[115] Forestry Commission (2002) "National Inventory of Woodland and Trees - County Report Hertfordshire", available at http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/hertfordshire.pdf/$FILE/hertfordshire.pdf

[116] http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity_vision/chapter_04_woodland.pdf Accessed 20/06/16

[117] https://heartwood.woodlandtrust.org.uk/about-heartwood/

[118] PPG Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 8-004-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019

A1.19 Green infrastructure provides a setting for the district's towns and villages, threading through and connecting them to the wider countryside. It contributes to the character of the area and is particularly important on the urban fringe, where it helps to soften the transition between urban and rural landscapes.

A1.20 St Albans has a rich green infrastructure resource and a number of existing green infrastructure assets and initiatives. These include promoted greenway routes on disused railway lines, the Butterfly World site at Chiswell Green, a proposed new country park at Ellenbrook Fields on the border with Welwyn Hatfield, the community forestry aspirations of the Watling Chase Community Forest and the ongoing implementation of forestry and other public access works at Heartwood Forest (by the Woodland Trust).

A2   Topic (b) population

Population structure

A2.1   The Census 2011 established the population of the district as 140,600. By 2018, the population was estimated to be 147,373[119]), an increase of about 9% since 2008, marginally faster than the rate for East of England (8.5%) and England (8.8%).

A2.2   Without any significant land use interventions (such as the release of land in the Metropolitan Green Belt or from other sources for housing to address the NPPF and the government's standard methodology for calculating housing need for the purposes of planning), the population of the district is not projected to increase significantly over the lifetime of the new Local Plan. Nonetheless, the ONS 2018 Population Projections show an ageing of the district's population consistent with the patterns for the rest of the country (see Figure A2).

A2.3   As of 2018, an estimated 17.1% of the St Albans population is 65 year old or over, compared with 19.9% in the East of England and 18.3% for England. ONS projections suggest the district's population will age with an estimated increase in households headed by someone in 65-74 age cohort in the period 2020 to 2036 of 33%. The new Local Plan will need to plan for specialist housing to meet the needs of an ageing population, especially whether it applies discretionary measures in Part M of the Building Regulations 2010.

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[119] ONS Estimate (2018)

Figure A2 Population projection in the district by age band: 2018 to 2036 (Source: ONS Population Projections)

Population profile by age band 2018

Population profile by age band 2036
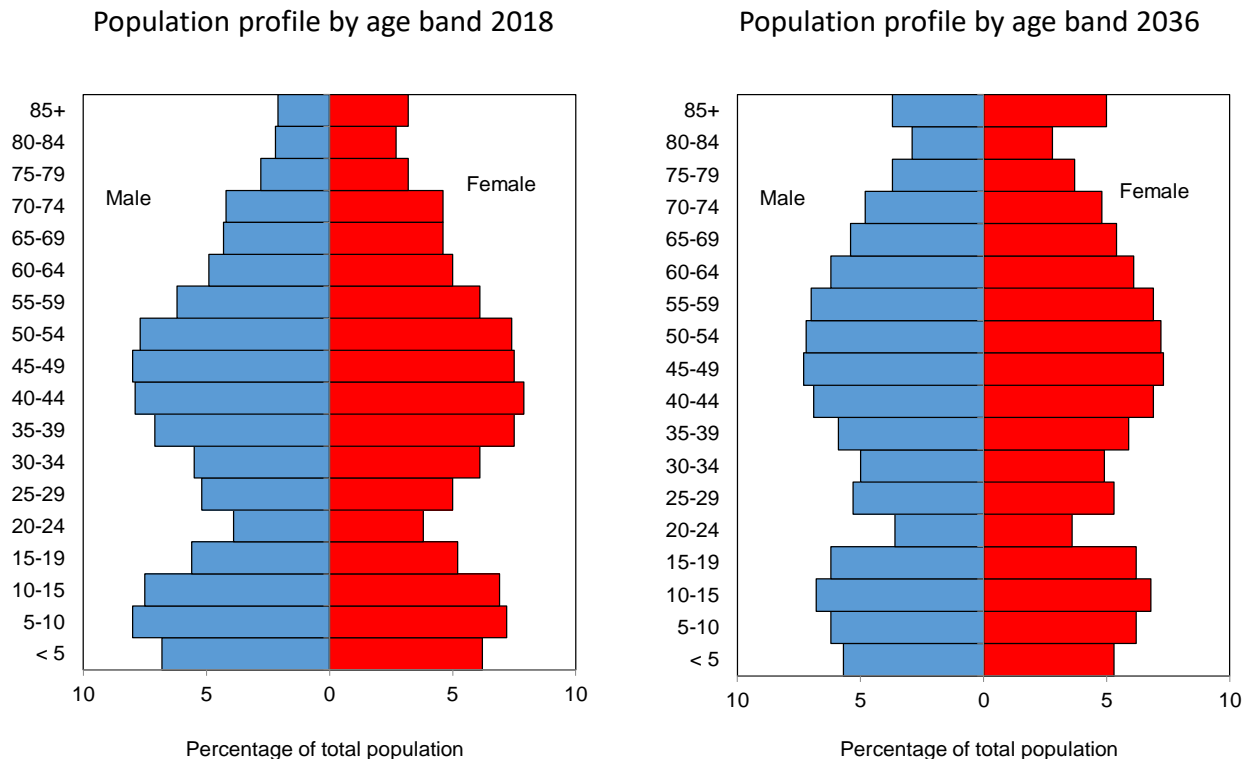
Ethnicity/ diversity

A2.3 The Census 2011 also established that 11.6% of the St Albans population identify themselves as being from a non-white ethnic background, a higher proportion than for the East of England (9.2%) but a lower level than the rest of England (14.6%).
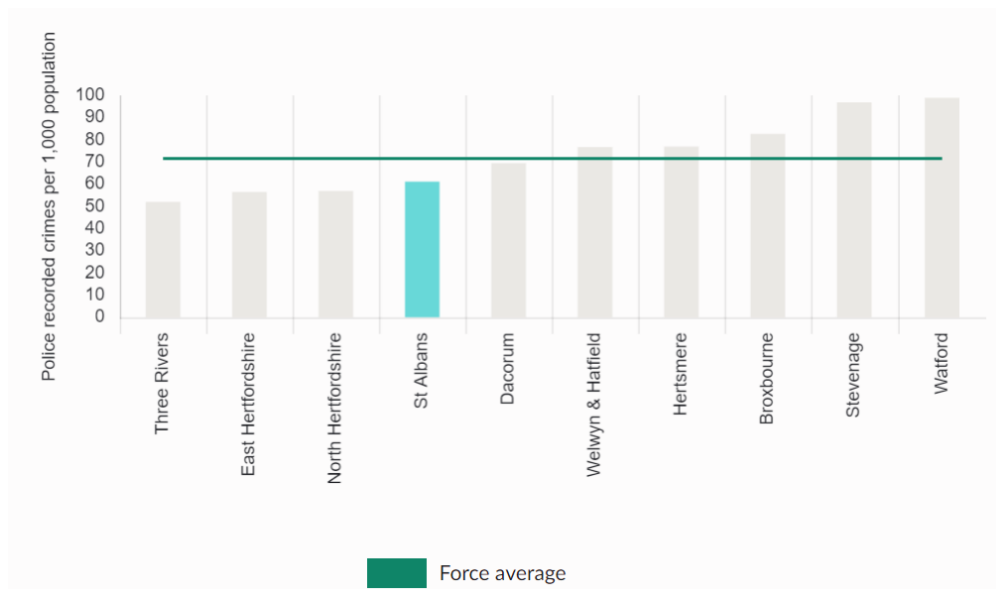
Figure A3 St Albans City and District population by ethnicity – percentage of total population (Source: Census 2011 - Table KS201EW)
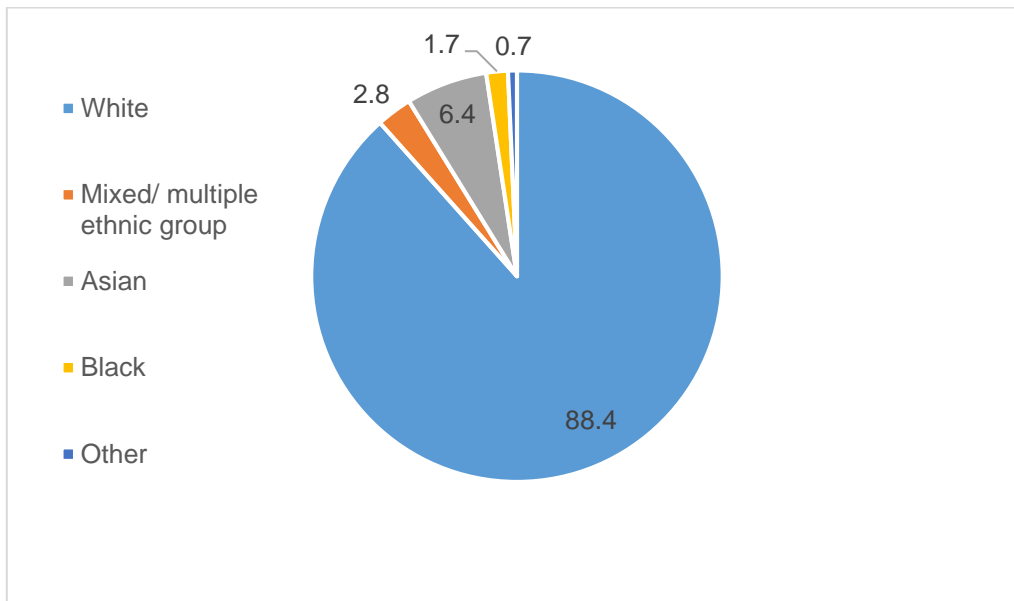
Crime

A2.4 St Albans is a district with relatively low levels of recorded crime. St Albans's recorded 61.02 crime per 1000 people in 2020, below the Hertfordshire rate of 71.30. In the year ending March 2020, the recorded crime rate in the district was markedly lower than other districts in the county[120].

Figure A4 Crime Rate in St Albans and Hertfordshire Local Authority Areas 2020 (Source: Police UK)[121]

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[120] https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/hertfordshire-constabulary/performance/compare-your-area/?tc=F02
[121] https://www.police.uk/hertfordshire/F02/performance/compare-your-area/

A2.5 The ONS collects raw reported crime data on a quarterly basis. In the period December 2015 to December 2018, theft, criminal damage and vehicle offences were the three most regularly reported crimes.

Deprivation

A2.6 St Albans ranked 306th out of 317 local authority areas in England in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD2019) rankings[122] (a rank of 1st being the most deprived). This compares to a ranking of 286/354 in 2010[123], 317/354 in 2007 and 333/354 in 2004. The neighbouring authorities in South West Hertfordshire had the following ranks: Dacorum 240/317 (286/354 in 2010), Hertsmere 224/317 (219/354 in 2010), Three Rivers 291/317 (250/354 in 2010), and Watford 195/317 (221/354 in 2010). The South West Hertfordshire sub region is clearly not deprived as a whole.

Figure A5 Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 records for St Albans by LSOA (Source: ONS)
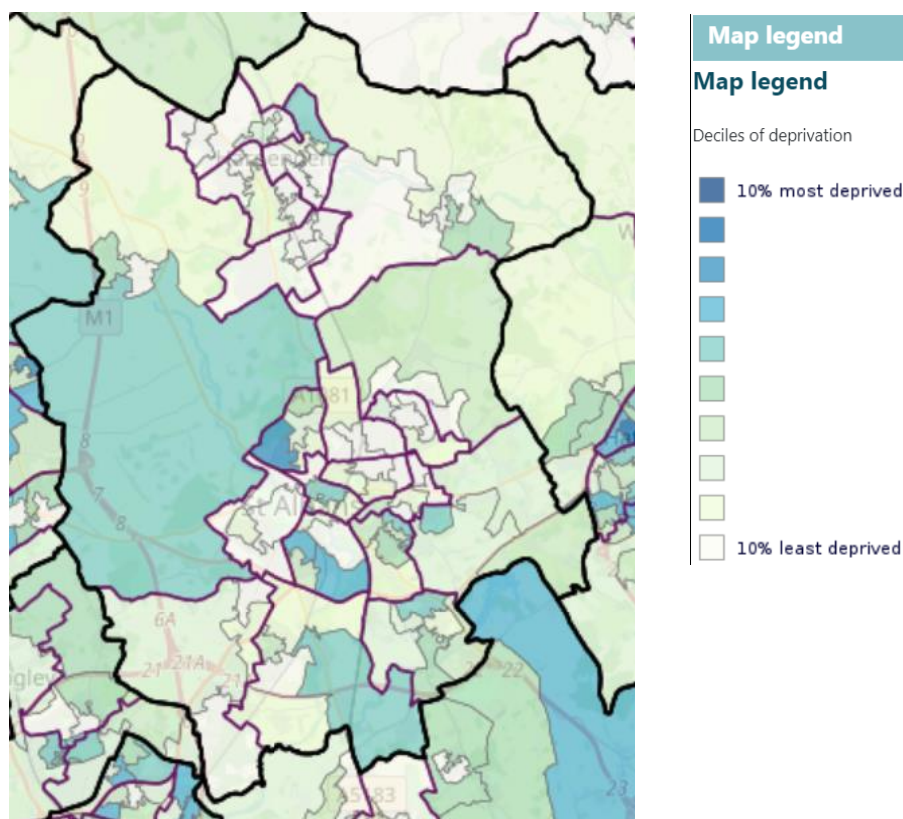
A2.7 The IMD2019 records some pockets of deprivation at the lower super output areas (LSOAs). One LSOA (009A LSOA in Batchwood Ward) is the most

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deprived in the district. Two other LSOAs in Sopwell ward (017A and 017B LSOAs) ranked 9950th and 12,653[th]. The main indicator of deprivation is that of "Barriers to Housing and Services".

Economy

A2.8   The baseline for the district shows a very buoyant economic situation. In the Census 2011, a total of 74,553 economically active people within St Albans. At that point, 69,041 were in employment which equates to 92.6% of the working population being in employment. This is a higher proportion when compared to regional and national averages (80.1% and 77.5% respectively). The number of self-employed was 12,566 with the remaining 56,475 comprising of employees. In total 2,715 people were unemployed across the District[124].

A2.9   The number of jobs in St Albans over the period 2015 to 2018 fell marginally from an estimated 76,000 to 75,000, a decline of 1.3%. By contrast, job numbers in the East of England and Great Britain grew over the same period (by 5.8% and 3.6% respectively)[125].

A2.10   Median earnings in St Albans are significantly higher than the average for Great Britain as a whole and the average for the East of England. Whilst female full time workers' pay is above average, there is a greater disparity in gender pay (40%) in St Albans (where females account for 40% of total fulltime earnings) in comparison with the East of England and Great Britain (where females account for 45% of full-time earnings) , (see Table A2)[126].

Table A2 Median earnings by residence and workplace in £ (Source: AWE, 2019)

	St Albans
Full-Time Workers	631.6
Male Full-Time Workers	713
Female Full-Time Workers	539.8

A2.11   The recorded median weekly pay in St Albans (2019[127]) is not only higher than regional and national comparators. It is also higher than the median for Hertfordshire (£555.80) and England (£482) too. Mean weekly income for St Albans (£821.90) was even higher and this reflects the fact that the district attracts some very high earning residents. Data below suggests a number of these have well-paying employment both in the district and in London.

A2.12   St Albans also falls above the national average for employment in Major Group 1-3 (managers, directors, senior officials; professional occupations; associate professional and technical) and below the national average for employment in Major Groups 4-5, 6-7 and 8-9 (refer Table A3).

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[124] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1946157227
[125] Source: NOMIS
[126] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157227/report.aspx#tabeinact
[127] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours

Table A3 SADC workforce employment by occupation (Source: NOMIS)

Employment by occupation (Apr 2019-Mar 2020)	St Albans (Numbers)	St Albans (%)	East (%)	Great Britain (%)
Soc 2010 Major Group 1-3	45,100	61.2	47.0	48.0
1 Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	11,000	15.0	12.8	11.6
2 Professional Occupations	24,100	32.7	20.7	21.5
3 Associate Professional & Technical	10,000	13.5	13.4	14.7
Soc 2010 Major Group 4-5	12,600	17.1	21.0	19.7
4 Administrative & Secretarial	7,300	9.9	10.5	9.7
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	#	#	10.5	9.9
Soc 2010 Major Group 6-7	8,000	10.8	15.3	16.1
6 Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	#	#	8.7	9.0
7 Sales And Customer Service Occs	#	#	6.6	7.0
Soc 2010 Major Group 8-9	8,000	10.8	16.7	16.3
8 Process Plant & Machine Operatives	#	#	6.0	6.0
9 Elementary Occupations	#	#	10.6	10.2

Source: ONS annual population survey

A2.13 This is further reflected in the academic skills of the population (refer Table A4). A much higher percentage of the district's residents (58.5%) are qualified to NVQ level 4 or above (degree level or equivalent) than in the East of England (26.8%) or England (40.3%). By contrast, the Census 2011 records that only 12.9% of the 16 to 64 age group do not have any qualifications, in contrast with 22.5% for the East of England.

Table A4 SADC workforce by qualification 2018 (Source: NOMIS)

Qualifications (Jan 2019-Dec 2019)	St Albans (Level)	St Albans (%)	East (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 And Above	53,400	58.5	36.8	40.3
NVQ3 And Above	66,200	72.5	55.0	58.5
NVQ2 And Above	81,400	89.1	74.2	75.6
NVQ1 And Above	83,800	91.8	86.4	85.6
Other Qualifications	#	#	6.3	6.7
No Qualifications	5,700	6.2	7.2	7.7

Source: ONS annual population survey

A2.14 The Hertfordshire County Travel Survey 2018 reported that 32% of St Albans residents work within the District, with 18% working in other districts within Hertfordshire, 36% working in London and 8% working in an adjacent county (6% unknown)[128]. These historic levels of out commuting pre Covid 19 accord with data from the Office of Road and Rail. St Albans City station had an estimated 7.56m users in 2018/9[129], a rise of over 20% since 2010/11. An estimated 3.37m passengers used Harpenden Station in 2018/19. The new Local Plan will need to take account of potentially changing commuting patterns

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[128] Hertfordshire County Travel Survey 2018 Report (released March 2019) https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/highways/transport-planning/transport-and-accident-data/final-report-to-hertfordshire-travel-survey.pdf
[129] https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage/

in the long term as a result of the pandemic. At the same time the district is a net importer of labour as reflected by its job density of 1.02[130]. This implies there has been historically movement into the district too.

A2.15 As of 2018, the largest industry jobs in the district were business administration and support, professional, scientific and technical; and wholesale and retail trade including motor repairs (refer Figure A6).

Figure A6 Employment in the district by sector by percentage of all jobs (2018) (Source: NOMIS)
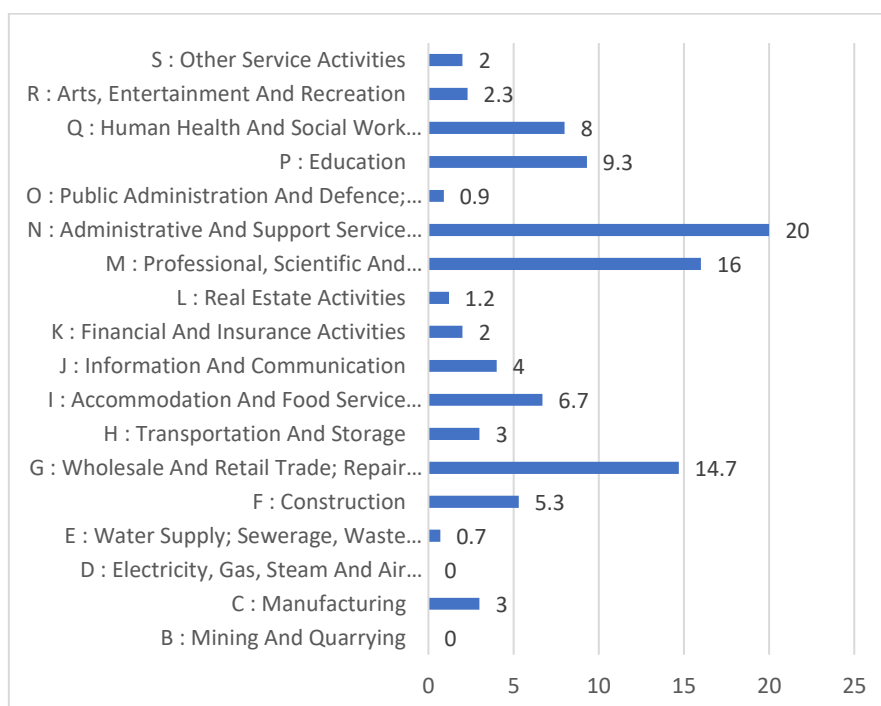
A2.16 The district has also historically both had a very tight employment market based on the proportion of local residents who are economically active as well as the claimant count for out of work benefits[131].

A2.17 The percentage of economically active people in St Albans (81.5% in March 2020) is higher than for the East of England (80%) and Great Britain (79.1%)[132]. This is one of the highest rates in Great Britain. By contrast, a review of the Claimant Count since 2006 has shown that unemployment rates in the district have remained historically lower than elsewhere in Great Britain (refer Table A5).

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[130] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk

[131] The Government's preferred measure of unemployment is the Labour Force Survey, however statistics are not published at district council level. This baseline has used claimant count consistent with the TRL survey. However, it is worth quoting NOMIS' advice about the use of the claimant count as an indicator of unemployment. Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. As Universal Credit Full Service is rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is therefore likely to rise.

[132] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157227/report.aspx   Data collected pre COVID 19

Table A5 Claimant Count in the period 2006 to 2020 (unemployment %) (Source: NOMIS)

	March 2006	March 2011	March 2016	March 2020	August 2020
St Albans	1.1	1.7	0.6	1.6	4.3
Dacorum	1.9	2.6	1.2	1.9	5.3
Hertsmere	1.8	2.6	1.3	2.1	5.9
Three Rivers	1.2	2.0	0.9	1.7	4.9
Watford	2.0	2.9	1.5	2.7	6.9
Hertfordshire	1.5	2.5	1.1	1.9	5.3
East of England	1.9	3.0	1.3	2.4	5.7

A2.18 There has been a recent rise in claimant count, and by deduction, unemployment as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.[133] Even then, the proportion of claimants in St Albans (4.3% in August 2020) is lower than the rate for all of its neighbours, the East of England (5.7%) and Great Britain (6.6%).

Businesses in the district

A2.19 The rate of new business formation in the district accords broadly with the rate for Hertfordshire[134].

A2.20 While the St Albans' workforce is wealthier than its neighbours, Gross Value Added[135] per head (£29,130) was only the sixth of ten districts in Hertfordshire[136]. This again implies that businesses in the district are not the major source of income for its residents.

A2.21 91.8% of St Albans registered businesses employee fewer than 10 employees, a marginally higher rate than the East of England area 90% [137].

Education

A2.22 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient school places for residents within St Albans in the state sector. In addition, there are also four independent (private) schools in the district [138] and others just over the district boundary in Elstree, Welwyn and Hemel

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[133] Source: NOMIS
[134] Source. NOMIS.
[135] GVA is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area
[136]
https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/regionalgrossvalueaddedbalancedbylocalauthorityintheuk - latest data 2016
[137] Source: NOMIS
[138] https://www.isc.co.uk/schools/ Nationally 7% of the total school population are educated in private schools. It has not been possible to establish a figure for St Albans

Hempstead. HCC commissions the places from existing schools. All new schools now need to be academies or free schools, approved by the Secretary of State. It is not possible to disaggregate data from the county to district level and it is appreciated that there will be some movement in and out of the district for schools. However, based on the latest (2018) survey, there is currently a surplus of primary school places[139] in the district and a shortage of secondary school places[140]. The council will need to work closely with HCC in any future review to plan for any future changes/ increases in schools provision that arise out of any new sites promoted for housing.

A2.23 Consistent with a population with high levels of qualifications amongst its workforce, academic performance in the district's schools is good. Ten of the twelve secondary schools in the district score well above average or above the average for England at Key Stage 4[141].

A2.24 Oaklands College in St Albans offers a range of full-time, part-time, apprenticeship and degree level courses and has over 5,000 students and apprentices. Improvement plans are in place to expand the teaching and associated accommodation at its Smallford campus[142].

Housing

A2.25 St Albans households comprise 2.3% of the households in the East of England. As of the end of the financial year 2018/19, there were 61,047 recorded homes in the district[143].

A2.26 The council is obliged to keep a record of the new homes it delivers annually in its Authority Monitoring Report[144] and to plan ahead too by reference to NPPF policy through the preparation of a Local Housing Need Assessment. The council prepared a joint report with its South West Hertfordshire neighbours in August 2020.

A2.27 Table A6 records the number of new homes built in the district each year since 2001/2. On average 445 new homes a year have been built, the overwhelming proportion of which are on previously developed land. Over the past five years (2015/6 to 2019/20), this has increased to on average 463 homes a year. This has been consistently below Government set standard methodology figure for the district of 893 homes a year. Using the Government set formula, it only has approximately 2.5 years' housing land supply.

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[139] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/schools-and-education/school-planning/summer-18-19-primary-meeting-demand.pdf

[140] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/schools-and-education/school-planning/summer-18-19-secondary-meeting-demand.pdf

[141] https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/compare-schools

[142] https://www.oaklands.ac.uk/news-events/news/detail/2017/11/10/62-million-campus-redevelopment-gets-the-green-light

[143] Source: ONS

[144] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/authoritys-monitoring-reports

Table A6 Dwellings Completions on Previously Developed Land (2001/02 – 2019/20) (Source: Authority Monitoring Report)

| Monitoring Year | Dwelling Completions (Gross) | | | |
	Previously Developed Land	Greenfield	Total	Percent Previously Developed Land (%)
2001/02	371	21	392	95
2002/03	295	54	349	85
2003/04	267	25	292	91
2004/05	612	34	646	95
2005/06	368	11	379	97
2006/07	437	3	440	99
2007/08	317	22	339	94
2008/09	457	9	466	98
2009/10	327	3	330	99
2010/11	433	61	494	88
2011/12	413	55	468	88
2012/13	217	183	400	54
2013/14	342	162	504	68
2014/15	321	77	398	81
2015/16	408	49	457	89
2016/17	358	46	404	89
2017/18	456	37	493	92
2018/19	677	62	739	92
2019/20	395	78	473	84
Total (% PDL Average)	7,471	992	8,463	88

A2.28 Over the last five years, the percentage of new homes that are affordable[145] has averaged at 17.2% (refer Table A7).

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[145] Refer Annex to the NPPF. Affordable housing is defined as: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers

Table A7 Affordable housing as a proportion of all new (net) homes completed (Source: Authority Monitoring Report)

Year	Total completions	Affordable	Percentage of completion that are affordable
2015/16	396	97	24
2016/17	340	59	17
2017/18	385	106	28
2018/19	624	82	13
2019/20	437	31	7
Total	**2,182**	**375**	**17.2**

A2.29 The lack of supply of housing and the attractiveness of living here is reflected in housing affordability tensions. A number of key findings from the LHNA reflect this. By way of example:

- The median house price in St Albans for 2019 was £530,000. House prices in St Albans are among the most expensive in England outside of London.
- Housing affordability pressures have substantially increased over the last 10 years (the housing affordability ratio[146] has risen from 10.05 to 16.09).
- The lower quartile average rent of a property for accommodation in St Albans was £950 pcm in September 2019, amongst the most expensive in England outside of London.
- The council is obliged to keep a Self Build Register of people who wish to build their own home. As of 1 January 2020, 450 successful were received on the register, 63% of all applicants across the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan area[147].

A2.30 Nonetheless, in other areas of housing stress, such as homelessness, the rate of official homelessness in St Albans (0.91 households per 1,000 households in the district January to March 2020[148]) is lower than the rate for England (1.56) for the same period.

Gypsy and travellers' housing

A2.31 The new Local Plan must also plan for future accommodation for gypsies and travellers too. Gypsy and travellers are statistically more likely to experience poorer health and other disadvantages than other groups in the district [149]. Figure A6 shows the distribution of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites in the

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[146] Median income to median house price – workbased data
[147] Source: LHNA (GL Hearn), August 2020
[148] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness
[149] https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/full-report.html

district. As of 2019, there were 87 pitches in public and private ownership[150][151]. Some do not benefit from planning permission.

Figure A7 Distribution of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites (2019) (Source: GTANA)
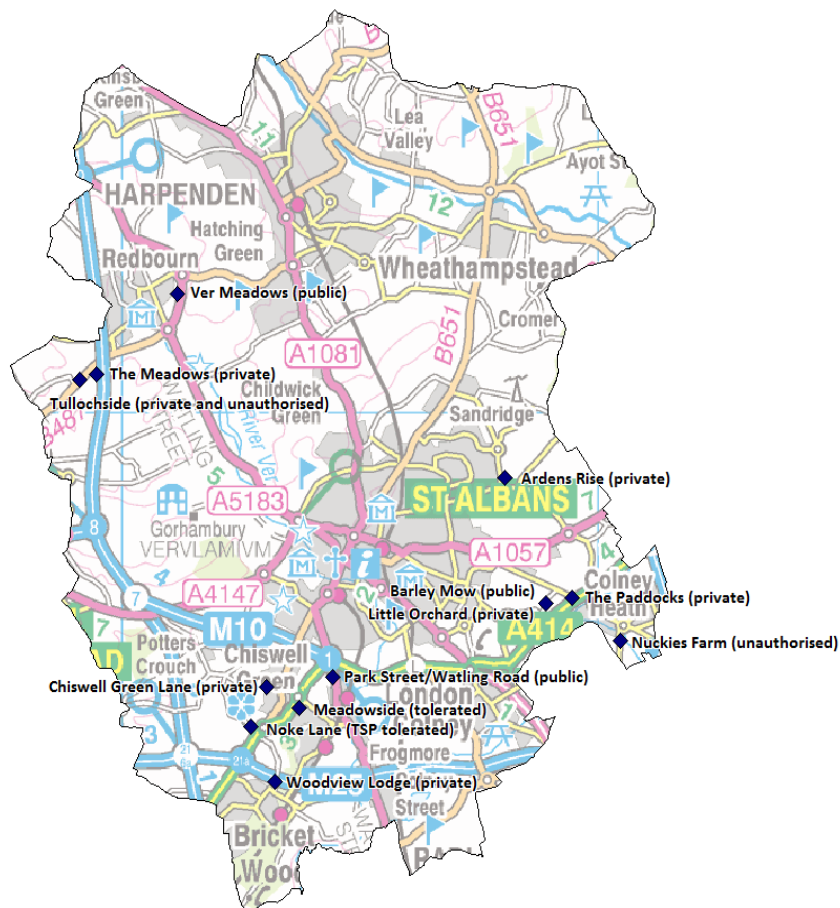
A2.32 The district needs to plan for 65 additional pitches for the period 2018 to 2033 for Gypsy and Traveller households meeting the Government's "planning" definition and up to 120 pitches if other households are included.

Transport and communication

Roads

A2.33 Highways England is responsible for the strategic road network in the district (M25, M1)[152] and HCC is the highway authority for the other roads in the district which includes 1600km of classified roads.

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[150] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP_EB_SAGypsyTravellerAccomNeedsAssess_tcm15-51282.pdf

[151] The Nuckies Farm site has subsequently been approved.

[152]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/860488/Network_management_08-01-2020.pdf

A2.34 The county's latest (2018)[153] published review of traffic and transport data confirms that there is congestion across the strategic road network at the peak hour (see Figure A8). The St Albans district area recorded 8.9 million vehicle kilometres a day on roads in the district of which 70% was on motorways, a disproportionately higher figure than all other districts in the county.

Figure A8 Congestion across the county (peak hour 2017) (Source: HCC)
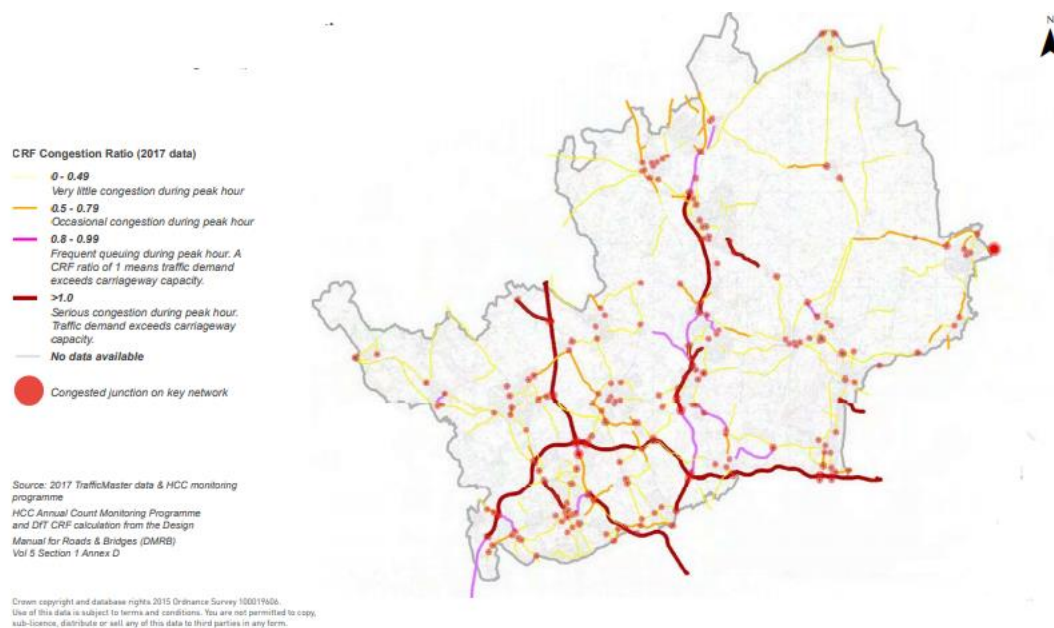
A2.35 The current forecast suggests an increase in road traffic across the whole of the East of England with an increase in road traffic in St Albans of 14.1% between 2017 and 2031 (refer Table A8). This is lower than the East of England and the rest of the county.

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[153] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/highways/transport-planning/transport-and-accident-data/ttdr/hertfordshire-traffic-and-transport-data-report-2018.pdf

Table A8 Forecast increase in road traffic by district across Hertfordshire and East of England (Source: HCC)

Area	2017-2021 All Roads (inc Trunk)	2017-2031 All Roads (inc Trunk)
EAST	6.5%	19.9%
Hertfordshire	6.3%	18.0%
Broxbourne	6.2%	18.3%
Dacorum	6.0%	17.4%
East Hertfordshire	5.9%	17.9%
Hertsmere	5.7%	16.0%
North Hertfordshire	8.0%	22.1%
St Albans	5.0%	14.1%
Stevenage	7.7%	21.1%
Three Rivers	5.3%	15.6%
Watford	6.5%	18.7%
Welwyn Hatfield	6.6%	19.0%

Source: TEMpro 7.2 based on National Trip End model AF15 Dataset. recasts by District

A2.36 Another local factor to take account of in transport is the very high level of car ownership in the district (see Table A9). This is a particular challenge given that the district is largely urban if assessed by settlement size. Despite high car ownership, the incidence for people killed or seriously injured on the roads of the district Albans in the period 2016/18 was 39.4 per 100,000 people, compared to 46.7 in the East of England and 42.6 in England [154]

Table A9 A Comparison of Car Availability by Percentage of Households (Source: Census 2011: QS416EW)

	St Albans	Hertford-shire	East of England	England
No cars or vans in household	13.5	16.9	18.5	25.8
1 car or van in household	42.9	42.2	42.9	42.2
2 cars or vans in household	33.8	30.9	29.1	24.7
3 cars or vans in household	7.1	7.2	6.9	5.5
4 or more cars or vans in household	2.7	2.8	2.6	1.9

A2.37 Covid 19 is currently disrupting traffic patterns especially for commuters. The percentage of households connected to superfast broadband in St Albans is 97.75%[155] which indicates that the district's office based workforce is likely to

[154] https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/wider-determinants/data#page/1/gid/1938133043/pat/6/par/E12000006/ati/101/are/E07000240/iid/93111/age/1/sex/4/cid/4/page-options/car-do-1_cin-ci-4_ovw-do-0
[155] 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

be resilient to potential long changes in working patterns, including the rise in home working. In the 2018 Hertfordshire Travel Survey, the district recorded the highest rate of residents working from home (50% of respondents of working age) of all districts.

A2.38 Nonetheless, cognisant of the projected long term trends in road traffic growth and the likelihood of the county's projected population growth (175,000 extra people by 2031), the county's Local Transport Plan 4 (2018)[156] (LTP4) seeks to accommodate this growth without a commensurate increase in the road network. It is therefore committed to promoting a change in travel behaviour and its plans seek to promote a mix of transport initiatives. The LTP4 identifies the following initiatives in the district:

- Transport improvements to support the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at the former Radlett Aerodrome and at East Hemel Hempstead to support an expanded Hemel Gardens Community;
- Junction improvements at A414/A1081;
- Cycle infrastructure improvement towns at Harpenden and St Albans;
- The promotion of St Albans as a Sustainable Travel Town; and
- Passenger Transport Hub/Coachway at M1 Junction 8 and A1(M) J8 as well as a bus rapid transport scheme on the A414 corridor.

Public transport

A2.39 The district has good regional transport connections with rail links connecting St Albans[157] and Harpenden with Luton Airport and Bedford in the north and with London St Pancras (and onward international Eurostar services), Gatwick Airport and Brighton in the south. A branch line connects St Albans Abbey Station with a number of local stations in the district to Watford Junction which provides onward connecting train services to London Euston, the Midlands, the north west of England, Wales and Scotland and the London Underground. Luton Airport is planning to expand its operations potentially to accommodate 32 million passengers a year. It is preparing an application for a development consent order[158].

A2.40 Planning permission was given by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for a strategic rail freight interchange at Radlett Aerodrome in 2014. Work has technically started on the project although it is not clear when this will be fully operational if at all.

A2.41 St Albans city centre is well connected on the local bus network (refer Figure A9) with services from North London, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Luton, Watford and Heathrow Airport, as well as routes to the city's suburbs and outlying shopping areas[159].

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[156] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/ltp4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf
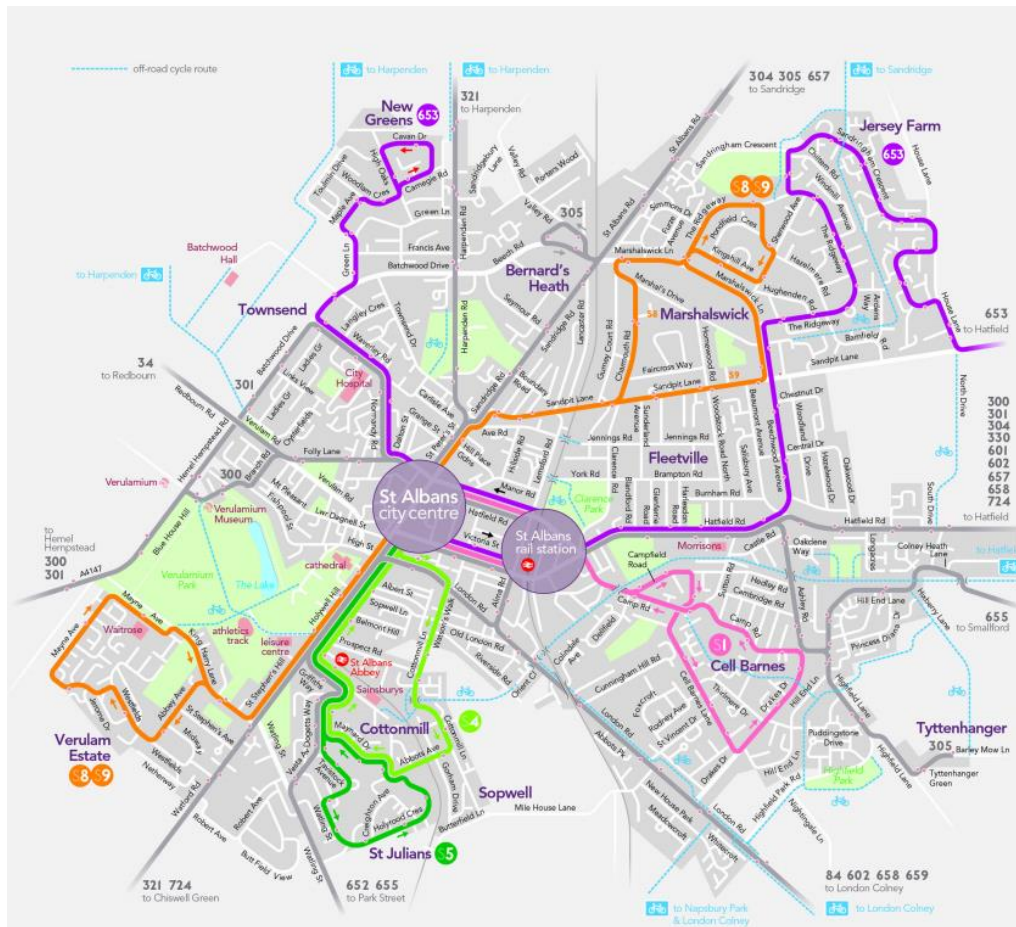
[157] St Albans City Station recorded over 7 million passengers a year, on par with many suburban London stations. It was the 68th busiest station in the UK.

[158] https://futureluton.llal.org.uk/

[159] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/public-transport/

Figure A9 Bus network from St Albans City Centre (Source: Enjoy St Albans)

A2.42 A community transport and Dial-A-Ride scheme operate for disabled passengers operated by Community Transport Hertfordshire.

A2.43 There are bus services and limited cycle routes that link the various settlements with other centres. The council has produced a cycle map of the district (refer Figure A10) and is working with HCC on a Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan to promote more cycling and address physical and other barriers to cycling.
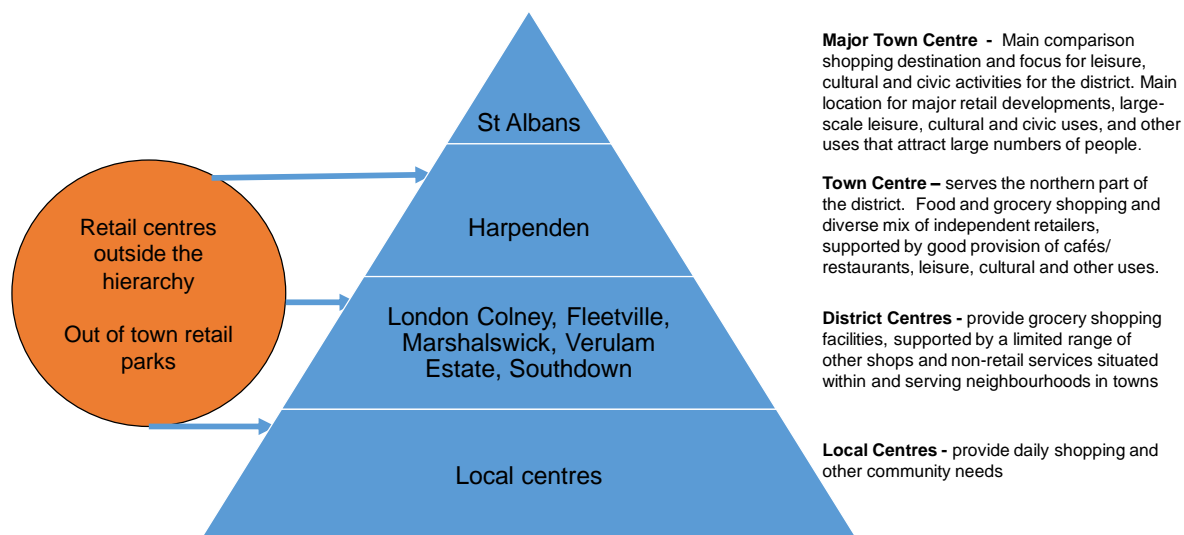
Figure A10 District Cycling Map
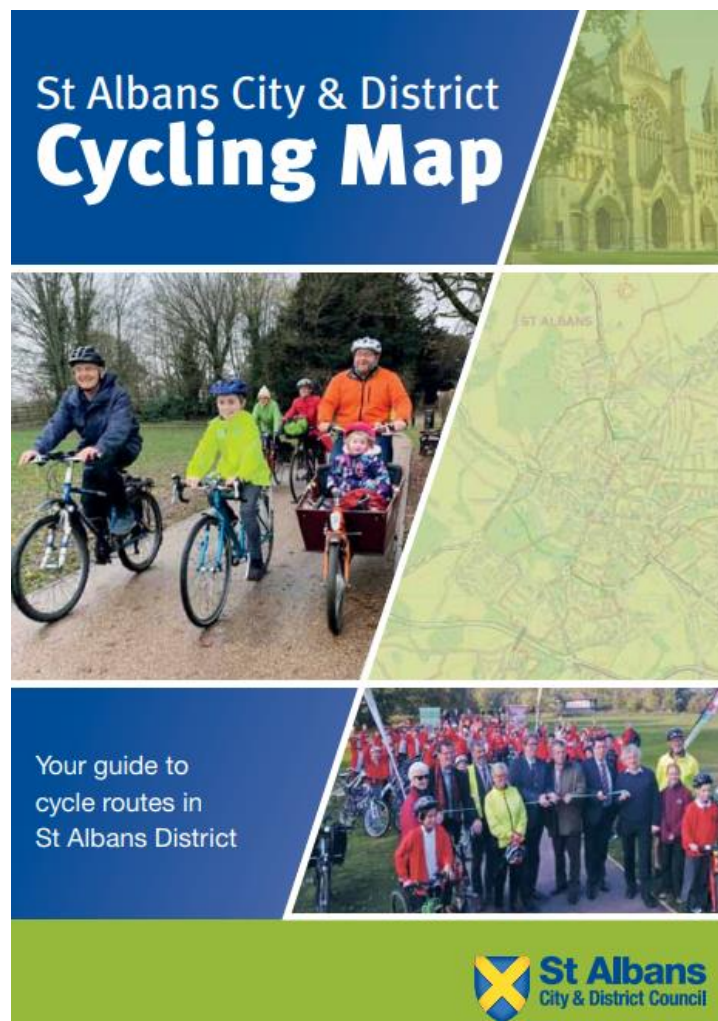
Hierarchy of centres

A2.44 There is a clear hierarchy of centres in the district (see Figure A11). Within the hierarchy St Albans is variously described as a Major Town Centre or Sub Regional Centre (with 71,990[160] sqm of retail and other main town centre uses) and a strong comparison retail offer too. Harpenden is a Town Centre (26,460 sqm) and there are five District Centres and a range of Local Centres below that. Beyond the district boundaries, there are major shopping facilities at Watford town centre (114,380 sqm) and, further afield, Brent Cross and Westfield London.

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[160] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/South%20West%20Hertfordshire%20Retail%20and%20Leisure%20Study%20-%20Part%201-%20Final%20Draft_tcm15-66977.pdf   Data collected in 2017, pre Covid 19

Figure A11 Hierarchy of centres in St Albans

Major Town Centre - Main comparison shopping destination and focus for leisure, cultural and civic activities for the district. Main location for major retail developments, large-scale leisure, cultural and civic uses, and other uses that attract large numbers of people.

Town Centre – serves the northern part of the district. Food and grocery shopping and diverse mix of independent retailers, supported by good provision of cafés/ restaurants, leisure, cultural and other uses.

District Centres - provide grocery shopping facilities, supported by a limited range of other shops and non-retail services situated within and serving neighbourhoods in towns

Local Centres - provide daily shopping and other community needs

A2.45 St Albans has a Business Improvement District [161] in place to promote the city centre's viability and vitality.

A2.46 The council monitors the performance of all of its centres annually. The vacancy rates in St Albans city centre (8%) and Harpenden town centre (4%) for July 2019 were substantially better than the Great Britain pre Covid 19 average rate of 12%. The mean vacancy rates in its five district centres was 6% (July 2019).

A2.47 The year 2020 has seen two significant factors that are likely to affect retail patterns and the hierarchy of the centres across the City and District of St Albans in time to come. First, Covid 19 has seen a closing down of much of the district's centres because of the spring 2020 lockdown so that data gathering for the 2019/20 Authority Monitoring Return may be inaccurate as a reflection of long term change. Moratoriums on rent payments have closed and many staff in the sector may not be re-employed once furlough arrangements end. Second, changes to Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (England) Order 1987 (as amended) have removed the old A, B1 and D Use Classes and given more flexibility for changes of use to take place without the need for planning permission including non-retail uses. In addition, out of town offices could convert to shops without planning permission. The policies and allocations in the new Local Plan will need to take account of such changes and how they might alter the hierarchy of centres in the district described above.

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[161] https://www.stalbansbid.com/

A3 Topic (c) human health

A3.1 St Albans is generally a healthy district. Female and male life expectancy (85.3 years and 82.7 years respectively) in St Albans is markedly higher than that for the East of England (83.7 and 80.3 years) or England (83.2 and 79.6 years). Life expectancy in St Albans has risen over the last ten years consistent with the regional and England average[162].

A3.2 The 2019 Health Profile for St Albans [163]provides the following summary in relation to the health of the District's population:

- The health of people in St Albans is generally better than the England average. St Albans is one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England. However, about 8.5% (2,355) children live in low income families.
- While life expectancy in St Albans is higher than the average for England, it is 4.5 years lower for men and 6.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of St Albans than in the least deprived areas.
- In Year 6, 11.1% of children were classified as obese, lower than the average for England. This is nonetheless an increase from the recorded figure (9.4%) in the 2015 profile.
- Levels of teenage pregnancy, GCSE attainment, breastfeeding and smoking in pregnancy are better than the England average.
- Rates for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions of teenagers and adults, excess weight in adults (aged 18+) and physically active adults (aged 19+) are better or significantly better than the England average.
- The rates of statutory homelessness, violent crime (hospital admissions for violence), under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases and under 75 mortality rate from cancer are better than the England average.
- Priorities in St Albans include reducing levels of excess weight in adults, helping the expanding older population maintain their health and reducing the prevalence of smoking.

A3.3 In the 2011 Census, people were asked about their general state of health. Table A10 shows the percentage of resident population in each group that classify themselves as being in either very good, good, fair, bad or very bad health and also provides the percentages of people that have limiting long term illnesses, are of working age and have a limiting long term illness and finally the percentage of households with one or more person with a limiting long term illness. This data is recorded for England, East of England, Hertfordshire and St Albans.

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[162] Source: ONS data
[163] https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profiles/2019/e07000240.html?area-name=st%20albans#:~:text=The%20health%20of%20people%20in,higher%20than%20the%20England%20average.

Table A10 Population breakdown by health group[164] (Source: Census)

	England	East of England	Hertfordshire	St Albans
General health: Very Good	47.17%	47.23%	50.90%	55.12%
General health: Good	34.22%	35.23%	33.93%	31.86%
General health: Fair	13.12%	12.87%	11.25%	9.81%
General health: Bad	4.25%	3.64%	3.07%	2.50%
General health: Very bad	1.25%	1.03%	0.85%	0.71%
People with a limiting long term illness	17.60%	16.70%	14.30%	12.90%
People of working age with a limiting long term illness	12.75%	11.40%	9.58%	8.28%
Households with one or more person with a limiting long term illness	40.94%	24.57%	22.27%	20.36%

Healthcare

A3.4   There are four major acute hospitals in the county with one in the district, the St Albans City Hospital. Watford Hospital is the closest hospital with specialist emergency facilities (e.g. intensive care). Having regard to GP provision, there was (as of 2018) an overall clinical space deficit for current patient registrations in the east and north east of Hemel Hempstead, Wheathampstead, St Albans, Harpenden, Redbourn, London Colney and Bricket Wood as a whole. Some GP practices with capacity for additional patients and others are constrained or severely constrained. Currently, there is constraint in almost all areas identified above; the exceptions with capacity being the surgery in Redbourn and one surgery in London Colney.[165]

A3.5   St Albans City & District performs better than average on the majority of healthcare indicators. Healthcare in the region is set to come under pressure with the ageing population- the 90+ age group is projected to increase by over 200% (2700 people) from 2014-2039. As a means to reduce pressure, HCC's Public Health Strategy 2017-2021[166] and the district's own health strategy support a focus on the prevention of ill health, including building mental resilience and promoting healthy weight amongst all age groups. There is also a call for the NHS to work with external bodies responsible for wider determinants of health, such as housing and accessibility to green space. The council has since 2014 from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to commission

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[164] http://atlas.hertslis.org/IAS/dataviews/tabular?viewId=1144&geoId=16&subsetId=
[165] 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
[166] https://www.healthierfuture.org.uk/publications/2017/november/hertfordshire-public-health-service-strategy-2017-21

local projects aimed at improving health and wellbeing including colocation of health and council services.[167]

A3.6 As part of the last Green Infrastructure Plan in 2011, consultants were engaged to undertake an assessment of Hertfordshire's districts in relation to Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)[168]. The results for the district were that:

- 52.1% of households lie within 300 m of an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 ha;
- 80.5% lie within 2 km of a site of at least 20 ha;
- 97.8 lie within 5 km of a site of at least 100 ha; and
- 4% lie within 10 km of a site of at least 500 ha.

A3.7 This countywide Green Infrastructure Plan is currently being reviewed. At a local level, the council has commissioned an update to its playing pitch strategy. The findings of both documents will be used to inform the evolving new Local Plan as well as later iterations of the Sustainability Appraisal.

A3.8 As of January 2019, the council provides, manages and maintains 763 allotment plots across 11 sites within the district. A further 29 allotment sites providing approximately 1,069 plots are located in the parish and town council areas of: London Colney; Colney Heath: Wheathampstead; Redbourn; St Stephens; and Harpenden Town. An additional two sites totalling 82 plots are managed privately by the Highfield Park Trust. There was a waiting list of 131 on council owned sites[169].

A3.9 There are 17 parks and public gardens across the district, ranging from the 54 hectare Verulamium Park to the tiny 227 sq m Glossop Memorial Garden[170]. They contain a range of disparate facilities which make them attractive to potential visitors, some from a wide area and others primarily local to a particular park or garden.

A3.10 According to the Sport England Active Lives Survey (2019), 81% of respondents in St Albans stated that they engaged in sport or physical activity at least once in the last month. Over two thirds of survey respondents stated that they were physically active for at least 150 minutes a week (refer Figure A12), marginally above the rates for the East of England and England. This appears to have declined marginally since the 2015 survey.

[167][167] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/news/health-and-wellbeing-strategy-st-albans-district-updated

[168] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/SP_GreenInfrastructurePlan_March2011_tcm15-46531.pdf

[169] 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

[170] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces

Figure A12 Levels of physical activity at least 150 minutes a week in the period 2015 to 2019 (Source: Sport England)
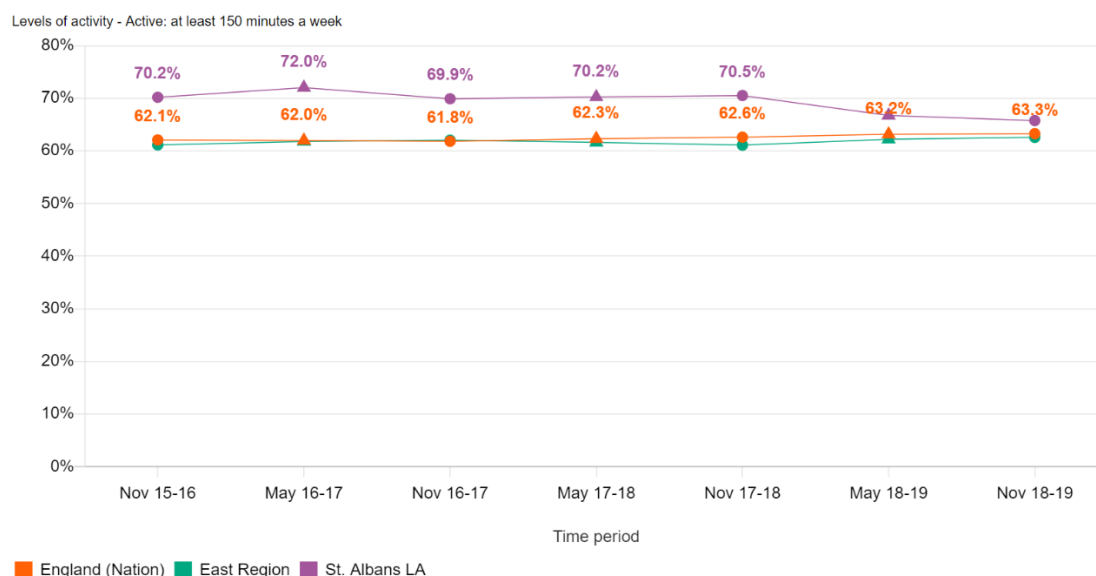

A4   Topic (f) soil

A4.1   The geology of the county is the major factor determining its topography (the hills and valleys) and its soils. These, together with the climate, determine the natural vegetation and habitats which support the range of species and influence farming practices. The combination of all these factors results in the distinctive landscape of each part of the county.

A4.2   The solid geology of Hertfordshire is relatively simple, being largely chalk of the Cretaceous period, overlain in the south and east by London Clay. In the far north and north-west of the county are small areas of Gault Clay. Throughout much of the county, the superficial deposits which overlay the solid geology complicate the picture. These include the Clay-with-flints of much of west Hertfordshire, including the Chilterns dip slope; the boulder clay of central and east Hertfordshire; and the gravels of the Vale of St Albans and the river valleys[171].

A4.3   South-west Hertfordshire's soils are mainly classified as grade 3 agricultural land, with some grade 2 soils especially to the west of Hemel Hempstead and in the south east of the district[172] (refer Figure A13).

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[171] http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity_vision/chapter_02_geology.pdf
[172] Natural England (2010) Agricultural Land Classification map Eastern Region(ALC008)
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/127056?category=5954148537204736

Figure A13 Soil classification (Source: DEFRA)
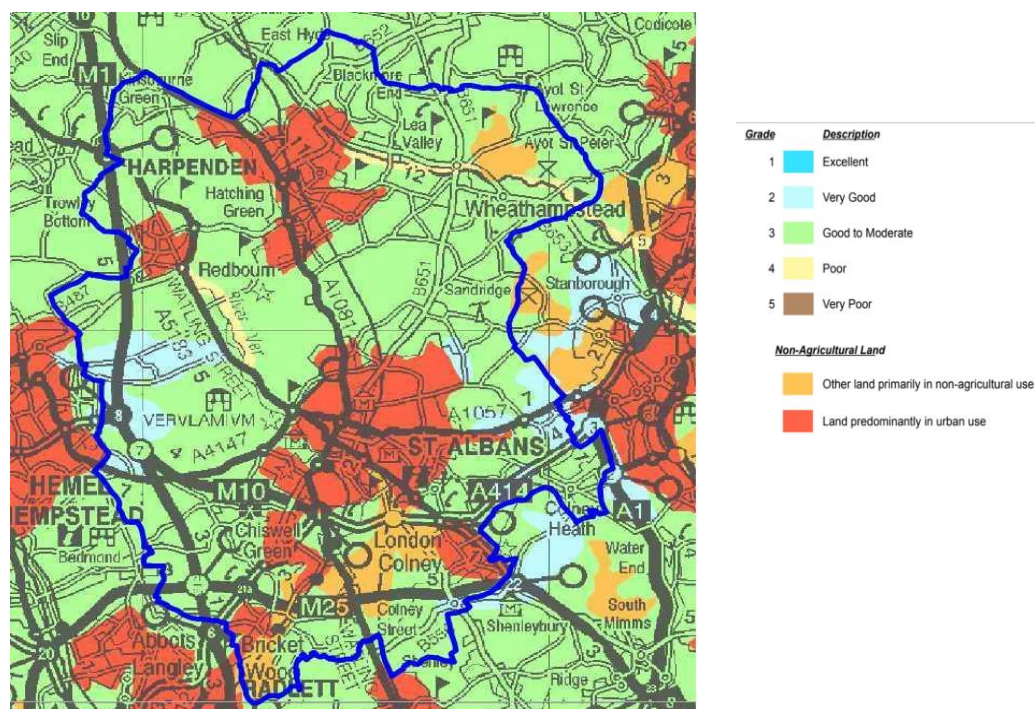
A4.4 The district contains a number of different soilscapes. The predominant soilscape is 'Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage', which has moderate to high fertility. There are also areas of 'Freely draining slightly acid loamy soils' (with low fertility); 'Slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils (with low fertility); 'Loamy and clayey floodplain soils with naturally high groundwater' (with moderate fertility); and 'Freely draining slightly acid but base-rich soils'; (with high fertility)[173]. The covers a relatively narrow area stretching from Chiswell Green to the north west of Redbourn, with one 'finger' off to north Hemel Hempstead and a second off to Sandridge/Marshalswick south of Wheathamstead/south-west Harpenden.

A4.5 Major impacts on soil are soil loss, contamination or compaction which can stem from a variety of sources, such as:

- Erosion;
- New developments (e.g. housing and accompanying infrastructure);
- Nutrient loss and diffuse pollution from agriculture;
- Climate change;
- Air pollution and run-off from roads; and,
- Quarrying.

A4.6 In recent years, Hertfordshire has seen a number of sinkholes appearing; a result of the predominantly chalk geology.

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[173] http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/index.cfm#

A5   Topic (g) water

Flood risk

A5.1   The district is covered by the Rivers Lee, Ver, Colne and Ellen Brook and their tributaries. An estimated 500 to 1000 households would be affected by a 1 in 100 year flood risk event, a relatively low figure compared to other areas[174]. There are nonetheless a number of Local flood risk hotspots in the district susceptible to small scale flooding from various sources. For example in the upper Colne catchment London Colney was affected by flooding in September 1992 and Winter 2000/01; and Colney Heath in 1947, 1979, 1992, 1993 and 2000. The risk of flooding is also expected to increase with climate change. Therefore, it is important that appropriate planning control and management is achieved in the wider river basins in order to help reduce this risk.

A5.2   HCC is the Lead Local Flood Authority for the district and formulates the local flood risk management strategy. Separate from this, the council consults the Environment Agency on planning proposals that may affect flood risk areas including flood risk assessments affecting all sites of 1ha or larger in area. It did not issue any planning decision contrary to the Environment Agency's advice in 2019/20.

Water quality

A5.3   The main sources of water quality information are the River Basin Management Plans which provide information on the ecological and chemical status of water bodies. The Environment Agency also keeps a catchment data tool with supports and builds on River Basin Management Plans. Its data shows that much of the district lies within a Source Protection Zone for groundwater[175]. The district is in the Thames River Basin District (a wider area that covers 16,000 sq km) and is also in the Lee Upper and Colne Catchment Areas.

A5.4   The latest River Basin Management Plan for the Thames Basin [176] confirms five main challenges. These are:

- Physical modifications - affecting 44% of water bodies in this river basin district including flood defences and weirs, and changes to the size and shape of natural river channels for land drainage and navigation.
- Pollution from waste water – affecting 45% of water bodies in this river basin district including waste water, sewage including from privately owned septic tanks. Population growth and changes in rainfall patterns are increasing the pressure on the sewer network.
- Pollution from towns, cities and transport - affecting 17% of water bodies in this river basin district including rainwater from urban areas which carries pollutants.

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[174] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/planning-building-control/planning-policy/examination-library/South%20West%20Hertfordshire%20Strategic%20Flood%20Risk%20Assessment%20-%20Appendix%20A%20St%20Albans%20-%20Final%20Draft_tcm15-66973.pdf
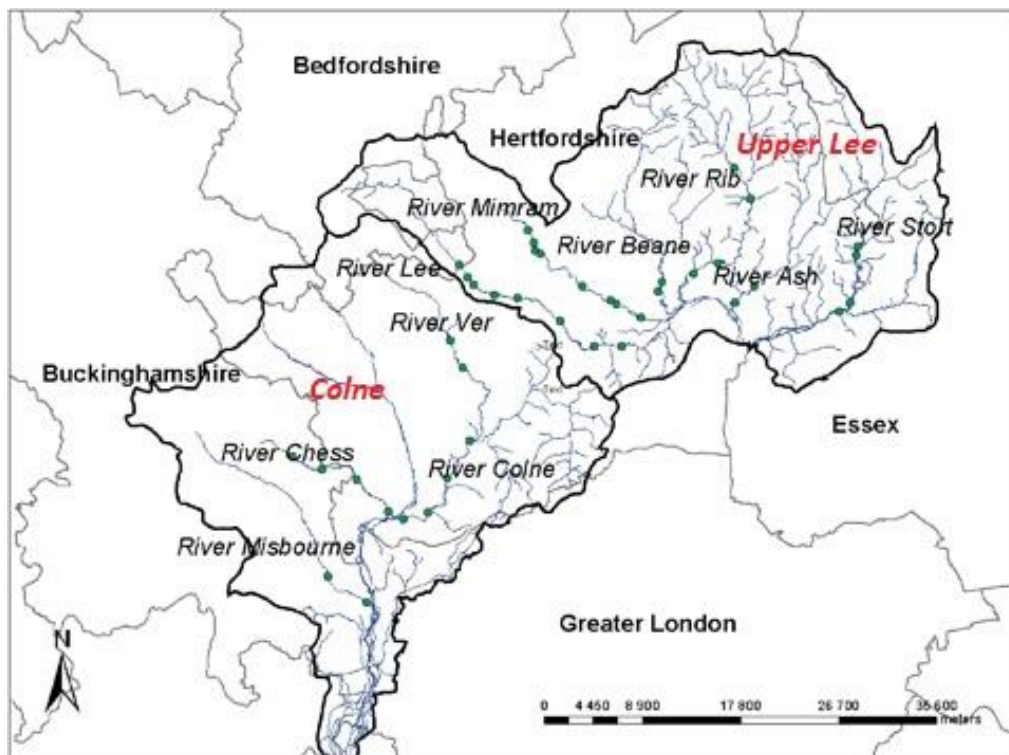
[175] http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/37833.aspx

[176] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/river-basin-management-plans-2015

- Changes to the natural flow and level of water - affecting 12% of water bodies in this river basin district Reduced flow and water levels in rivers and groundwater caused by human activity (such as abstraction) or less rainfall than usual can mean that there is not enough water for people to use and wildlife might not be able to survive. Climate change research shows that by 2050 England can expect significant seasonal variations, with higher winter and lower summer flows, and a reduction in flow overall. In the long term, there will be less water available to abstract for drinking, industry and irrigating crops.
- Negative effects of invasive non-native species - affecting 3% of water bodies in this river basin district Non-native invasive species can have significant economic impacts. Climate change is thought to drive certain species northwards, increasing their frequency and variety in the future and affecting the condition of water bodies.

A5.4 There are two catchment management areas in the district (the Colne and the Upper Lee catchment). The multi-agency River Colne Catchment Action Network monitors the Colne[177] and the River Lee Catchment Partnership [178] the Upper Lee.

Figure A14 Catchment areas in the district (Source: Environment Agency)

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2008

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[177] http://www.colnecan.org.uk/
[178] http://www.riverleacatchment.org.uk/index.php/upper-lea-home

A5.5 The status of the main water courses in St Albans[179] using the Water Framework Directive is as follows:

- River Ver: overall status was moderate in 2019, compared with bad in 2013 (ecological status is recorded as "moderate", chemical status is recorded as "fail");
- Upper Colne and Ellen Brook: overall status was moderate in 2019, the same status as in 2013 (ecological status is recorded as "moderate", chemical status is recorded as "fail");
- River Colne (from Confluence with Ver to Gade): overall status was poor in 2019, compared to moderate in 2013 (ecological status is recorded as "poor", chemical status is recorded as "fail"); and
- Lee Upper (from Luton Hoo Lakes to Hertford): overall status was moderate in 2019, the same status as 2013 (ecological status is recorded as "moderate", chemical status is recorded as "fail").

Water use

A5.6 Hertfordshire has one of the highest water consumption rates in the UK, with domestic water use recorded as averaging out at 166 litres per head per day (l/h/d), compared to the overall national average of 147 l/h/d in 2011.

A5.7 Affinity Water is the water company that supplies water to homes and businesses in the county. It is aiming to reduce the amount of water that is abstracted without affecting availability of water for customers.

A5.8 The impact of these high water consumption levels is exacerbated by the fact that St Albans is located in the driest region in the country. The East of England receives only two thirds of the average UK annual rainfall. Many of the region's surface and ground waters are under severe pressure. Water resources are over abstracted in the region. Hertfordshire's natural water environment is constantly at risk from periods of drought and floods. Groundwater resources are now at or approaching full utilisation, and many rivers and streams including the River Ver and River Colne[180] suffer from low flows which detrimentally impacts upon water quality. The River Ver dried up in 2019. Climate change could also contribute to a 5% loss of available water resource by 2035[181].

A5.9 HCC has identified the following interlinked water challenges for the county that the Local Plan and this SA must take into account (refer Figure A15).
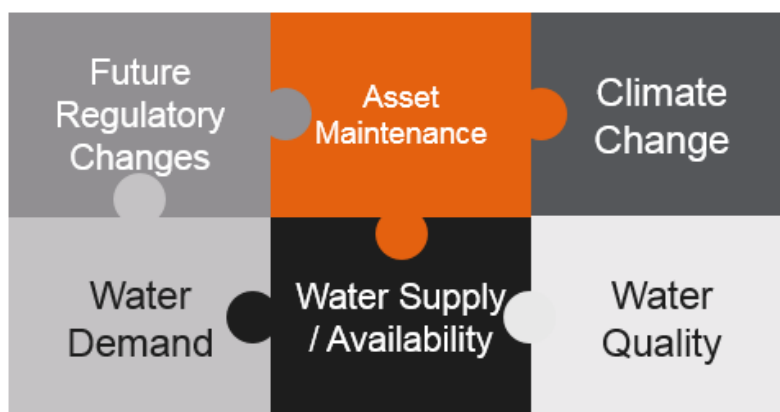
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[179] Using the Environment Agency Catchment data tool https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/search?type=placename&k=ST.%20ALBANS&q=http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/so/Town/st-albans
[180] http://www.colnecan.org.uk/
[181] http://www.hertslink.org/buildingfutures/content/migrated/obdocs/pdfs/waterjan11.pdf

Figure A15 Future water challenges for Hertfordshire (Source: HCC)

A5.10 Groundwater and rivers supply water for local people, and 90% of water abstracted is used for this purpose. The Chilterns Chalk Streams are particularly susceptible to over abstraction. The Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) for the Colne catchment identified that the underlying chalk aquifer is assessed as being 'over-abstracted'.

A6   Topic (h) air

A6.1   Monitoring of air quality helps to ensure that levels of identified pollutants remain below national standards and targets so that human health and eco systems are protected. Identified pollutants include: Nitrogen oxides (NO_X); Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2); Particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$); Sulphur dioxide (SO_2); Benzene; Carbon monoxide (CO); and 1, 3-butadiene.

A6.2   The main source of air pollution within St Albans District is generated from vehicle emissions[182]. Monitoring of NO_2 throughout the district is done using a network of passive diffusion tubes. There are currently 45 diffusion tubes within the network including one triplicate site. In June and July 2017, seven diffusion tube sites were closed and two were relocated to nearby sites[183].

A6.3   In 2017, St Albans was recorded to have a mean reading of 10.3 $\mu g/m^3$ of pollution from $PM_{2.5}$, a rate that is both higher than both the average for the East of England (9.7 $\mu g/m^3$) and England (8.9 $\mu g/m^3$) [184].

A6.4   Three AQMAs have formally been declared within the District in relation to the annual mean air quality objective (annual mean standard in excess of 40 $\mu g/m^3$ for NO_2):

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[182] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/2017%20ASR%20St%20Albans%20Final_tcm15-63128.pdf
[183] https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/Environmental%20and%20Sustainability/air-pollution/St%20Albans%20ASR%202018%20v1_tcm15-66653.pdf   Annual Status Report December 2018
[184]
https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Environmental%20Services/Air%20Quality%20Annual%20Status%20Report%202019.pdf

- AQMA No 1: The area comprising 1-7 London Road and 2-38 London Road, St Albans and 1-11c Holywell Hill (see Figure A16).
- AQMA No 2: The area comprising Beechtree Cottages, Hemel Hempstead Road, St Albans (adjacent to junction of M1 (J7) and the now renamed A414 (formerly the M10) and;
- AQMA No 7: An area encompassing a number of domestic properties in Frogmore and Colney Street in the vicinity of the M25.

Figure A16 AQMA No.1 boundaries (Source: DEFRA)
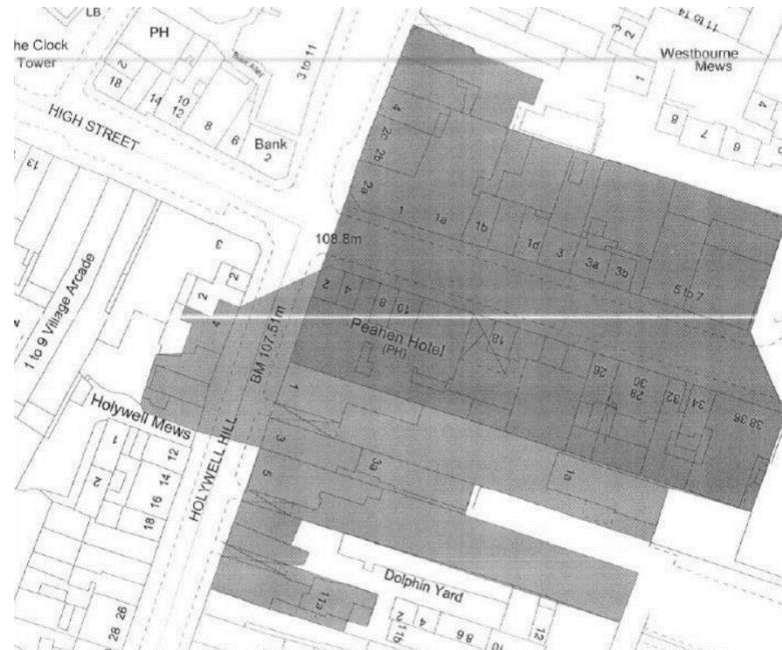
A6.5   Whereas AQMAs 2 and 7 are relatively isolated and affected by motorway traffic, the AQMA No 1 area is a city centre location which has a number of busy streets where canyon effects of pollution are evident. The latest Annual Status Report notes that emissions in the city centre have fallen and some initiatives have been undertaken in the city centre including an anti-idling campaign and measures to fit buses with exhaust treatments to reduce pollutants. It points to the need to continue to promote a number of "Green Travel" initiatives including cycling, public transport, car sharing/ car clubs and the use of electric vehicles. There is an opportunity in the new Local Plan to address this matter given that the city centre, as a Major Town Centre and location for business, performs a number of roles across the district.

A7   Topic (i) climatic factors

A7.1   In 2018, St Albans recorded the second highest carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions per capita in Hertfordshire (out of the 10 local authority areas). The CO_2 per capita emissions for St Albans are higher than the average figures for Hertfordshire and the East of England. St Albans figures are somewhat aligned with the average for England and the UK, though do not show decline in recent years that is apparent in the national (UK) average figures (see Figure A16).

A7.2   Per capita emissions in the District have shown an overall decline since 2005 (from 8.6 tonnes CO_2 per person to 6.35 tonnes CO_2 in 2014). However this includes a slight increase in 2012. This follows the regional and national trends.

Figure A17 Per capita CO_2 emission estimates 2005-2018 (t CO_2 per person)[185] (Source: BEIS)
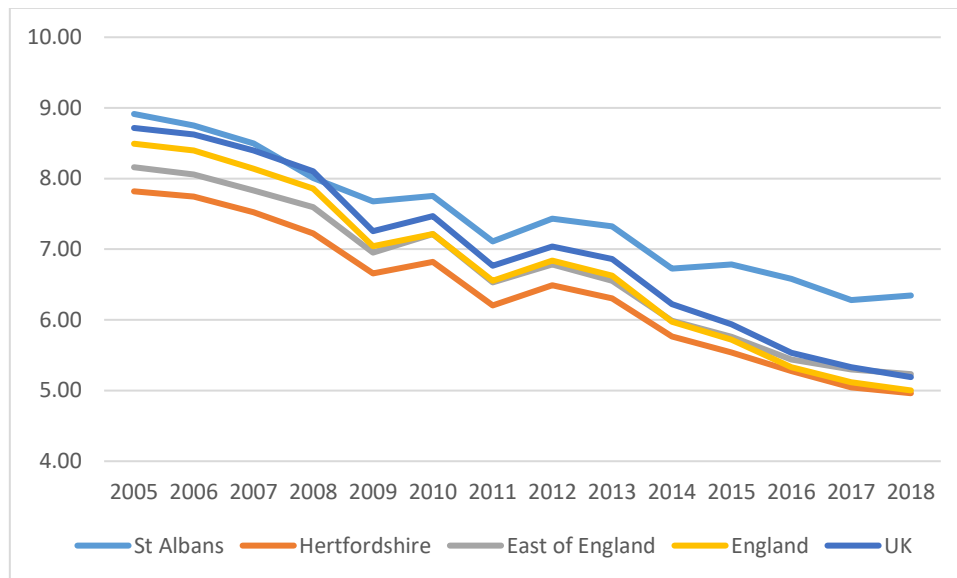
A7.3   In 2018, about 25% of emissions were produced from energy use (mainly electricity and gas) in St Albans homes (compared to 31% in 2005 and 33% in 2010). The industry and commercial sector contributed about 13% of emissions (compared to 21% in 2005 and 21% in 2010). Transport contributed around 62% of emissions within the district (an increase from 47% in 2005 and 46% in 2010). These were almost entirely attributed to road transport (99%). The emissions from car traffic are to be expected given the presence of the M1 and M25 in the district.

Renewable energy

A7.4   There are no major renewable energy installations in the district.   As of 2018, there was an estimated 1,185 installations of renewable energy in the district, the vast majority being solar panels. Many domestic installations of renewable energy schemes do not require planning permission so others may exist without the council's knowledge.

Effects of climate change

A7.5   The new Local Plan will both need to develop policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the council's and HCC's declarations of a climate emergency and demonstrate measures to mitigate climate change. By the

[185] BEIS National Statistics (2018) UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2018

years 2050, Hertfordshire could see a 17% increase in rainfall or snow in winter, with a 19% decrease in rainfall during the summer[186].

A7.6 Future climate change is likely to have the following effects:

- Implications for agricultural practices, such as change in crops grown and season of activity;
- Threats to the natural environment and native biodiversity;
- Implications for human health;
- Risks and opportunities for local businesses;
- Opportunities for leisure and tourism sector;
- Weather-related disruption of transport system;
- New types of building design and existing buildings no longer being fit for purpose;
- Drought conditions and associated restrictions following prolonged dry periods - the Environment Agency declared the first environmental drought in Hertfordshire and North London in 2019 reflecting three drier than average years and high water consumption; and
- Increased river and surface water flood risk[187].

A8 Topic (j) material assets

Land for housing and economic development

A8.1 The council has historically delivered a significantly higher proportion of its new housing and new commercial development on previously developed or brownfield land relative to the average in England. In the financial year 2019/20, 84% of new homes were built on previously developed land, a reduction from the average (from 2001/2 to 2019/20) of 88%[188]. This is a significantly higher figure than the rate across England (53% in 2017/18)[189].

A8.2 The district's good performance in this area reflects the fact that the current Local Plan dates from 1994 and predates the introduction of the NPPF (originally in 2012) which seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing and has facilitated release of land in Green Belts elsewhere in England. Green Belt can only be released for housing and other development though the plan making process in "exceptional circumstances".

A8.3 The government has proposed higher housing targets for the district in recent years. Using its 2014-set standard methodology, this would have required the council to deliver 893 net new homes a year. The White Paper for Planning (2020) proposes a higher number of 996 homes a year. The council cannot demonstrate five years' housing land using either of these recent housing

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[186] Hertfordshire Building Futures toolkit, Climate Adaptation

[187] http://atlas.hertslis.org/IAS/profiles/profile?profileId=973&geoTypeId=16&geoIds=26_   and https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/sustainable-hertfordshire/sustainable-hertfordshire.aspx#climatechange

[188] This figure will have included garden land which, until 2010, was recorded as "previously developed land".

[189]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805435/Land_Use_Change_Statistics_England_2017-18.pdf

methodologies. While some new housing will inevitably continue to come forward from brownfield land and from other reforms to permitted development rights introduced in recent years, the council is highly likely to have to consider releases of Green Belt land if it cannot find a neighbouring authority to cooperate and take some of the district's requirements.

A8.4   The new Local Plan will therefore need to identify ways to limit new housing growth to the minimum possible and prioritise ways in which land can be released to protect best and most versatile agricultural land, land with mineral resource potential and land with ecological and landscape value.

Waste

A8.5   HCC is the waste disposal authority and the minerals and waste planning authority for the county. Locally, the district council runs the household refuse and recycling collection service for all residents in the district.

A8.6   In Hertfordshire, overall waste produced fell between 2017/18 and 2018/19 marginally with 483,073 tonnes of household waste being produced. There has been a downward trend in household waste generation per household since 2012/3 with the district performance generally following that of other districts in the county (refer Table A11).

Table A11 Household waste generation per household, Hertfordshire districts (Source: Hertfordshire Waste Partnership)

Year	Broxbourne	Dacorum	East Herts	Hertsmere	North Herts	St Albans	Stevenage	Three Rivers	Watford	Wel / Hat	Herts CC	H W P
2018/19	871	851	884	863	803	838	829	864	810	800	143	985
2017/18	916	873	901	899	866	859	846	899	841	788	144	1,013
2016/17	923	895	889	904	872	868	861	907	859	821	145	1,024
2015/16	907	895	910	912	875	869	881	927	858	871	141	1,031
2014/15	930	887	906	920	866	869	890	950	855	931	157	1,055
2013/14	919	898	902	923	856	877	857	953	845	962	158	1,056
2012/13	925	898	888	898	869	865	842	929	828	930	125	1,013
2011/12	957	912	913	946	894	874	846	975	861	955	151	1,063

A8.7   Data for 2019/20 shows that district households produced 50,390 tonnes of waste. 31,732 tonnes of this (62.97%) was recycled, composted or sent to an anaerobic digestion plant to produce energy. The remaining 18,658 tonnes were disposed of. 90% was incinerated to create energy, and the remaining 10% was buried in landfill outside of Hertfordshire. More of St Albans household waste collected in 2018/19 (62.1%) was recycled compared to the East of England (48.5%) and England (43.5%) average. The district has the fifth highest recycling rate in England.

A8.8 A long term solution to the disposal of Hertfordshire's residual waste (waste not reused, recycled or composted) is being developed. In the meantime, short term interim residual waste disposal contracts are currently in place. These are:

- **Ardey ERF** -this site in Oxfordshire accepts waste from the Waterdale Transfer Station.
- **Westmill Landfill** just north of Ware - the only contracted disposal location located within Hertfordshire.
- **Milton and Bletchley Landfill** - this landfill is located in Cambridgeshire and accepts a portion of North Hertfordshire's residual waste, mainly from the Royston area. In addition, residual waste from both the privately operated Hitchin Transfer Station and the Waterdale Transfer Station is delivered to the Bletchley Landfill site in Buckinghamshire.
- **Greatmoor ERF -** this ERF has recently been completed near Calvert, Buckinghamshire. Greatmoor ERF started accepting residual waste from Hertfordshire in December 2015, further increasing the diversion of Hertfordshire's waste from landfill [190].

A8.9 These arrangements, whilst indicating a move from the use of landfill sites to ERF, demonstrate that Hertfordshire has a lack of in-county disposal options and a need for increased waste transfer by road to access regional facilities.

Waste water and sewage

A8.10 Thames Water covers most of Hertfordshire's drainage catchment split into two main catchments, each with a sewage treatment works (STW). In the east is Rye Meads STW (near Ware) and to the west is Maple Lodge STW located in Rickmansworth. The Maple Lodge site serves Hemel Hempstead along with St Albans and Watford and given the future growth planned for this area will need to have upgrades in order to provide sufficient treatment capacity[191].

Aggregates and minerals

A8.11 HCC is the minerals planning authority for the area. The district council has a duty to cooperate with HCC as it discharges its functions to facilitate the need to provide a sufficient supply of minerals to meet future needs and to secure their long term conservation. For the new Local Plan, this includes acknowledging the county's minerals resources and other infrastructure and not prejudicing their operations. HCC keeps a Minerals Plan but prepares regular Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA), the latest of which was prepared in 2019.

A8.12 Hertfordshire's geology is primarily chalk bedrock from the Cretaceous period, with a covering of London Clay in the south and the east of the county. In the very north and northwest of the county there are some small areas of Gault Clay. Lying on top of the bedrock, there are superficial deposits of Clay-with-

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[190] Hertfordshire Quality of Life Report (2016)
http://atlas.hertslis.org/IAS/profiles/profile?profileId=961&geoTypeId=16&geoIds=26
[191] Water Cycle Scoping Study. Hyder 2010. NEEDS AN UPDATE. CAN'T FIND ONE.

flints covering a large proportion of west Hertfordshire, including the Chilterns dip slope. Boulder clay can be found in central and east Hertfordshire, while there are gravel deposits in the Vale of St Albans and the river valleys[192] (refer Figure A18).

Figure A18 Geological map of the main mineral resources for Hertfordshire (Source: LAA 2019) [193]
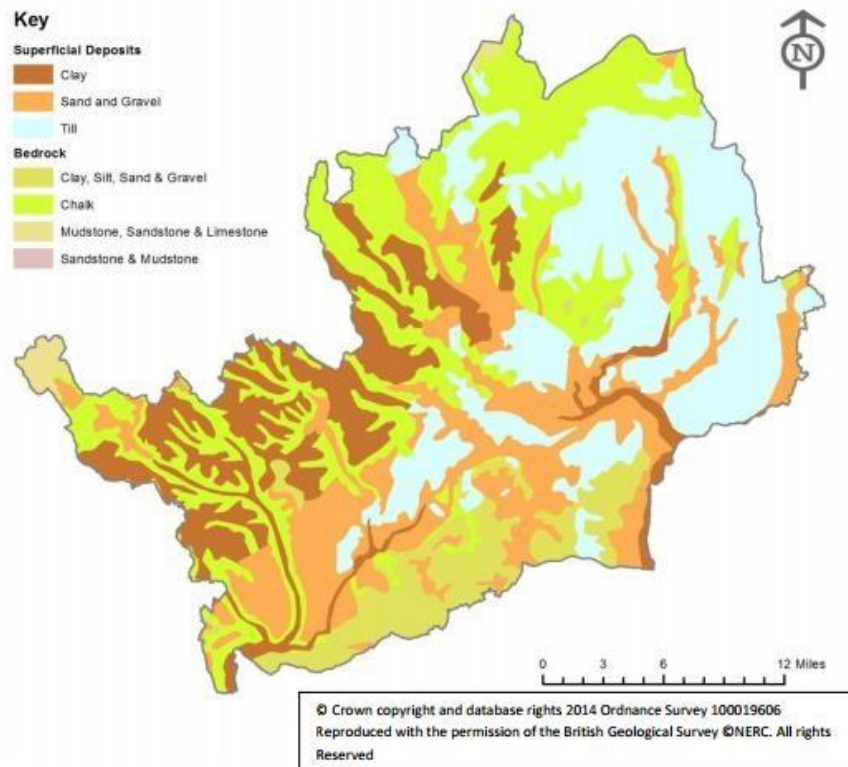
A8.13 Sand and gravel is the most commonly worked mineral in Hertfordshire, with land-won sand and gravel providing the only source of soft sand and sharp sand. The sand and gravel resources are found in most parts of the county, although they are particularly concentrated in a belt sitting across the southern half of the county (south of a line between Bishop Stortford in the east and Hemel Hempstead in the west) (see Figure A18). This area entirely covers the local authority areas of Watford, Three Rivers, Hertsmere, Welwyn Hatfield and Broxbourne. Large parts of St Albans and East Hertfordshire are also covered along with a small part of Dacorum[194].

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[192] Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire 2006, www.hef.org.uk
[193] Source: BGS & ODPM, 2003, Technical report CR/03/075/N Mineral Resource Information in support of National, Regional and Local Planning: Hertfordshire and Northwest London Boroughs
[194] Hertfordshire Minerals Planning (2015) 'Local Aggregate Assessment' http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/docs/pdf/l/locaggass2015.pdf

A8.14 Soft sand is relatively scarce within Hertfordshire and is concentrated within a small number of areas, meaning that the county in general has to import this resource from elsewhere; however sharp sand and gravel are more widely distributed across Hertfordshire (see Figure A19).

Figure A19 Sand and gravel belt in Hertfordshire (source: LAA 2019)
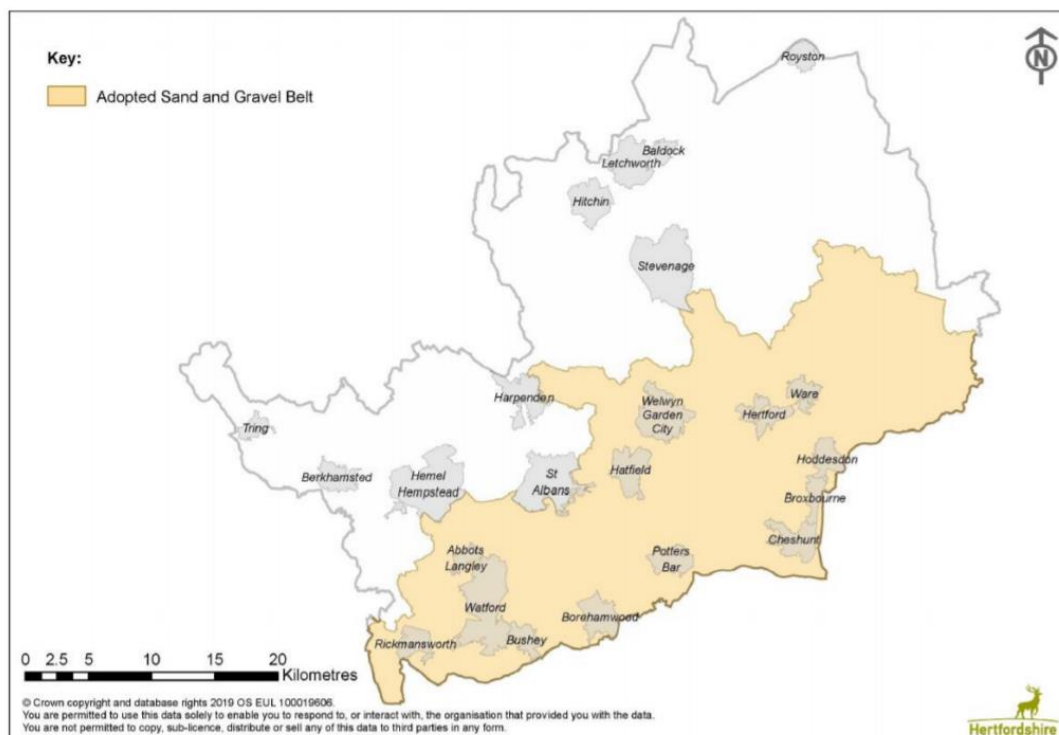
A8.15 Gravel deposits are found within the river valleys of the Mimram, Ver and Colne around St Albans and Hemel Hempstead, although resources at the Ver and Colne have mostly been exhausted[195].

A8.16 There are four quarries extracting sand and gravel in Hertfordshire:

- Tyttenhanger Quarry, Colney Heath;
- Hatfield Quarry;
- Thorley Hall Farm; and
- Pynesfield.

A8.17 The Local Aggregates Assessment (2019) reported that extraction is steadily continuing at active sand and gravel sites in Hertfordshire. Permitted reserves in Hertfordshire are estimated to be able to supply aggregate for a period of 7.2 years based on the County's current apportionment of 1.39 million tonnes.

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[195] Hertfordshire Minerals Planning (2015) 'Local Aggregate Assessment'
http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/docs/pdf/l/locaggass2019.pdf

A8.18 There are three chalk quarries located within Hertfordshire (Codicote Quarry, Bedwell Park just outside Hertford, and Anstey Chalk Pit). In the past, there were many chalk extraction sites, primarily for local use, however the scale of extraction has significantly decreased to just these sites. The chalk is now extracted for use in agriculture within and outside the county.

A8.19 There is no hard rock found within Hertfordshire. The county therefore has to import crushed rock via a number of rail aggregate depots. One of them is in the district at Harper Lane, Radlett, close to the boundary with Hertsmere Borough Council.

Geodiversity

A8.20 Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, natural processes, landforms and soils that underlie and determine the character of our landscape and environment[196]. Within Hertfordshire there are 19 sites designated as Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGs), which are the most important places for geology and geomorphology after statutorily protected land such as SSSIs. They are equivalent to local Wildlife Sites.

A8.21 There are two Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites in St Albans, both of which are former chalk pits:

- Potterscrouch Section (0.18ha);
- Redbournbury Chalk Pit (0.78ha).

A9   Topic (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage

A9.1   The district has a good mix of heritage features. The retention of these features both has inherent benefit in itself adding to the tradition, continuity and character to an area. It also has economic benefits. It is also an important part of the St Albans city marketing strapline "2000 years of history, 20 minutes from London"[197]. Both national planning policy, the policies in the existing Local Plan and the law place clear controls on safeguarding heritage assets and restricting development likely to harm them.

A9.2   Historic England maintains the National Heritage List for England[198] that records listed buildings, registered parks and scheduled monuments. The district council maintains the schedule of conservation areas and a scheduled of "locally listed buildings", buildings of historical and architectural interest not covered by protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. HCC keeps an online Historic Environment Record of The Historic Environment Record (HER) is an online database of archaeological finds and remains, information on historic buildings and structure and historic

[196] http://www.ukgap.org.uk/geodiversity.aspx

[197] https://www.enjoystalbans.com/

[198] Historic England (2016) Local Authority Profiles 2016. https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/indicatordata/local-authority-profiles/ Accessed 22/08/17

parks and landscapes across the county[199]. These sources of information should all be used to assess how heritage assets could be affected by the planning policies – especially any site allocations - in the new Local Plan.

A9.3 In summary, the key elements of the district's heritage assets comprise the following:

- 857 listed buildings in the District (consisting of 10 Grade I buildings, 38 Grade II* buildings and 809 Grade II buildings);
- 18 scheduled monuments;
- Two registered parks and gardens (both Grade II); and
- 19 conservation areas.
- A schedule of "locally listed buildings".

A9.4 There are no World Heritage sites or historic battlefields in the district.

A9.5 There are currently only two scheduled monuments within St Albans at Risk that are on the 2018 Historic England Heritage at Risk Register: Wheathampstead earthwork incorporating Devils Dyke and the Slad; and The Benedictine Priory of St Mary (Sopwell Priory) [200].

A10 Topic (l) landscape

Landscape designations

A10.1 There is no National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the district. However, the Chilterns AONB is located close to the district boundary with Dacorum. The Chilterns AONB has a number of special qualities[201]. These include: its panoramic views; nationally important, species rich chalk grassland; hedgerows; its tranquillity; and woodland cover. Any site allocations close to the AONB in the new Local Plan will have to take account of these qualities and protect them.

A10.2 Natural England has sub-divided England into 159 "National Character Areas" (NCAs) that examine the landscape character and challenges in each area. The district falls into two NCAs: Chilterns (110) and the Northern Thames Basin (111). Most of the district is in the Chilterns NCA (refer Figure A20).

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[199] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/historic-environment-archaeology/hertfordshire-historic-environment-record.aspx
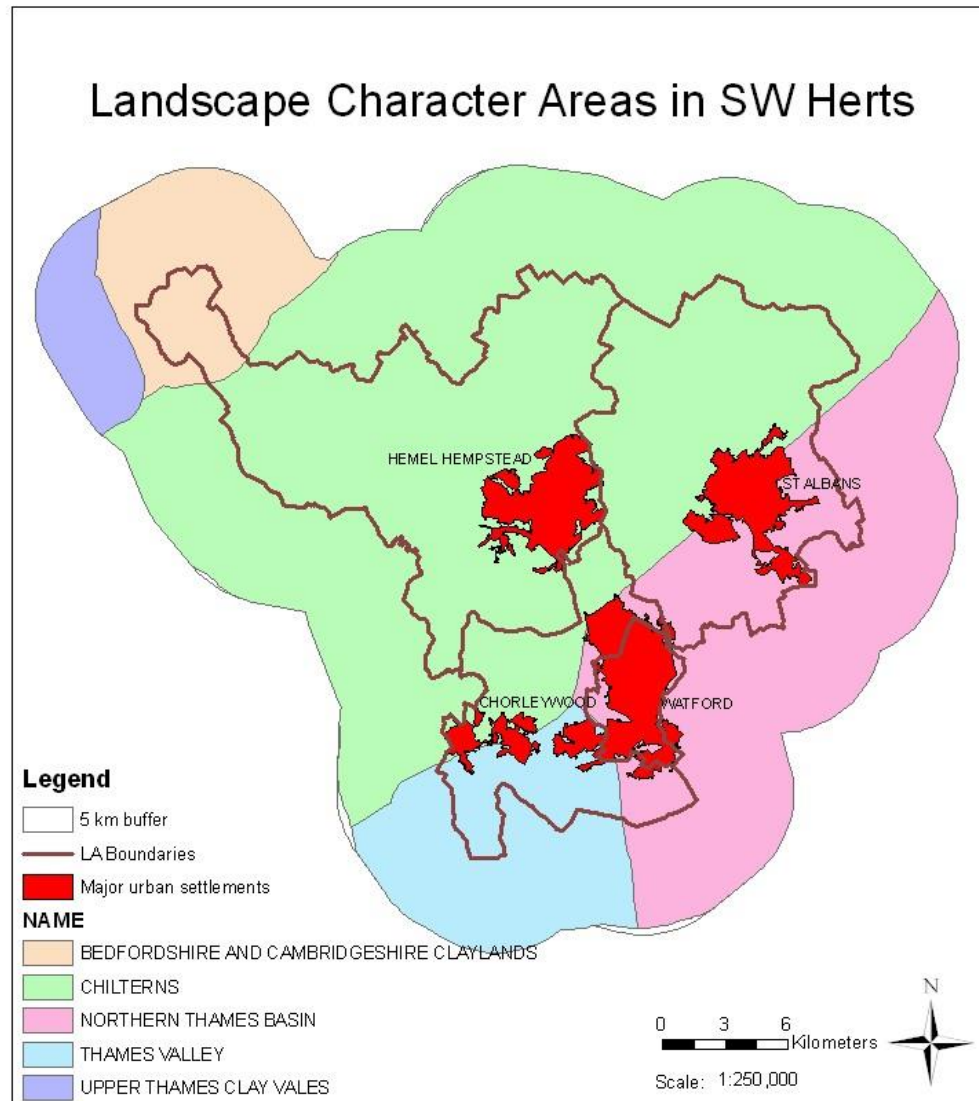
[200] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2018-registers/ee-har-register2018/

[201]

https://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/ConservationBoard/ManagementPlan/Chilterns_Management_Plan_2019-2024_Full.pdf

Figure A20 National Character Areas in South West Hertfordshire (Source: SW Herts Partnership)

A10.3 Natural England characterises the Chilterns NCA[202] as follows:

> "The extensively wooded and farmed Chilterns landscape is underlain by chalk bedrock that rises up from the London Basin to form a north-west facing escarpment offering long views over the adjacent vales. From the vales, the River Thames breaches the escarpment in the south at the Goring Gap and flows on past riverside towns such as Henley. Small streams flow on chalk down some of the dip slope valleys or from the scarp foot, passing through numerous settlements. The major sources of public water supply for the Chilterns and the London area are the chalk aquifer and the Thames.
>
> The countryside is a patchwork of mixed agriculture with woodland, set within hedged boundaries. Furthest from London, the natural and built features of the countryside are recognised as special and attractive in

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[202] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4977697?category=587130

approximately half the National Character Area (NCA) by the designation of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and, in a small area south of the River Thames, by the North Wessex Downs AONB. Outside the AONBs there are major settlements that incorporate extensive urban fringe and growth areas, including Luton, Hemel Hempstead and High Wycombe".

A10.4 It characterises the Northern Thames Basin NCA (2013)[203] as follows:

"The Northern Thames Basin is a diverse area which extends from Hertfordshire in the west to the Essex coast in the east. It is separated from the North Sea and Thames Estuary by a narrow band of land that makes up the Greater Thames Estuary National Character Area (NCA). Included within this NCA are the suburbs of North London and also historic towns and cities including St. Albans and Colchester, as well as new and planned towns such as Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Basildon. Although arable agriculture is a large industry in the area the soil quality ranges from good to poor quality. The London Clay provides a poor quality soil that becomes waterlogged in winter and cracks and shrinks in summer. Better quality soil is found in areas that contain alluvial deposits from the Thames and other rivers in the area as they formed and changed position over time.

The Northern Thames Basin is an area rich in geodiversity, archaeology and history and diverse landscapes ranging from the wooded Hertfordshire plateaux and river valleys, to the open landscape and predominantly arable area of the Essex heathlands, with areas of urbanisation mixed in throughout. Urban expansion has been a feature of this area since the 16th century when wealthy merchants who were conducting business in London built homes on its outskirts, mainly in the Hertfordshire area. This trend increased dramatically from the mid-19th century as infrastructure improved and people could travel to work in London from the surrounding areas in an hour or less. This has put increased pressure on the area in terms of extra housing developments, schools and other necessities for expanding populations, with a consequential reduction in tranquility."

A10.5 HCC has conducted in depth work regarding local landscape character assessments[204]. There are 18 distinct landscape designations covering the district. Generally, landscapes to the north of the District are generally of a better condition and strength of character than those to the south, some of which have been harmed by minerals extraction and disrupted by major transport corridors.

A10.6 Areas of landscape importance within the District are defined as 'Landscape Conservation Areas'. Much of the Upper Lea Valley, north east of Harpenden together with land around Wheathampstead and a tract between St Albans and

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[203] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4721112340496384?category=587130
[204] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/landscape/landscape-character-assessment.aspx#

Harpenden, is currently defined as a Landscape Conservation Area.   The new Local Plan will need to incorporate this evidence to assess in more detail how local landscape character could be affected by the proposed planning policies or site allocations.

The Metropolitan Green Belt

A10.7 The Green Belt across the edges of England's major cities and conurbations has a number of purposes, the most important of which is its openness. While not a landscape designation as such, it has historically played an important role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preserving the setting and special character of the District's historic settlements and assisting in urban regeneration.

A10.8 In Hertfordshire, an area of 84,640 hectares of land was designated as within the Metropolitan Green Belt, making up 51.5% of the county. Of this, 13,140 hectares are within St Albans District (in 2020). There was no change in the District between 2018 and 2020. By contrast, across England, there has been a loss of 1.1% (17,480 ha) in the period 2013 to 2019[205], changes largely due to new Local Plans being produced that support growth onto former Green Belt land.

Light pollution

A10.9 The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) has worked with environmental consultants LUC to review light pollution across England. Light pollution is accredited not only with negatively impacting people's experience of the countryside but it is linked to having impacts on wildlife by interrupting natural rhythms including migration, reproduction and feeding patterns and disrupted sleep in humans too. In its latest "Night Blight" Report 2016[206], the CPRE records that at the county level, only five counties in England have a lower percentage of dark skies than Hertfordshire, meaning that the county has relatively high levels of light pollution. This, in part, reflects the county's relationship with skyglow from the London area. HCC, as the highway authority, has responded to this by switching off most street lights between the hours of 1am and 5am, both to reduce carbon emissions and to cut its electricity bill. It is also reviewing the type of street lighting it uses[207].

A10.10 Figure A21 and Table A12 record the CPRE/ LUC's findings for the district. It scored 182nd out of 326 local authority areas, where 1st is the darkest and 326th is the most adversely affected by light pollution. Generally, the north of the district experiences lower levels of light pollution.

[205]
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856100/Green_Belt_Statistics_England_2018-19.pdf

[206] https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/images/resources/Night_Blight_cpre.pdf

[207] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/news-archive/longer-street-lighting-hours-a-possibility

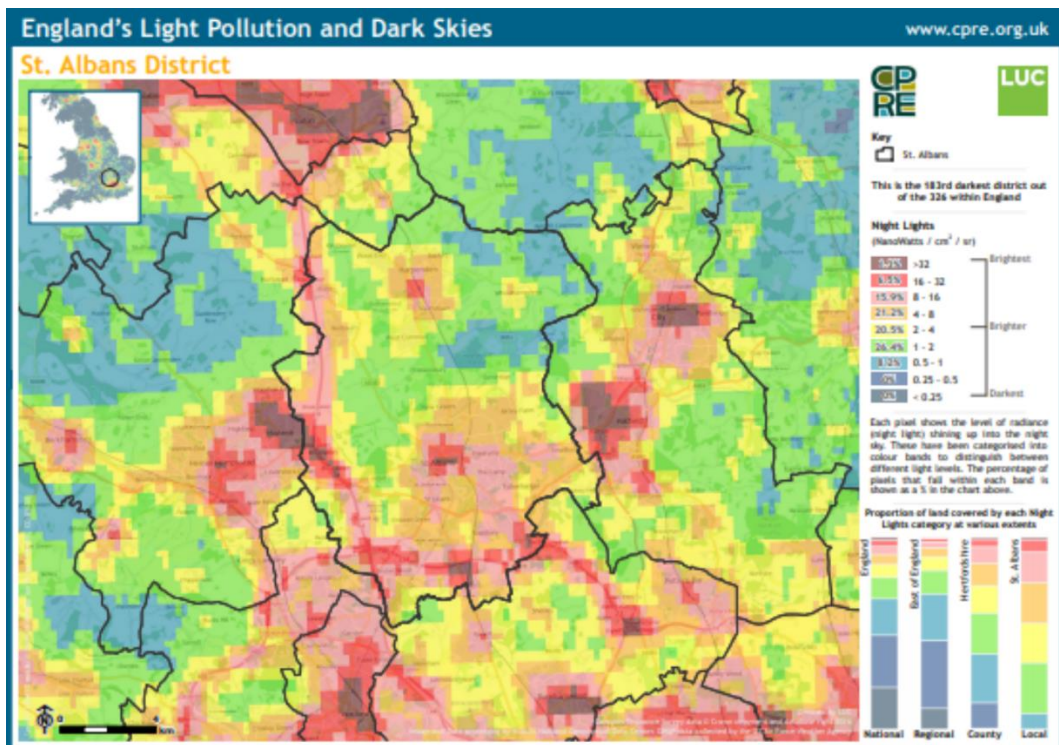Figure A21 Light pollution across the district (Source: CPRE/ LUC)

Table A12 Comparative levels of light pollution (Source: CPRE/LUC)

Brightness values (NanoWatts)	St Albans	Hertfordshire	East of England
Colour band 9 (> 32 (brightest))	1.3%	1.2%	0.6%
Colour band 8 (16 – 32)	6.5%	3.7%	1.8%
Colour band 7 (8 – 16)	15.9%	8.7%	3.3%
Colour band 6 (4 – 8)	21.2%	11.7%	4.6%
Colour band 5 (2 – 4)	20.5%	14.2%	7%
Colour band 4 (1 – 2)	26.4%	21.2%	12.3%
Colour band 3 (0.5 – 1)	8.2%	25.5%	24.4%
Colour band 2 (0.25 – 0.5)	0%	13.2%	35.3%
Colour band 1 (< 0.25 (darkest))	0.0%	0.5%	10.8%
Rank (where a rank of 1 has the darkest skies)	183/326 local authorities	36/41 counties	2/9 regions