

13 Harpenden, Redbourn and Surrounds

Introduction

This chapter reviews provision in the Harpenden and Surrounds and Redbourn and Surrounds areas and applies the various provision standards to identify potential surpluses and deficiencies. It then goes on to make recommendations on ways of ensuring that provision meets local needs better.

The Harpenden and surrounds planning area extends to some 3,250 hectares and has an estimated population of some 28,500. Redbourn and Surrounds is slightly smaller at 2,490 hectares but has a significantly smaller population of around 5,500. As Map 13.1 below shows, in both areas the residents live overwhelmingly in or close to Harpenden or Redbourn. There are no other settlements of any size in either area and therefore the analysis below relates primarily to the developed area around them.

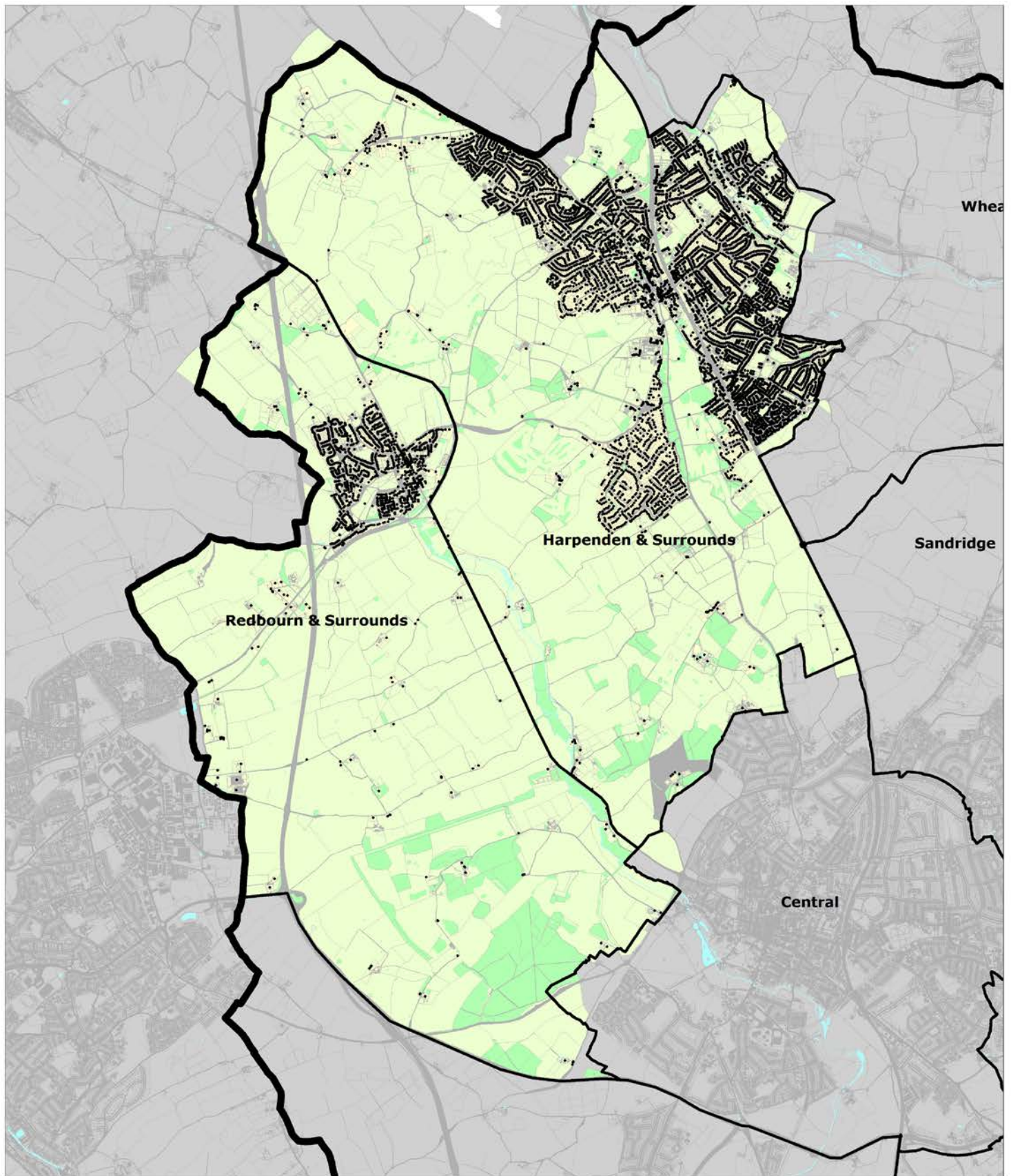
Allotments

Map 13.2 shows the location of allotments sites, together with 10 minute walking and driving distance thresholds and the quartile containing the composite summary audit score for each of the sites.

Harpenden

Harpenden has a total of sixteen sites offering nearly 685 plots – the highest number of plots in the eight planning areas of the City and District.

There is a waiting list for most sites and those with the highest list in relation to their size are Harpenden Rise, Westfield Road, Sibley Avenue and Topstreet Way. At each of these sites the waiting list is over 25% of the total available plots.



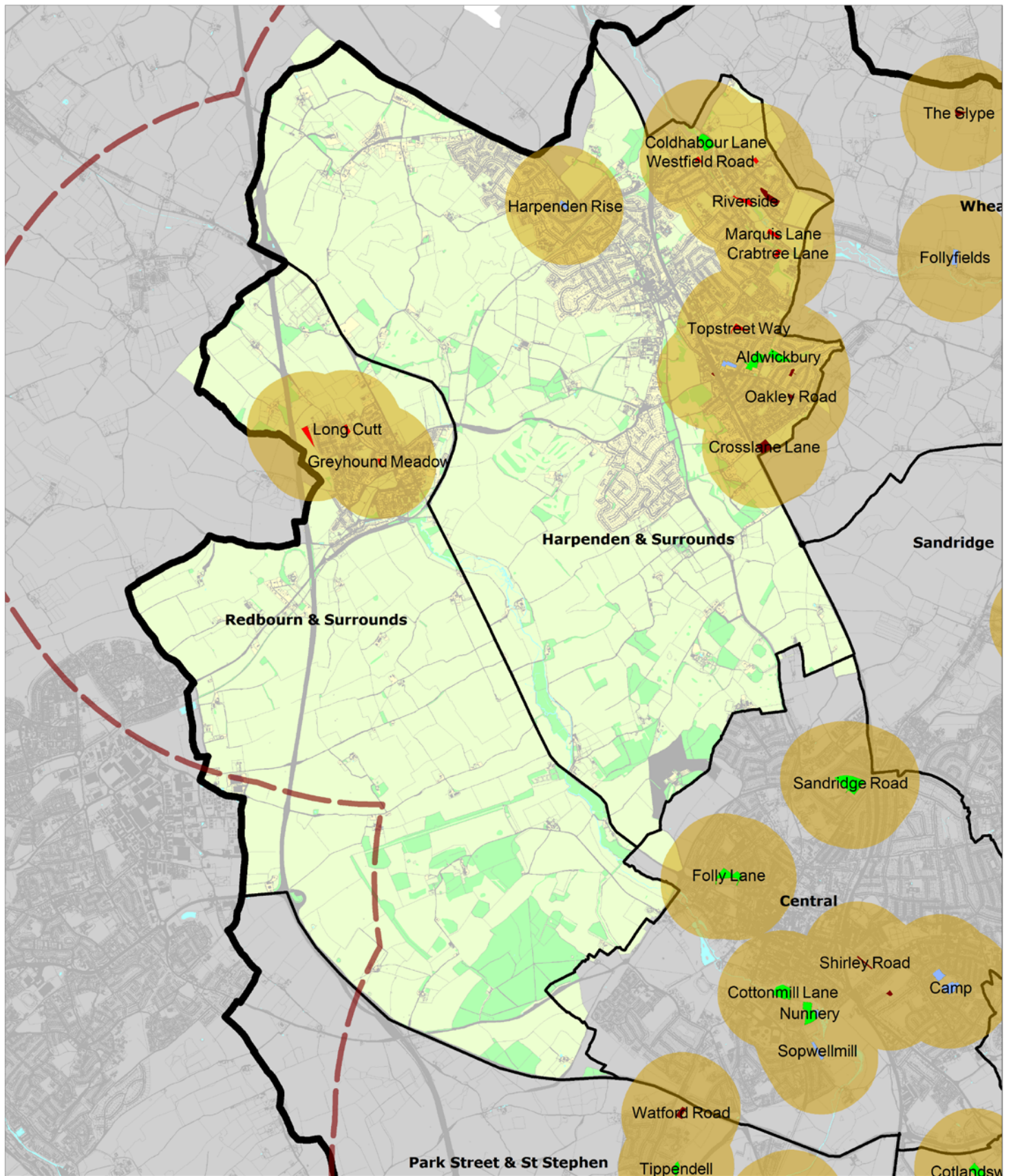
• Properties

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Map 13.1
Harpenden and Redbourn
Distribution of Properties

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- Sites with first quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with fourth quartile summary audit scores

- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold

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Map 13.2 Harpenden, Redbourn and surrounds Allotments

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A few of the residents of the rural parts of the Harpenden and surrounds planning area live closer to an allotments site in Redbourn, Wheathampstead or St Albans city than Harpenden town, but they will generally have to drive to them. No residents of the Harpenden and surrounds area live within walking distance of an allotments site in an adjoining planning area. Based on the number of properties in the town, its population is likely to be approximately 28,000. Applying the provision standard of 5.5 m per person to this population suggests a need for some 15.8 ha of allotments compared with the 13.0 ha currently available – a shortfall of some 2.8 ha. Of this approximately half is needed to meet current demand as expressed through the various waiting lists.

Other key points relating to allotments in Harpenden are that:

- Although 68% of properties in the analysis area lie within the walking distance threshold of at least one allotments site, only 35% are within the same distance of a site with a fourth quartile/good audit score
- Nearly all of the allotment sites lie to the east of the railway line through the town. The central part of this area generally contains large houses with large gardens whose residents are less likely to require access to allotments than those living in dwellings with small gardens.
- The only site to the west of the railway line is Harpenden Rise and this is also the site with the highest waiting list, suggesting significant demand on the western side of the town.
- There is a clear difference between the sites in the north-east and south-east of the town, with those in the latter area generally of higher quality and value than those in the north-eastern area.
- The main areas outwith the walking distance threshold of at least one allotments site are in the central area are relatively low density so there is unlikely to be significant demand for allotments.
- The whole of the Harpenden planning area lies within an acceptable driving distance threshold of several sites.

Action Points – Harpenden Allotments

- Seek to allocate at least an additional 2.8 ha for allotments in a location that will maximise accessibility. Given that all but one of the existing sites are on the eastern side of the town, it will probably be desirable for any allocations to be to the

west of the railway and in particular in or close to the West Common area.

- Encourage the Town Council to enhance its allotments sites so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C

Redbourn

Redbourn has only three allotments sites, all of them with first quartile/very poor summary audit scores indicating a clear need for enhancement. In total there are currently 82 plots occupying an area of just under 1.5 ha and a waiting list of 4 people, with a handful of plots untenanted because they are overgrown with brambles. Applying the provision standard of 4.5 sq m per person suggests a need for an additional 1.0 ha for allotments over the whole of the planning area. However, some of this potential demand is from outwith the village so the need in Redbourn itself is probably for slightly less than 1 ha.

Action Points – Redbourn Allotments

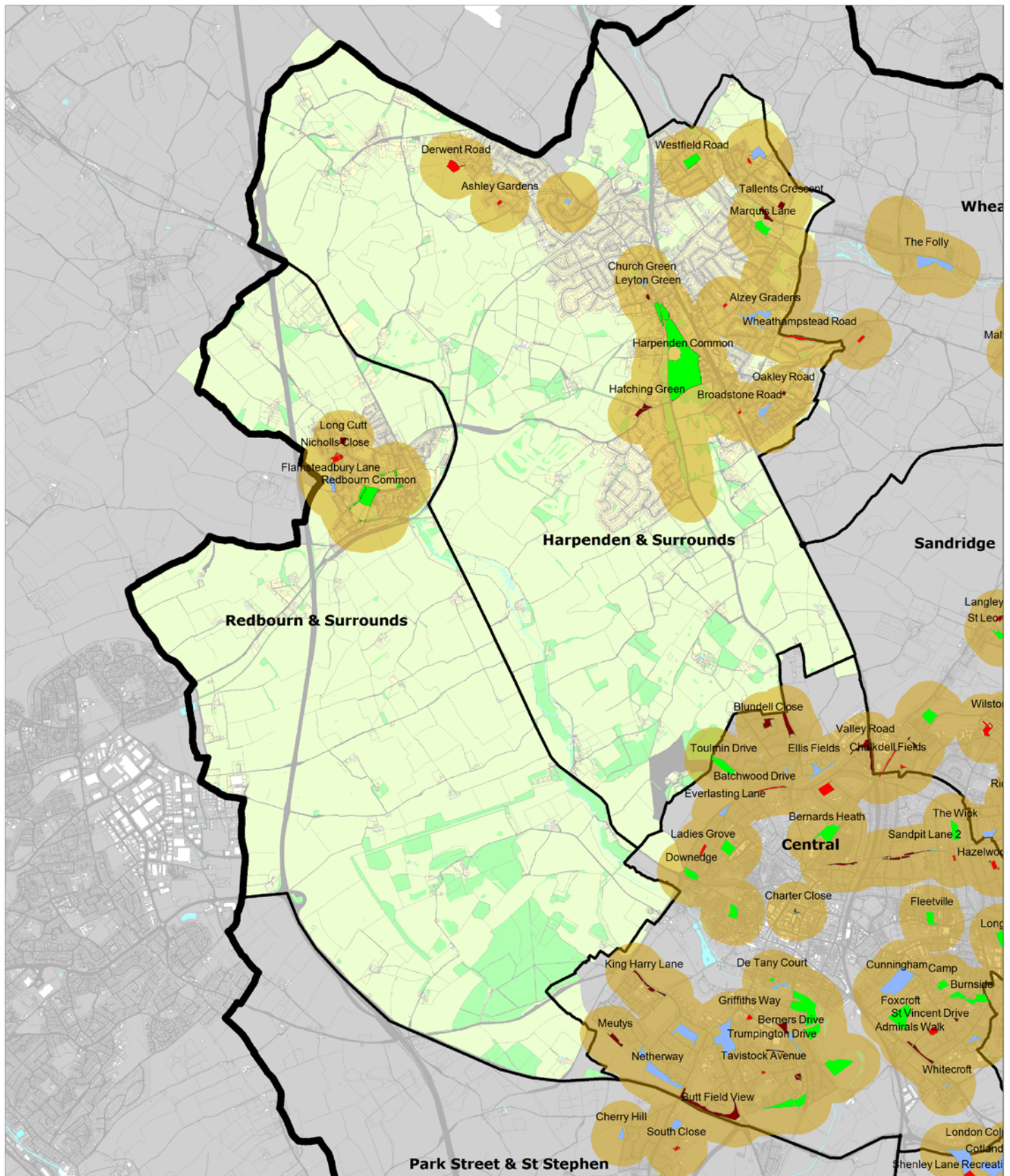
- Seek to allocate up to an additional 1.0 ha for allotments in the village. Given the location of the current sites, the best location will be in the southern area of the village, although the most likely opportunities are adjacent to existing sites
- Encourage the Parish Council to enhance its allotments sites so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C

Amenity Greenspace

Map 13.3 shows the location of amenity greenspaces in the Harpenden and Redbourn areas, the quartile containing the composite summary audit score for each of the sites and the 5 minute/300 m walking distance threshold. For the purposes of analysis, part of the Common is classed as amenity greenspace, part as natural greenspace and part as outdoor sports facilities.

Harpenden

Some significant parts of Harpenden are outwith the 300 m walking distance threshold, particularly the area to the north and east of the town centre and the south western part of West Common. More serious, however, is the fact that a number of the amenity greenspaces in Harpenden scored poorly in the audit. However, the most important space in the town – Harpenden Common – achieved a fourth quartile/good score, in part thanks to the recent improvements initiated by the Town Council. However there is still a deficit of 2.8 ha of amenity green space, but this is balanced by a surplus of natural green space.



- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold

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Map 13.3 Harpenden, Redbourn and surrounds Amenity Greenspaces

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This analysis refers only to amenity greenspace but other types of greenspace also serve an amenity purpose and this is considered further later in this chapter. However, it is clear that there is a need to enhance some of the town's amenity greenspaces.

Action Points – Harpenden

- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspace section of Appendix C
- Seek opportunities to improve the accessibility of amenity spaces, especially to the east of the railway line

Redbourn

Most of Redbourn is within the walking distance threshold of at least one amenity greenspace, although three of the four spaces have first quartile/very poor summary audit scores. Like Harpenden, therefore, there is a need to enhance the village's amenity greenspaces. As in Harpenden there is a deficit of amenity green space, but this is balanced by a surplus of natural green space.

Action Points – Redbourn

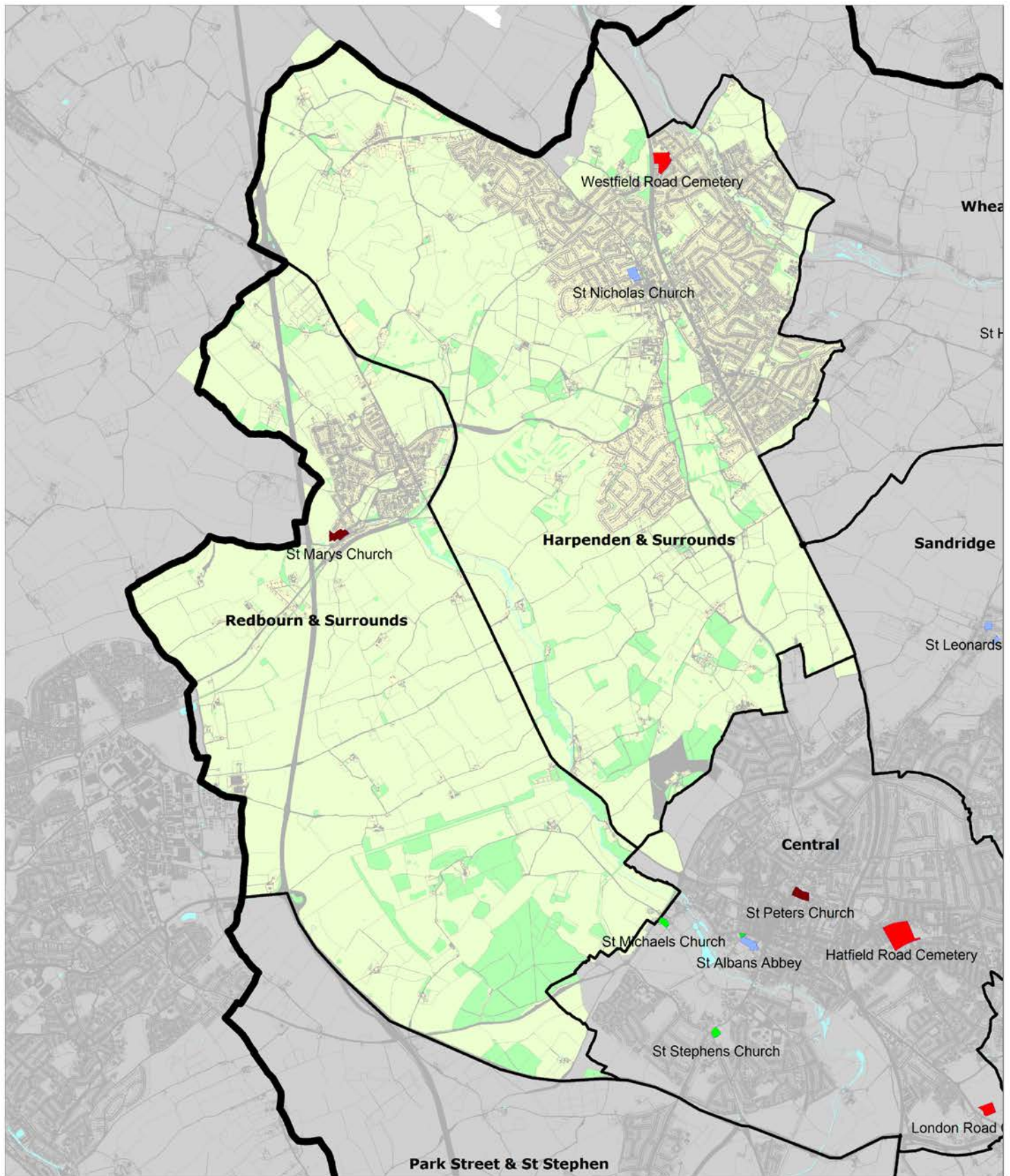
- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspace section of Appendix C

Churchyards and Cemeteries

Harpenden has two churchyard sites – St Nicholas Church and the Westfield Road Cemetery – and Redbourn has one, St Mary's Church. Map 13.4 shows their location and the quartile containing the summary audit score for each of them. There are no distance thresholds because most visitors to cemeteries are going to visit a specific grave so distance is not an issue.

Harpenden

Of the two Harpenden spaces, St Nicholas Church is of significantly greater quality and value as a local greenspace than the Westfield Road Cemetery. The latter scored poorly in the audit, with improvements needed to signage and dog control. The main improvements needed to the St Nicholas's site relate to better maintenance.



- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

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Map 13.4 Harpenden, Redbourn and surrounds Churchyards and Cemeteries

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Action Points – Harpenden

- Enhance Westfield Road Cemetery so that it accords with the churchyards and cemeteries section of Appendix C

Redbourn

In Redbourn, the main improvements needed to the St Mary's Churchyard relate to disabled access and interpretation.

Action Points – Redbourn

- Enhance the disabled access to St Mary's Churchyard

Natural Greenspaces

Thanks largely to Kinsbourne Green Common and part of Harpenden Common, there is a significant amount of natural greenspace in Harpenden, even allowing for the fact that Harpenden Common is classed partly as amenity greenspace for the purposes of this analysis. In Redbourn there is also a reasonable amount of natural green space. Map 13.5 below shows the location and summary audit scores for the natural greenspace sites in the audit, together with Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites.

Harpenden

The audit included seven natural greenspaces in Harpenden, although Green Lane and the Sherwood Rise woodland in the south east of the town are contiguous and appear as a single site on the map:

	Sq m
Batford Springs LNR	23,475
Green Lane	6,981
Holly Bush Lane Woodland	14,270
Kinsbourne Green Common	173,338
Sherwood Rise Woodland	7,691
Harpenden Common (part)	458,316
Crabtree Fields	51,330
Total	735,401

Some of these sites are also County Wildlife Sites, as are some other sites in the town, including Harpenden Common. The Batford Springs Local Nature Reserve in the north east of the town beside the River Lea (or Lee) is particularly important. The largest and therefore in many ways the most significant – apart from Harpenden Common - is Kinsbourne Green Common. As it is on the northern edge of the planning area it will obviously attract people from North Hertfordshire. The main improvements required relate to better signage and

disabled access.

The sites with the lowest audit scores are the Hollybush Lane woodland, which is blighted by the adjoining main railway line and has no public access and Crabtree Fields. The other two sites – Green Lane and Sherwood Rise – may have the potential to form part of a green corridor from the Common north east to the edge of the town and north to the Lea Valley Walk.

Action Points – Harpenden

- Seek to enhance access to existing natural greenspaces
- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C

Redbourn

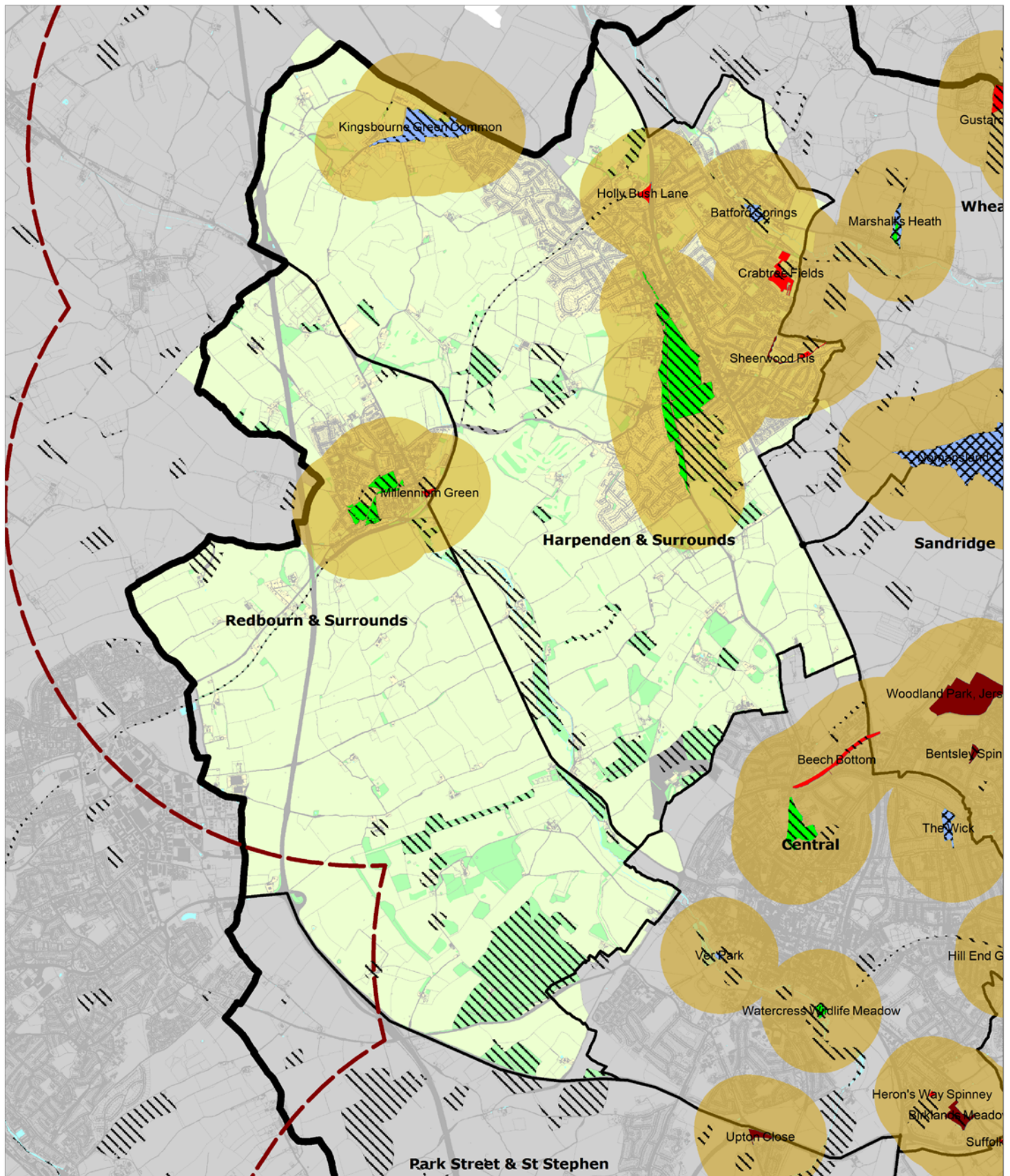
The audit included only two natural greenspaces in Redbourn, part of the Common and the Millennium Green. The latter is fairly poorly located as it is tucked away behind an industrial area on the edge of the village. Like many other spaces across the City and District, it could do with better signage, disabled access, measures to control dogs, more litter bins and better paths. However, a better alternative may be to sell it for development and use at least some of the capital receipt to create a new green corridor along the River Ver between Harpenden Lane and High Street (a flood risk area) and link up with the Nickey Line north to Harpenden or south to Hemel Hempstead.

Redbourn – Action Points

- Review the use of the Millennium Green and consider disposing of it to fund a new green corridor
- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Establish a green corridor from the Nickey Line along the River Ver between Harpenden Lane and the High Street

Parks and Gardens

Map 13.6 shows the location of the parks and gardens in Harpenden and Redbourn, together with the quartile containing the composite summary audit score for each of them and the relevant walking and driving distance thresholds.



- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

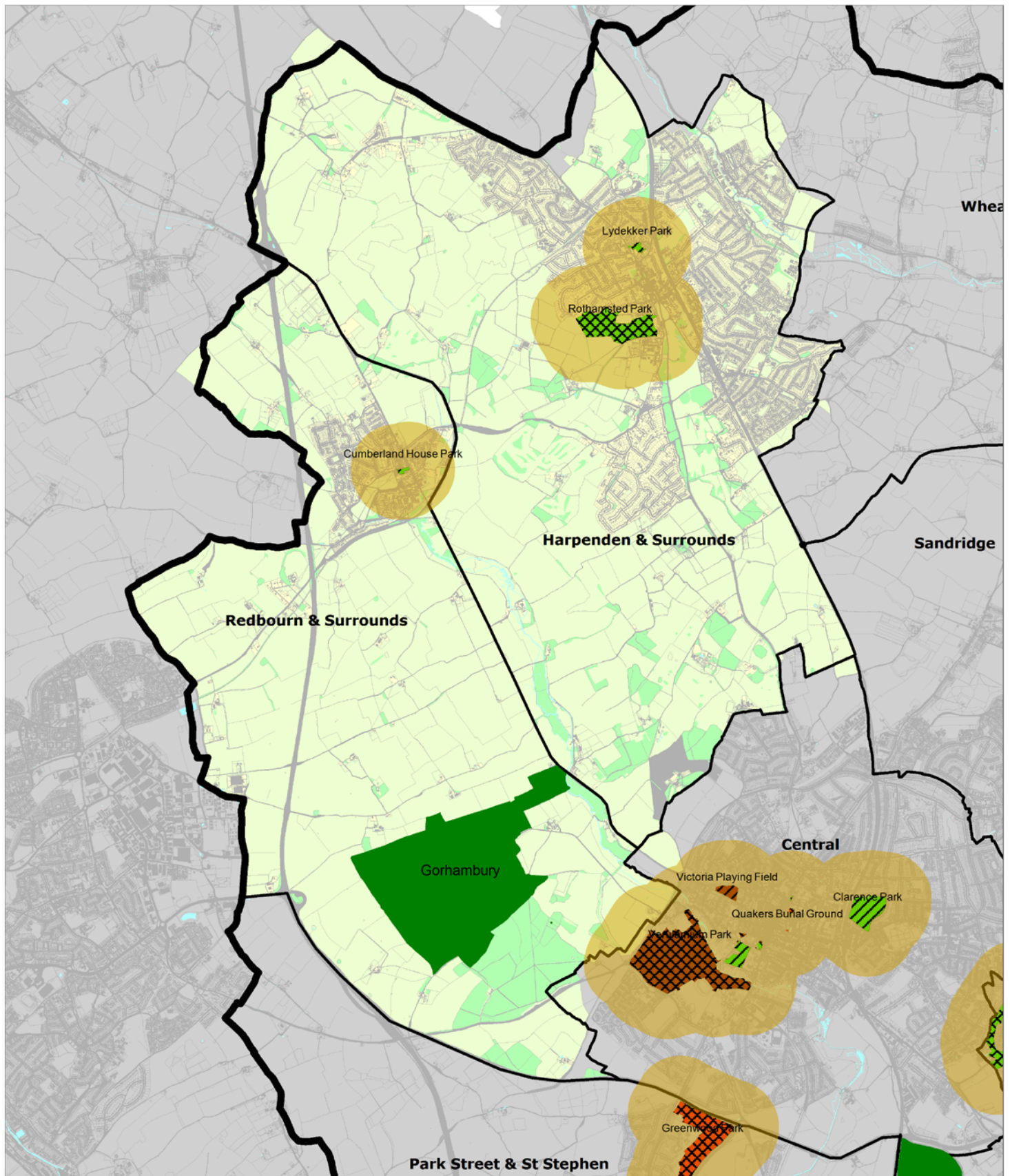
- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold

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Map 13.5 Harpenden and Redbourn and surrounds Natural greenspaces

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- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

- Local Parks
- Local Garden
- District Park
- 8 minutes/500 m walk distance threshold

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Map 13.6 Harpenden, Redbourn and surrounds Parks and Gardens

Harpenden

Harpenden has two parks:

	Area (sq m)
• Rothamsted District Park	202,277
• Lydekker Local Park	9,652

Both have fourth quartile/good composite summary audit scores, indicating that they are of high quality and value. Rothamsted is also included in the *English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*. However there is still a slight overall quantity deficiency.

Most of Harpenden lies outwith the walking distance threshold of a park and this suggests that it will be desirable to enhance some of the other greenspaces in the town in similar ways to those suggested above.

Action Points – Harpenden

- Enhance suitable spaces outwith the distance threshold of the established parks (eg Crabtree Fields) to make them more “park-like” and accord as much as possible with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C

Redbourn

Redbourn has just one park: Cumberland House, which might perhaps be better described as a local garden. However, it has a fourth quartile/good audit score and therefore there is no need for enhancement. However, Gorhambury, a registered historic park, lies to the south of the area.

Roughly half of the village lies within the walking distance threshold of the site even though part of its notional catchment area is the undeveloped area to the east of Dunstable Road and north of Harpenden Lane.

Action Points – Redbourn

- Investigate opportunities for creating a small local park in the northern part of the village

Green Corridors

Harpenden

Harpenden is served by two green corridors – the River Lea Walk, which links the town north to Luton and east to Wheathampstead – and the Nickey Line, which links it to Redbourn. The eastern end of the latter is only a short distance from the River Lea but unfortunately the main north-south railway line provides a barrier to joining them up other than on-street.

The rights of way network in the Harpenden area is fairly fragmented and the potential for using existing routes to create a circular walk around the town is limited. However, it may be possible to develop two loop routes. The first will be from the Nickey line west to Townsend Lane, south towards the Rothamsted Experimental Station then east to the Harpenden Sports Centre and Common and back to the town centre. The second will be from Westfield Road south along the River Lea Walk down to Piggosthill Lane and then down to the Common and back up to the town centre.

Redbourn

Redbourn almost has an existing circular walk around the village along part of the Nickey Line and various rights of way around its periphery so it will be desirable to investigate joining them up better. In addition there is an opportunity to link the Nickey Line to the village centre along the River Ver between Harpenden Lane and the High Street.

Action Points

Harpenden

- With the Town Council, consider the potential for developing an enhanced green corridor around the western side of the town
- With the Town Council, consider the potential for creating a green corridor from the Common to the north of the town
- With the Town and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Redbourn

- With the Parish Council, consider the potential for developing a green corridor from the Nickey Line into the village centre along the River Ver, possibly funded by the disposal of the Millennium Green
- Investigate the potential for creating a continuous circular walk around the village using established rights of way as much as possible
- With the Parish and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Children's Play Areas

Map 13.7 shows the location of equipped play areas for the under-6s, together with the quartile containing the composite summary audit score for each of them and 8 minute/300 m walking distance thresholds. Map 13.8 shows similar information for play areas designed for 6-11 year olds, but with 450 m distance thresholds.

Harpenden

Play Areas for under-6 Year Old Children

Harpenden has seven play areas suitable for young children, all of which achieved at least a third quartile/fair composite summary audit score. Accordingly the quality and value of the town's provision is generally good. However, as Map 13.7 shows, large parts of the town are without any such provision, particularly a broad band running east-west across the centre of the town. Although there is little provision serving the West Common area, houses there generally have large gardens and so the need for public provision is very limited.

Play Areas for 6-11 Year Old Children

Harpenden has nine play areas suitable for older children, although six of them are more or less in three "pairs" of sites. All are of good quality and value. The overall accessibility is very similar to play for younger children, with no facilities in the middle third of the town.

Redbourn

Play Areas for under-5 Year Old Children

Redbourn has three play areas for young children, of which two have third or fourth quartile summary audit scores and one a second quartile/poor score. The best and worst sites in the town – Silkmill and Brooke End respectively – are close to one another.

Play Areas for 6-11 Year Old Children

Redbourn has three play areas with equipment for older children and they are readily accessible from most of the town, apart from the area to the east of the High Street. All three are of good quality and value.

Action Points

Harpenden

- Enhance existing greenspaces to make them more interesting and valuable for children's play and/or seek sites for additional equipped play provision for both toddlers and older children:
 - To the west of the railway line and town centre. If there are no possible sites one option the Council and Town Council should consider is the

- creation of one or more home zones.
- To the east of the railway line, particularly south of Station Road. Given the lack of greenspaces in this area, the Council and Town Council should consider the creation of one or more home zones.
- In the Coldharbour Lane area

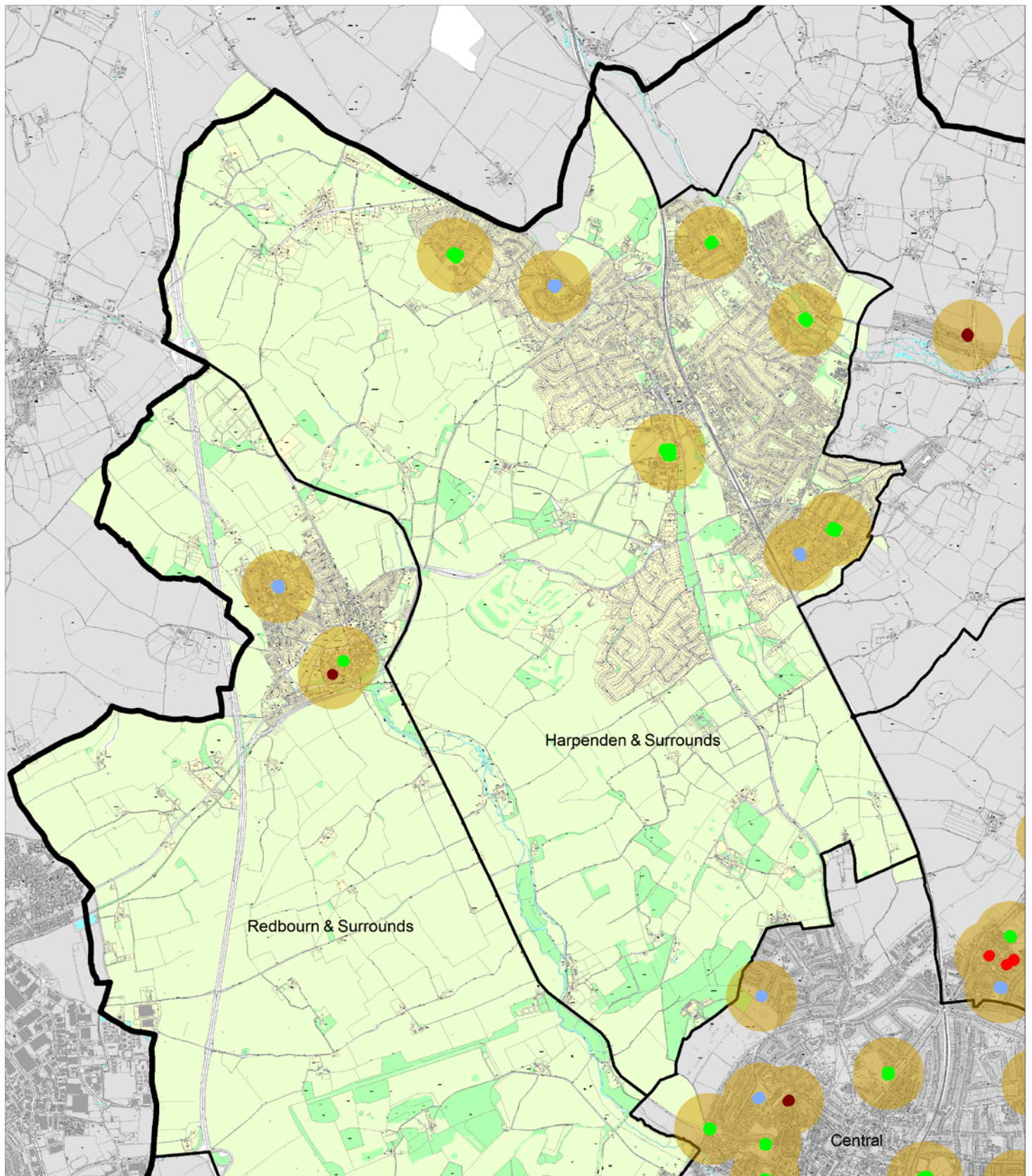
Redbourn

- Enhance existing greenspaces to make them more interesting and valuable for children's play and/or seek sites for additional equipped play provision:
 - For both toddlers and older children to the east of the High Street
 - On the western side of the village; this could be met by additional equipment at the Flamstedbury Lane play area
- Consider rationalising the Silkmill and Brooke End sites into a single play area. The Silkmill site has plenty of space for additional equipment and currently has six items of play equipment compared with three at Brooke End.

Provision for Teenagers

Map 13.9 shows the distribution of teenage facilities together with the quartile containing the summary audit score for each of them and 10 minute walking and cycling distance thresholds. It also shows the location of multi-courts which, while not intended primarily for teenagers, offer informal sports facilities. There are two sites in Harpenden intended primarily for teenagers - Westfield Road and the Rothamsted Skatepark – but none in Redbourn. There are also two multi-courts in Harpenden but none in Redbourn.

The Rothamsted skatepark has a fourth quartile/good audit score and is a popular local facility. Westfield Road, on the other hand, offers only a tarmac area and so is of low value but good quality. Overall only 29% of properties in Harpenden and surrounds lie within the walking distance threshold of one of these sites, but 74% within the cycling distance threshold. 8% and 52% respectively lie within these thresholds of the Rothamsted Skatepark. The main accessibility deficiencies are in Kinsbourne Green, West Common and in the south east of Harpenden. The last of these has the densest housing and therefore probably the most teenagers.



- Sites with fourth quartile/
good summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile/
fair summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile/
poor summary audit scores
- Sites with first quartile/
very poor summary
audit scores

8 minutes/300 m walking
distance threshold

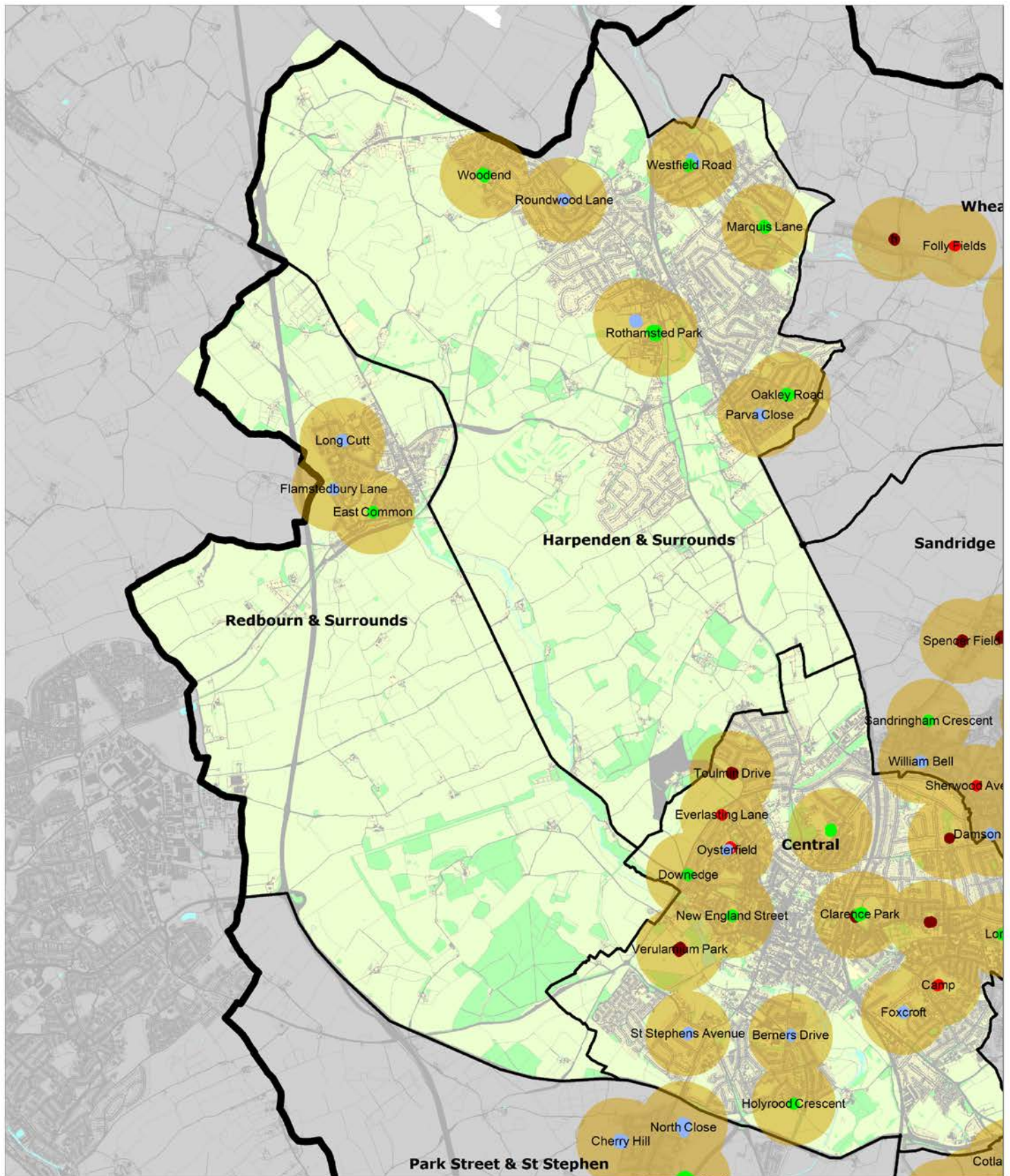
Note: sites shown enlarged
for clarity

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Map 13.7 Harpenden and surrounds/Redbourn and surrounds: Toddlers' Play Areas

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- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

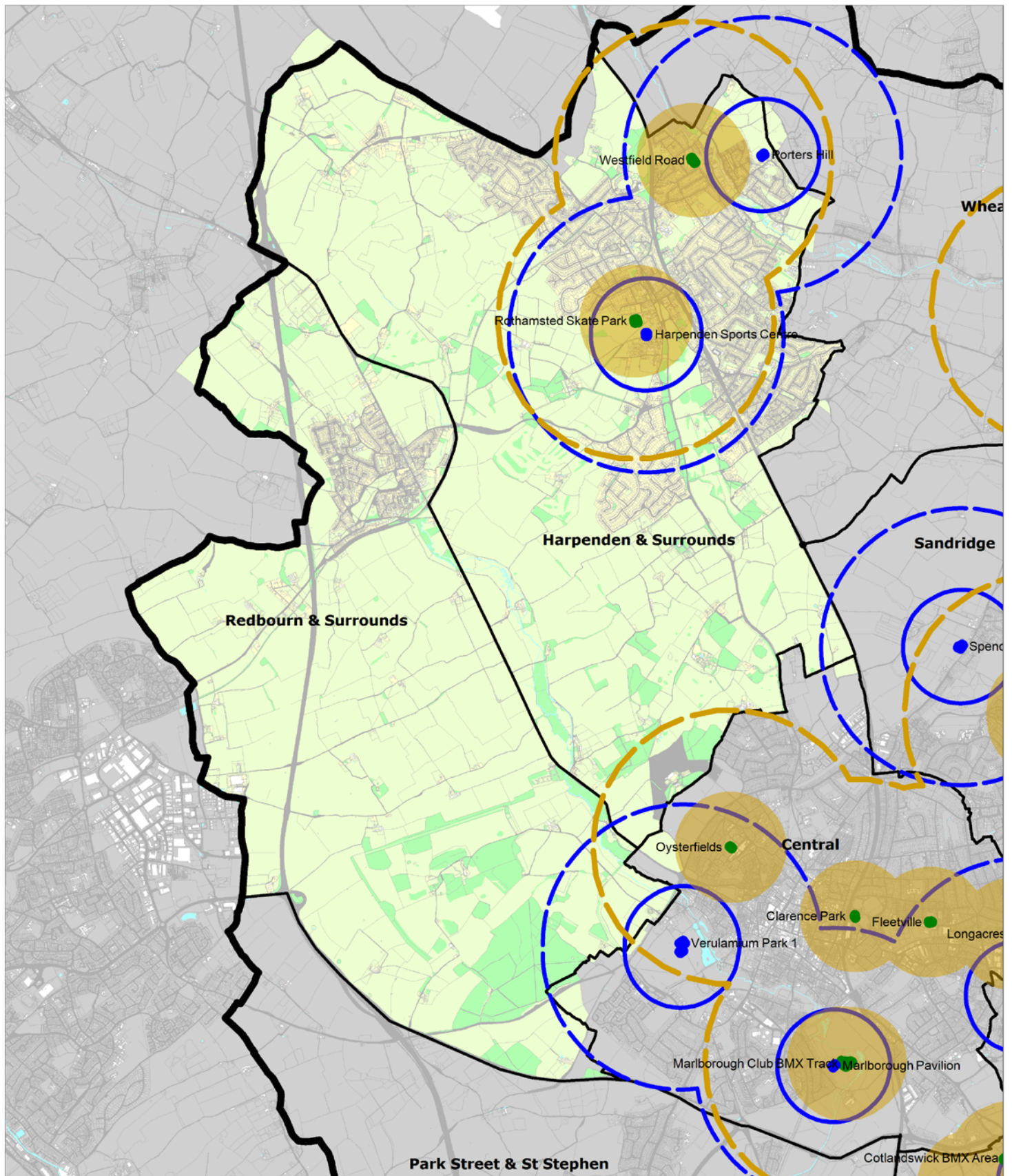
8 minutes/450 m walk distance threshold

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Map 13.8 Harpenden, Redbourn and surrounds Older Children Equipped Play

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Teenage facilities



Multi-courts



10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold



10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold



10 minutes/1500 m walk distance threshold



10 minutes/1500 m walk distance threshold

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Map 13.9 Harpenden, Redbourn and surrounds Teenage Facilities and Multi-courts

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In Redbourn and surrounds only a tiny handful of properties are within the cycling distance threshold of the good teenage facility at Oysterfields in St Albans. However, this will require teenagers to cycle for a significant distance along the main road and is therefore not realistic.

Applying the quantity standard of 0.18 sq m per person suggests a need for something like an additional 0.3 ha of teenage provision in Harpenden and surrounds and 0.1 ha in Redbourn.

Action Points - Harpenden

- Work with the Town Council and local teenagers to identify needs and opportunities for additional teenage facilities especially in the south east of Harpenden

Action Points – Redbourn

- Work with the Parish Council and local teenagers to identify needs and opportunities for additional teenage facilities

Multi-functional Greenspace: Overview

To some extent, a surplus of one type of multi-functional greenspace – amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens – in an area and a deficiency of another creates an opportunity to change the nature of spaces so that there is a better balance, especially if this can also resolve one or more accessibility deficiencies. In addition, while the primary purpose of playing fields is very clearly the playing of sport, for much of the time some can be available as local greenspaces, although for obvious reasons school playing fields cannot be “open access” during school hours.

There is also a degree of what might be called “substitutability” between different types of multi-functional greenspace. For example, someone may want to visit a natural greenspace but regard a local park as an acceptable substitute if it is closer to home. Map 13.10 therefore shows the network of multi-functional greenspaces in Harpenden and Redbourn, together with open access outdoor sports facilities and 5 minute/3200 m walk distance thresholds. It also shows the main green corridors.

Harpenden

The Quantity of Multi-functional Greenspace

The total amount of different types of multi-functional greenspace provision in Harpenden compared with the

amount required by the application of the quantity standards derived earlier in this report is:

	Required sq m	Available sq m
Amenity greenspace	426,500	325,500
Natural greenspace	142,000	735,500
Parks and gardens	340,000	212,000
Totals	908,500	1,273,000

Notes:

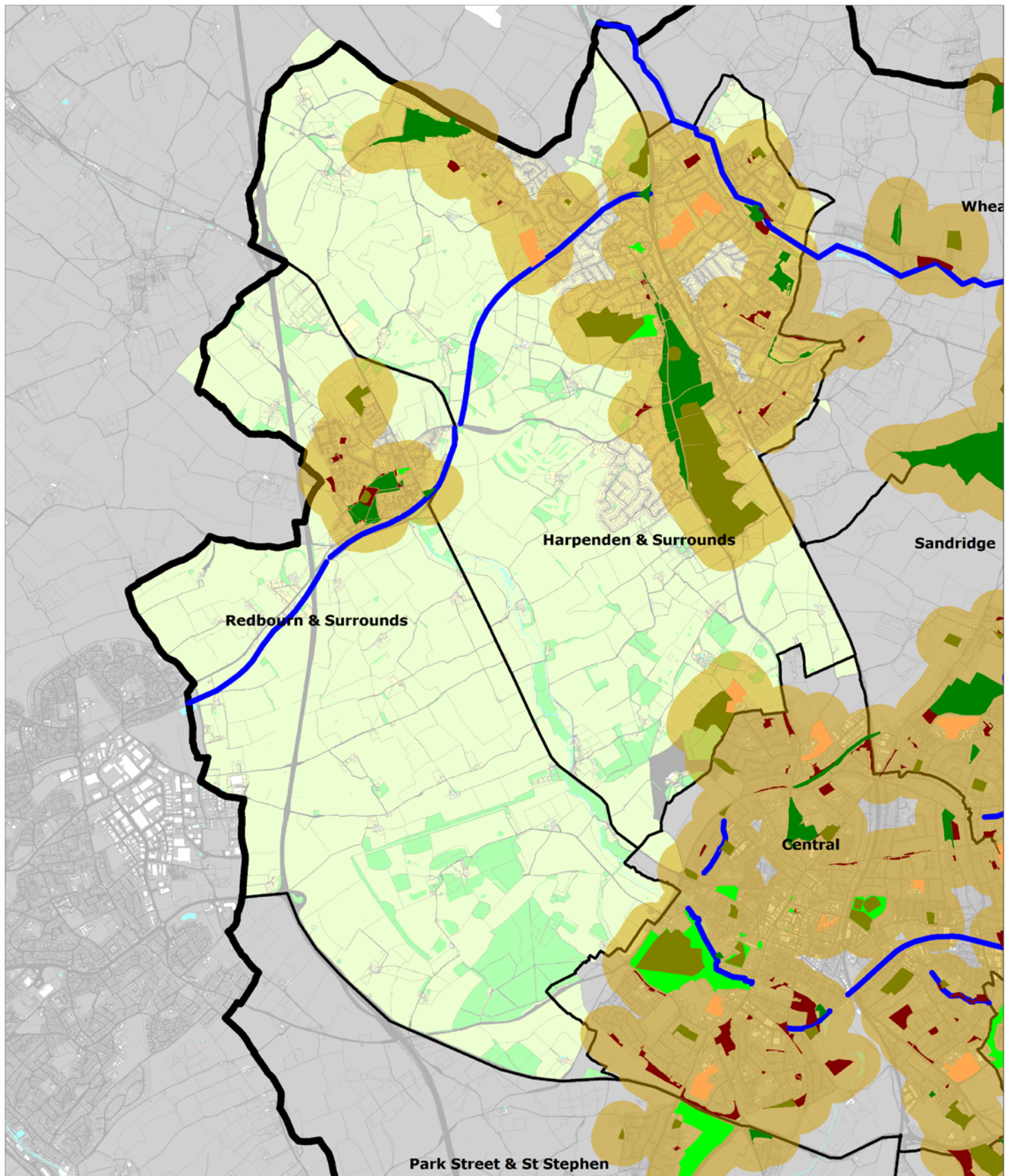
- 1 This analysis is based on the estimated 28,500 population of Harpenden itself and not the whole of the Harpenden and surrounds planning area
- 2 These totals include part of Harpenden Common in the amenity greenspace total and Kinsbourne Green Common in the natural greenspace total

Overall, therefore, there is sufficient multi-functional greenspace in Harpenden for the current population. However, while there is more than ample natural greenspace, there are deficiencies in the overall area of amenity greenspace and parks and gardens, although this reflects at least in part the slightly academic split of the Common into amenity and natural greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities.

The Accessibility of Multi-functional Greenspace

Overall, 85% of properties in Harpenden are within 300 m of at least one greenspace. However, as Map 13.10 shows, there are significant walking accessibility deficiencies to publicly accessible spaces:

- To the east of the railway line and south of Manland Way. However, the St George's and Sir John Lawes school playing fields provide a large green area immediately to the north of this area. Accordingly they are important in terms of open-ness, although it is very unlikely that they can be opened up for public access.
- In the south western area of the town
- In the north western area to the south east of Roundwood Park School. Again, it is very unlikely that it will be possible to open up the school's playing fields for public access. However, there is no great need for any action to remedy this deficiency as the Nickey Line passes through it and offers a green corridor leading to the open countryside to the west.



- Amenity greenspaces
- Natural greenspaces
- Parks and Gardens
- Open access sports facilities

- Secondary school playing fields
- Green corridors
- 5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold

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Greenspace Strategy



Map 13.10
Harpenden, Redbourn
and surrounds
Multi-functional Greenspace

Redbourn

The Quantity of Multi-functional Greenspace Provision

The total amount of different types of multi-functional greenspace provision – amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens – in Redbourn compared with the amount required by the application of the quantity standards derived earlier in this report is:

	Required sq m	Available sq m
Amenity greenspace	82,000	54,000
Natural greenspace	27,500	147,000
Parks and gardens	66,000	5,000
Totals	175,500	206,000

Overall, therefore, there is limited surplus of in multi-functional greenspace in Redbourn for the current population. However, while there is more than ample natural greenspace, there are deficiencies in the amount of amenity greenspace and parks and gardens. These deficiencies are unlikely to be significant because of the size of the town and proximity of the countryside. In addition, the relative surpluses and deficiencies reflect primarily the slightly academic allocation of different parts of the Common into amenity and natural greenspaces.

The Accessibility of Multi-functional Greenspace

As in Harpenden, 85% of properties lie within 300 m of at least one greenspace. Accordingly there are no significant accessibility deficiencies.

Action Points

Harpenden

- Consult the Town Council in order to determine whether there are any worthwhile opportunities to create a small local park in the northern part of the town, for example as part of the development of a suitable housing allocation
- Seek to negotiate access to school hours outwith the school day
- Seek to enhance and ideally extend the Batford open space
- Seek to work with the town council and local community to enhancing greenspaces on the eastern side of the town. In addition, given the density of development, it will be desirable to enhance access to the urban fringe all down the eastern side of the

town.

- Enhance Crabtree Fields and link the site to the Lea Valley Walk
- Seek opportunities to reduce the deficit of amenity green space and parks and gardens.

Redbourn

- Work with the Parish Council to enhance the quality of the amenity greenspaces in the northern half of the village
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance the green Corridor along the River Ver

14 Wheathampstead

Introduction

This chapter reviews provision in the Wheathampstead planning area and applies the various provision standards to identify potential surpluses and deficiencies. It then goes on to make recommendations on ways of ensuring that provision meets local needs better.

The Wheathampstead planning area extends to some 2,545 hectares and has an estimated population of some 6,050. Map 14.1 shows that the majority of residents live in Wheathampstead itself, but there are also significant numbers of residents on the edge of Harpenden in Gustard Wood, and at the Lea Valley Estate and Folly Fields along the Lower Luton Road to the west of Wheathampstead.

Wheathampstead Village Plan

The Parish Plan (May 2009) sets out a range of aspirations and priorities for the future, including an action plan for each of the main issues in the Plan. Four of these issues are particularly relevant to this strategy: Traffic and Transport; Youth and Leisure; The Environment; and Planning.

The Traffic and Transport Action Plan identifies a desire for cycle tracks:

- Alongside the Lemsford Road towards Brocket Hall Golf Club and Welwyn Garden City
- Alongside the Harpenden Road
- Towards Sandridge and St Albans

The Youth and Leisure Action Plan highlights a need:

- To provide a multi-use games area, with the preferred site being the Marford Road playing fields
- To update play areas owned by the Parish Council (Maltings Drive, Folly Fields, Marford Playing Fields; Marshalls Heath and Rectory Meadow)
- To encourage the City and District Council to update the play areas it owns (Caesars Road, Hilldyke Road and Davy's Close)

- To encourage the County Council to update the Butterfield Road play area
- To improve the signing of leisure walks

The Environment Action Plan suggests a need:

- To maintain footpaths better and provide all-weather surfaces
- To provide cycling routes from Wheathampstead to Kimpton, Harpenden, St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and the Heartwood Forest
- To improve existing cycle paths
- To publicise walks better
- To improve access to the River Lea

The Planning section highlights the importance of enhancing the green chains along the river and former railway line.

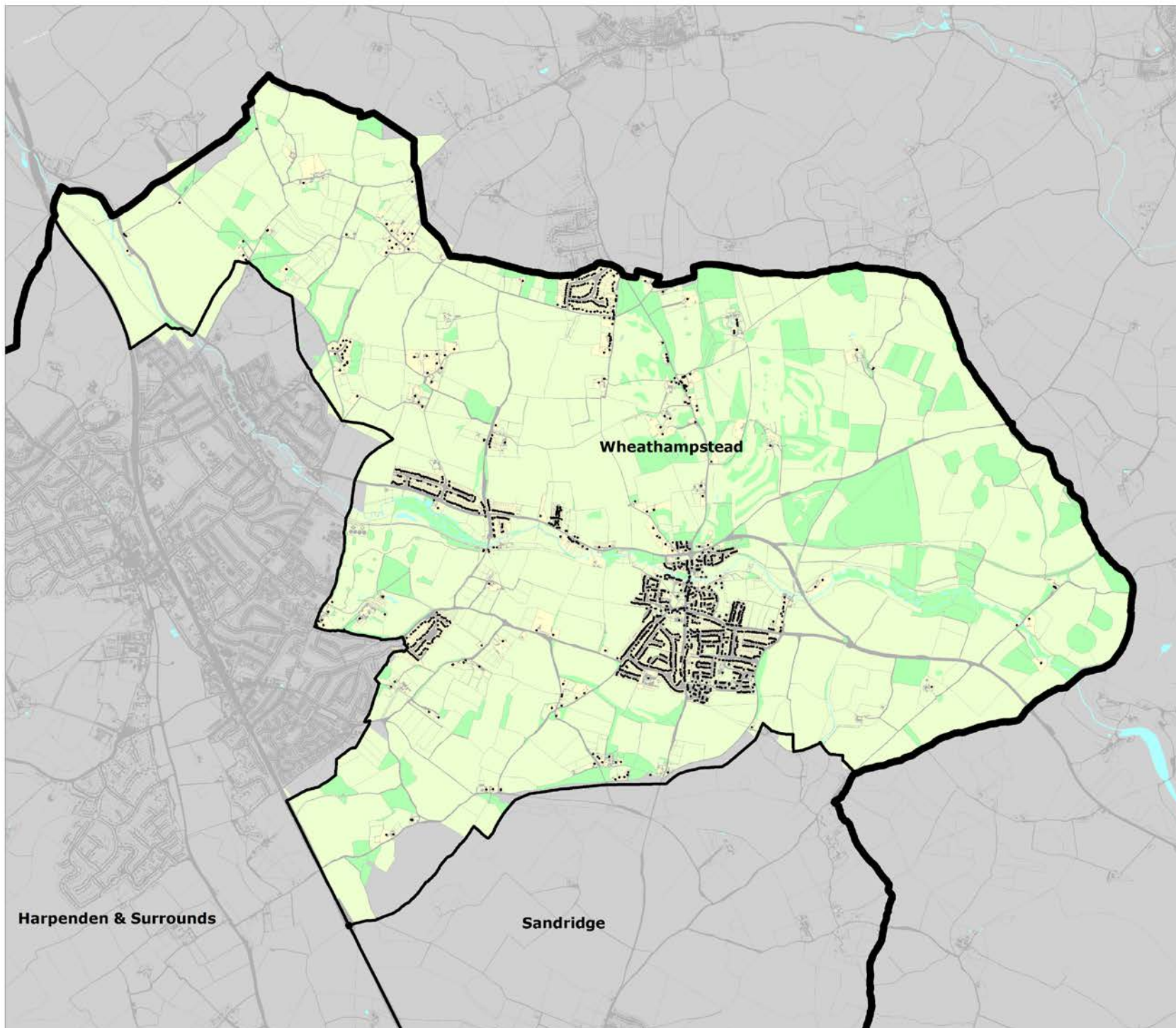
Allotments

Maps 14.2 shows the location of the four allotments sites in the area. The two sites in Marford Road have the highest waiting lists:

Site name	Plots	Waiting list as % plots
Folly Fields	21	19%
Glebe Field, Marford Road	45	18%
Hitchens Field, Marford Road	83	10%
The Slype, Gustard Wood	17	18%
Totals	166	23%

Accordingly there appears to be sufficient demand for an additional or larger site in the Wheathampstead area, with the best location being on the west side of the village.

Applying the provision standard of 12.2 sq m per person to the whole of the Wheathampstead area suggests a need for some 7.4 ha of allotments provision compared with the 5.9 ha currently available, a quantitative deficiency of 1.5 ha. Of this, about 0.7ha is required to meet the demand from the current waiting list, although this assumes that all plots should have an average size, including common areas, comparable to the current average size of approximately 166 sq m.



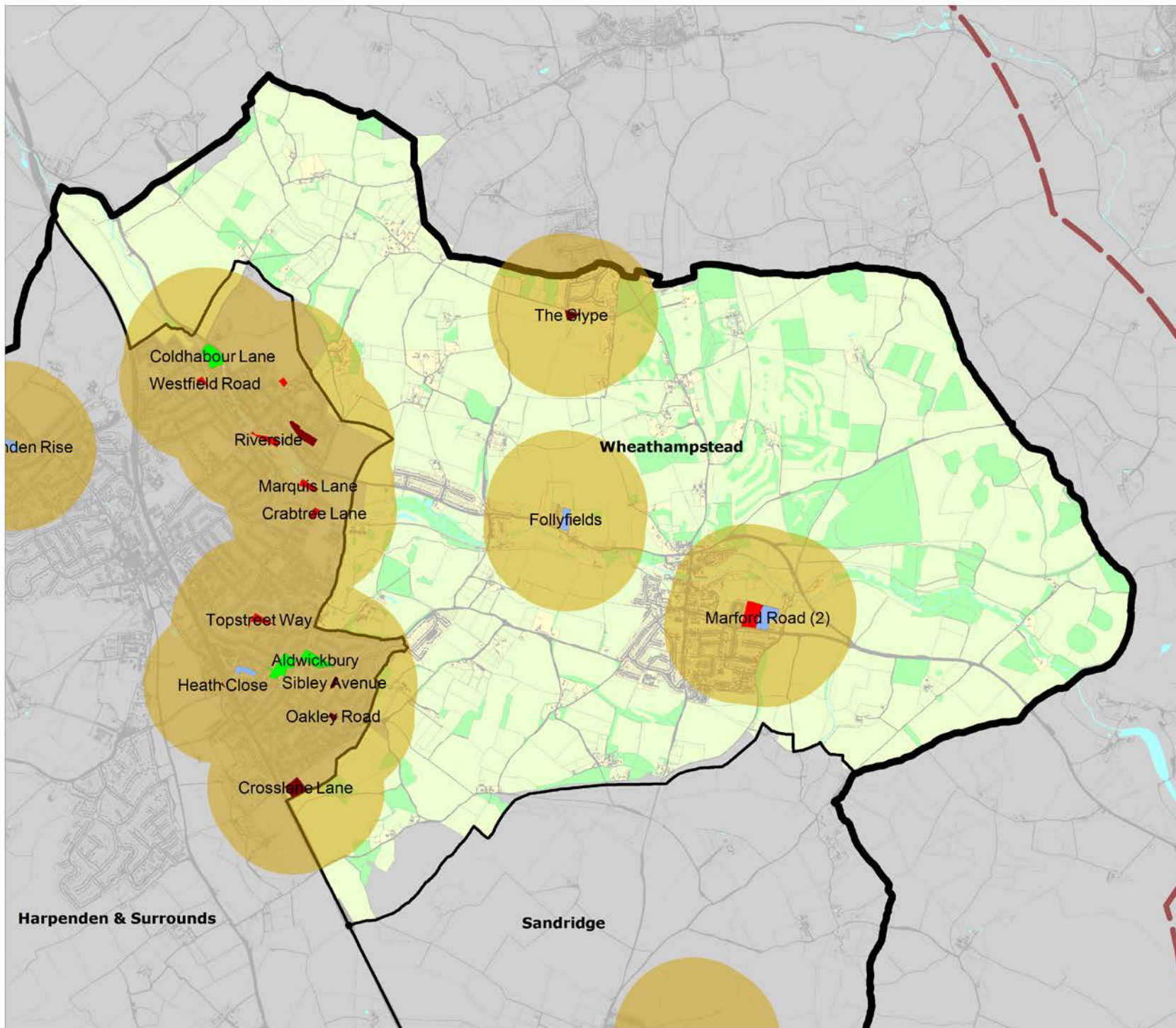
• Properties



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 14.1
Wheathampstead
Distribution of
Properties**

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- Sites with first quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with fourth quartile summary audit scores
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

Map 14.2 Wheathampstead Allotments

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The conclusions from this analysis are therefore that:

- Overall, while 60% of properties lie within walking distance of at least one allotments site, none has a fourth quartile/good summary audit score. Accordingly there is a need to enhance all four sites, although the priority should be The Slype and Hitchens Field.
- There is a need for additional allotments provision and on the basis of the current waiting lists the unmet demand is concentrated in Wheathampstead itself.
- The whole of the Wheathampstead planning area lies within the driving distance threshold of at least one allotments site.

Action Points

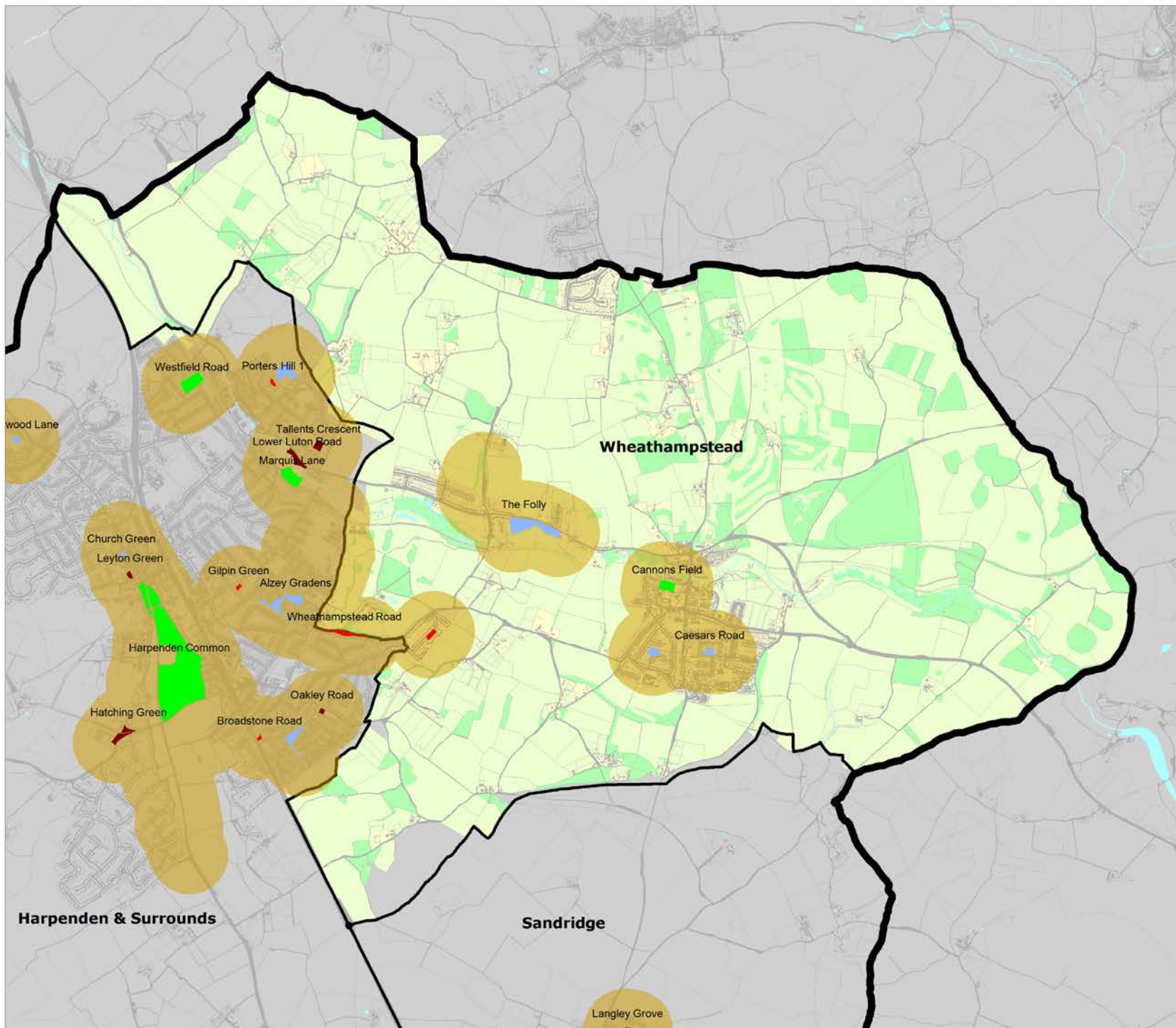
- Seek to allocate an additional site of around 1.5 ha on the western side of Wheathampstead
- Encourage Wheathampstead Parish Council to enhance each of its allotments sites so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C, but to give priority to The Slype and Hitchens Field. Glebe Field is owned by the Diocesan Board so the Parish Council should also seek to work with it to enhance this site.

Amenity Greenspace

Map 14.3 shows the location of the amenity greenspaces in the Wheathampstead area. Most of the developed parts of the planning area lie within the walking distance threshold of at least one amenity greenspace, although only a few spaces come into this typology. Four of the six spaces have first quartile/very poor composite audit scores, indicating a need significantly to enhance them. Overall, 71% of properties lie within the distance threshold of at least one space, although only 27% within the same distance of a space with a fourth quartile/good composite audit score. There is an overall deficit of 42,000 sq m of amenity space but this is balanced by a surplus of natural green space

Action Points

- Enhance the quality of those existing spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C



St Albans City and District Greenspace Strategy

Map 14.3 Wheathampstead Amenity Greenspaces

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Churchyards and Cemeteries

Map 14.4 shows that there is only a single churchyard, at St Helen's Church in Wheathampstead and that it has only a second quartile/poor composite audit score. As a result it will benefit from enhancement.

Action Points

- Enhance the St Helen's Churchyard so that it accords with the churchyards and cemeteries section of Appendix C

Natural Greenspaces

Map 14.5 shows the natural greenspaces in the Wheathampstead planning area, together with Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites. There are two sizeable natural greenspaces: Gustardwood Common and Nomansland Common, most of which lies in the Sandridge planning area.

Overall some 24% of properties lie within the distance threshold of at least one natural greenspaces but only 12% within this distance of one with a fourth quartile/good summary audit score.

Action Points

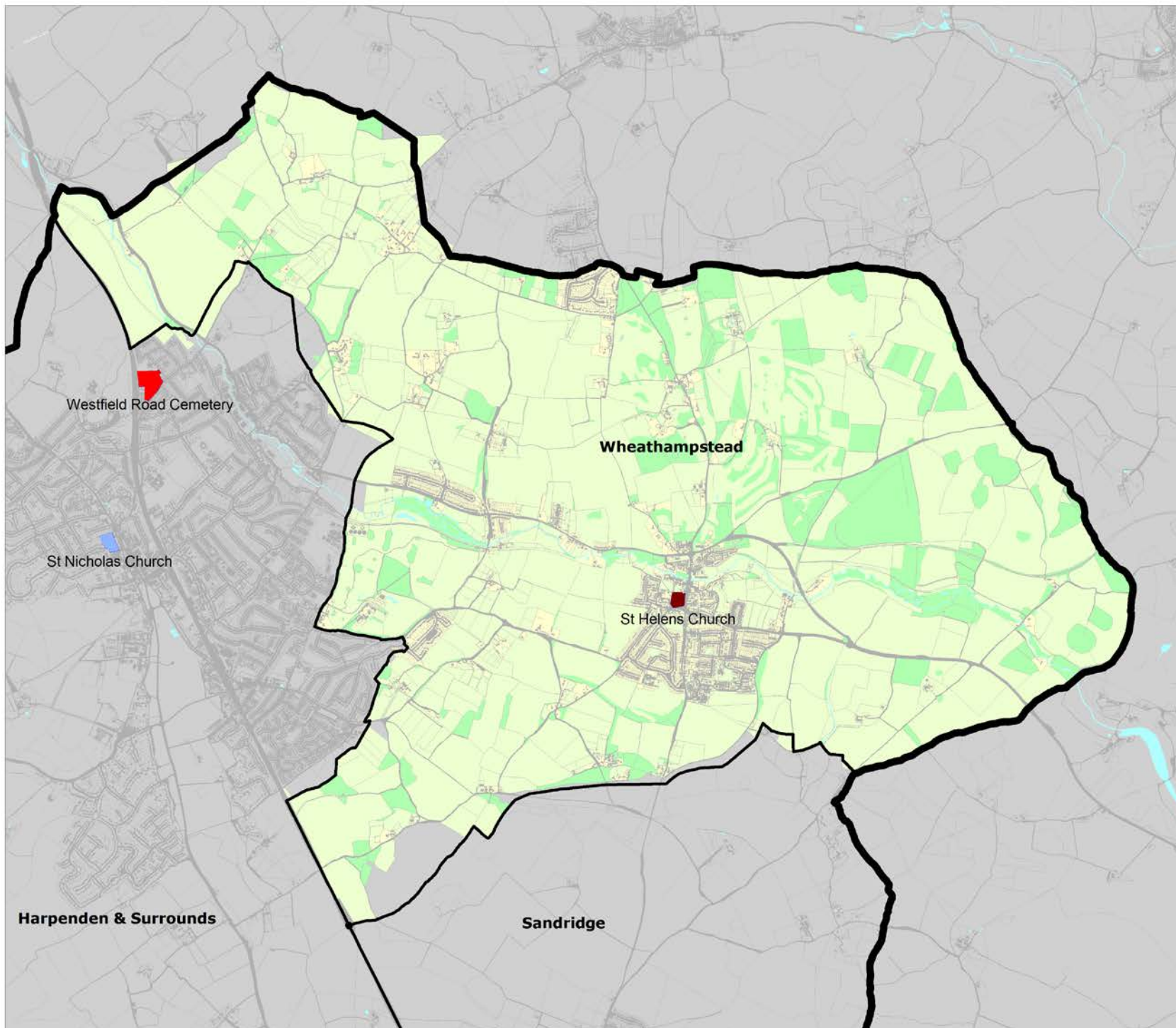
- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C

Parks and Gardens

There are no parks and gardens in the Wheathampstead planning area and therefore it will be desirable to enhance existing spaces in accordance with at least some of the characteristics of parks and gardens set out in Appendix C. However Bocket Park, a registered historic park, lies to the eastern edge of the area and therefore the Council should explore opportunities for improved public access.

Action Points

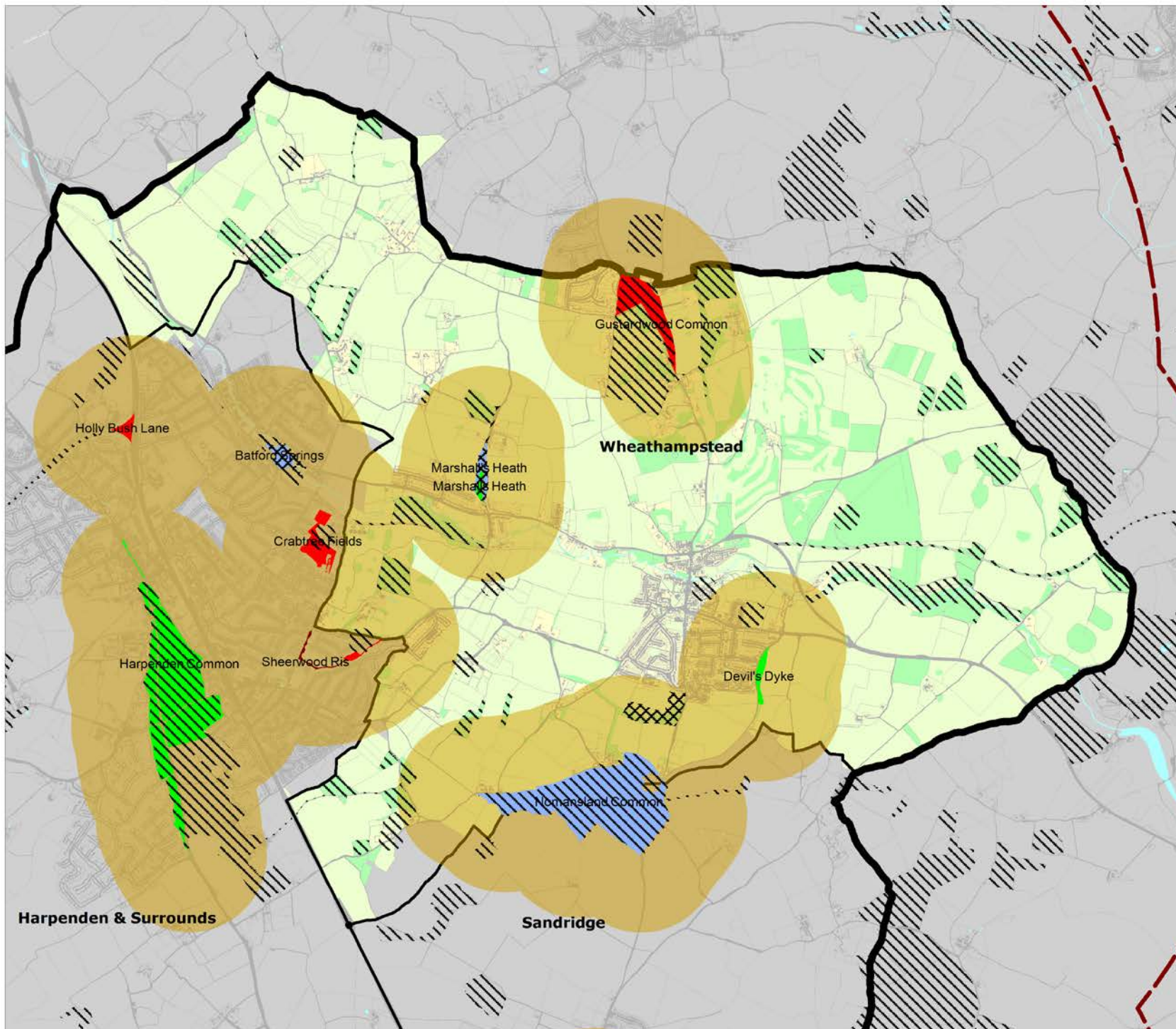
- Enhance one or more spaces within Wheathampstead (Marford Road may be the only realistic opportunity) so that they accord as much as possible with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

Map 14.4 Wheathampstead Churchyards and Cemeteries

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- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold



St Albans City and District Greenspace Strategy

Map 14.5 Wheathampstead Natural Greenspaces

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Green Corridors

The Wheathampsted planning area is bisected in an east-west direction by the River Lea and Lea Valley Walk and the Ayot Greenway. The former links Harpenden to Brocket Hall.

Action Points

- With the Parish Council, consider developing a north-south corridor linking Wheathampstead north to Gustardwood Common and south to Nomansland Common and the Heartwood Forest.
- With the Parish and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Children's Play Areas

Map 14.6 shows the location of equipped play areas for children aged under 6 and Map 14.7 shows similar information but for children aged 6-11 and 8 minute/450 m distance thresholds.

Accessibility, Quality and Value – Toddlers

There are eight equipped play areas in the Wheathampstead planning area designed for toddlers, and 72% of properties lie within a 300 m walk of at least one of them. However, most are of poor quality and value and there are no sites with a fourth quartile/good summary audit score. Accordingly there is a real need to enhance existing play areas and the worst sites, with only first quartile/very poor summary audit scores, are:

- Folly Fields, Marshalls Heath
- Cannons Field, Wheathampstead
- Maltings Drive, Wheathampstead
- Caesars Road, Wheathampstead
- Hill Dyke Road, Wheathampstead
- Davy's Close, Wheathampstead

Accessibility, Quality and Value – Older Children

The distribution of play areas for older children aged about 6-11 years, and their audit scores, is identical to provision for toddlers as each of the sites has equipment suitable for both age groups.

Quantity of Provision

The eight equipped play facilities have an aggregate area of a little under 0.4 ha, almost exactly the amount required by application of the quantity standard of 0.5 sq m per person. Accordingly there is no need for additional local play provision.

Action Points

- Work with the Parish Council to make existing greenspaces in housing areas more interesting and valuable for children's play
- Encourage Wheathampstead Parish Council to enhance its existing play facilities so that they accord with the Children's Play section of Appendix C
- Enhance the Council-owned play facilities so that they accord with the Children's Play section of Appendix C

Teenagers

Wheathampstead has only a single teenage facility at the Marford Road Playing Fields. Map 14.8 shows its location and also that it has only a first quartile/very poor audit score. Accordingly the audit broadly supports the Village Plan proposal for a multi-use games area, with Marford Road being the obvious location in the village. 43% of properties lie within a 10 minute walk of the site and 75% within a 10 minute cycle ride.

Applying the quantity standard of 0.18 sq m per person suggests only a slight deficiency in the area of teenage provision.

Action Points

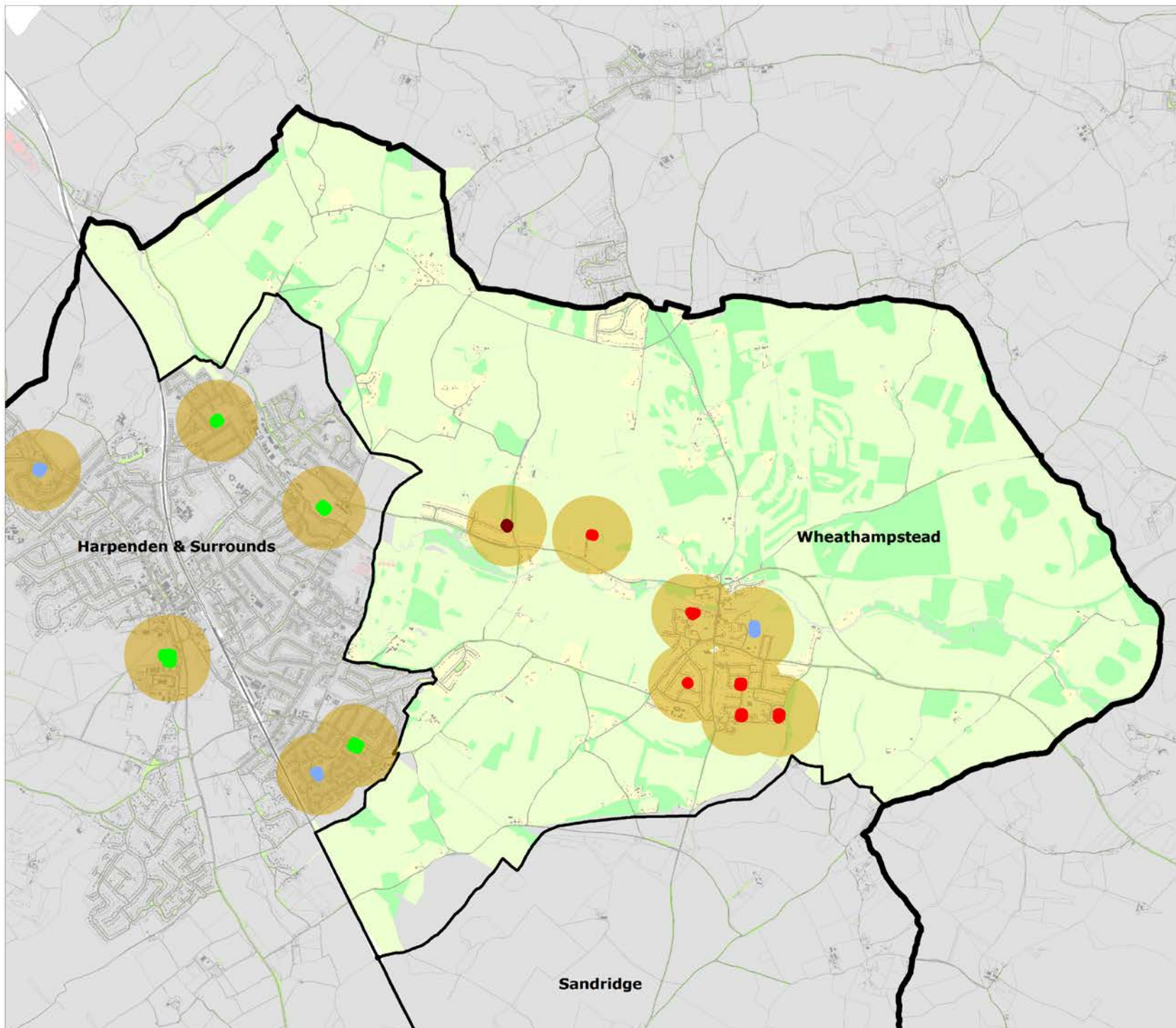
- Progress the Village Plan proposal for a multi-use games area at Marford Road (note: this assumes that the proposal was a response to the views expressed by local teenagers. If not, the Parish or City and District Council should first consult teenagers to ensure that this will be their first choice)

Multi-functional Greenspace: Overview

Map14.9 shows the network of multi-functional greenspaces – amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens – in the Wheathampstead area. There are no secondary schools playing fields in the area, although the playing fields linked to the former secondary school are still available to community teams.

The total amount of multi-functional greenspace available (excluding Nomansland Common because it is not immediately adjacent to a developed area) compared with the amount required by the application of the quantity standards derived earlier in this report is:

	Required sq m	Available sq m
Amenity greenspace	90,870	48,790
Natural greenspace:	30,290	156,736
Parks and gardens	72,696	0
Totals	193,856	205,526



- Sites with fourth quartile/
good audit score
- Site with third quartile/
fair audit score
- Sites with second quartile/
poor audit score
- Sites with first quartile/
very poor audit score

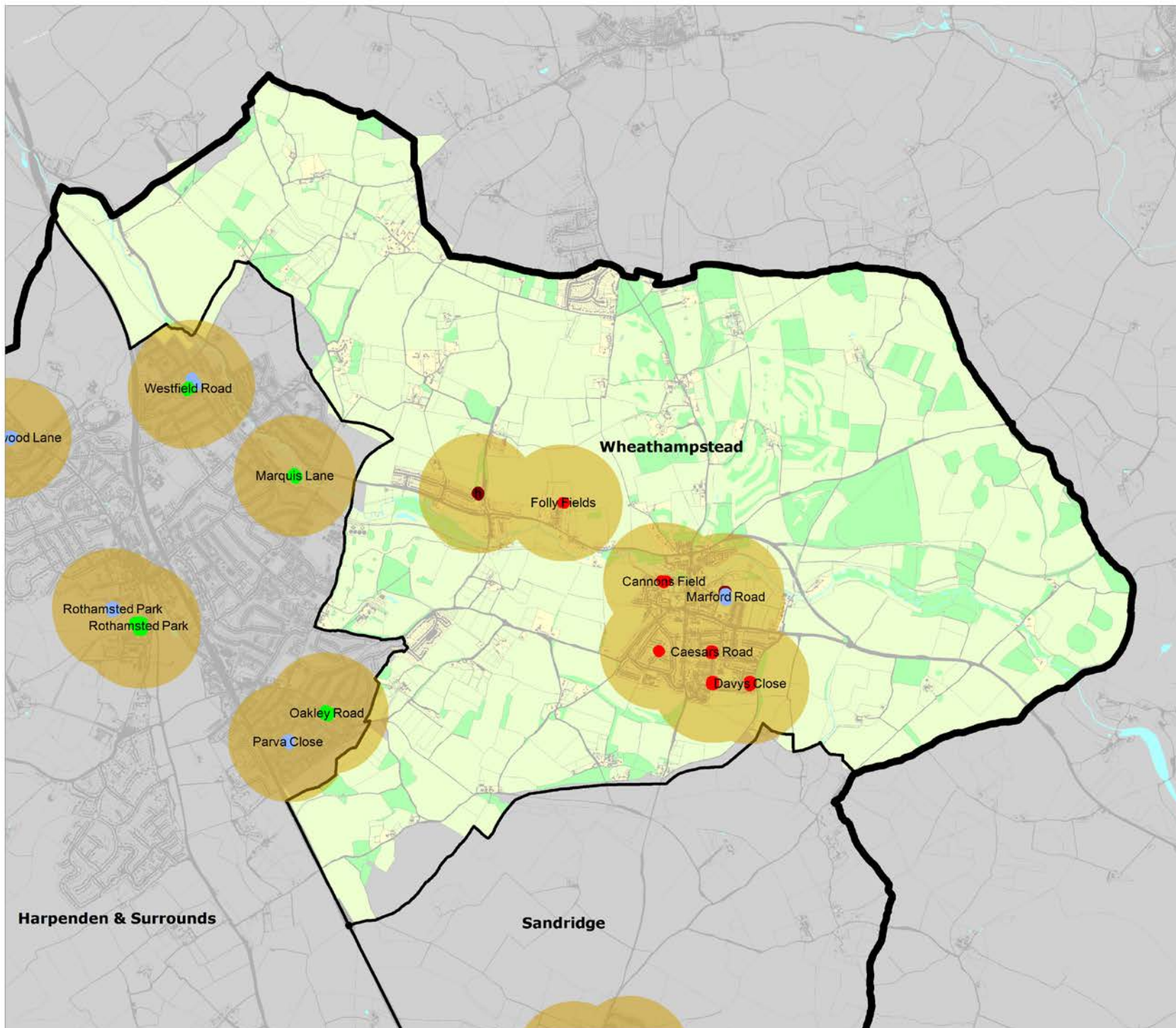
5 minutes/300 m walk
for toddlers and
young children



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 14.6
Wheathampstead:
Toddlers' Play Areas**

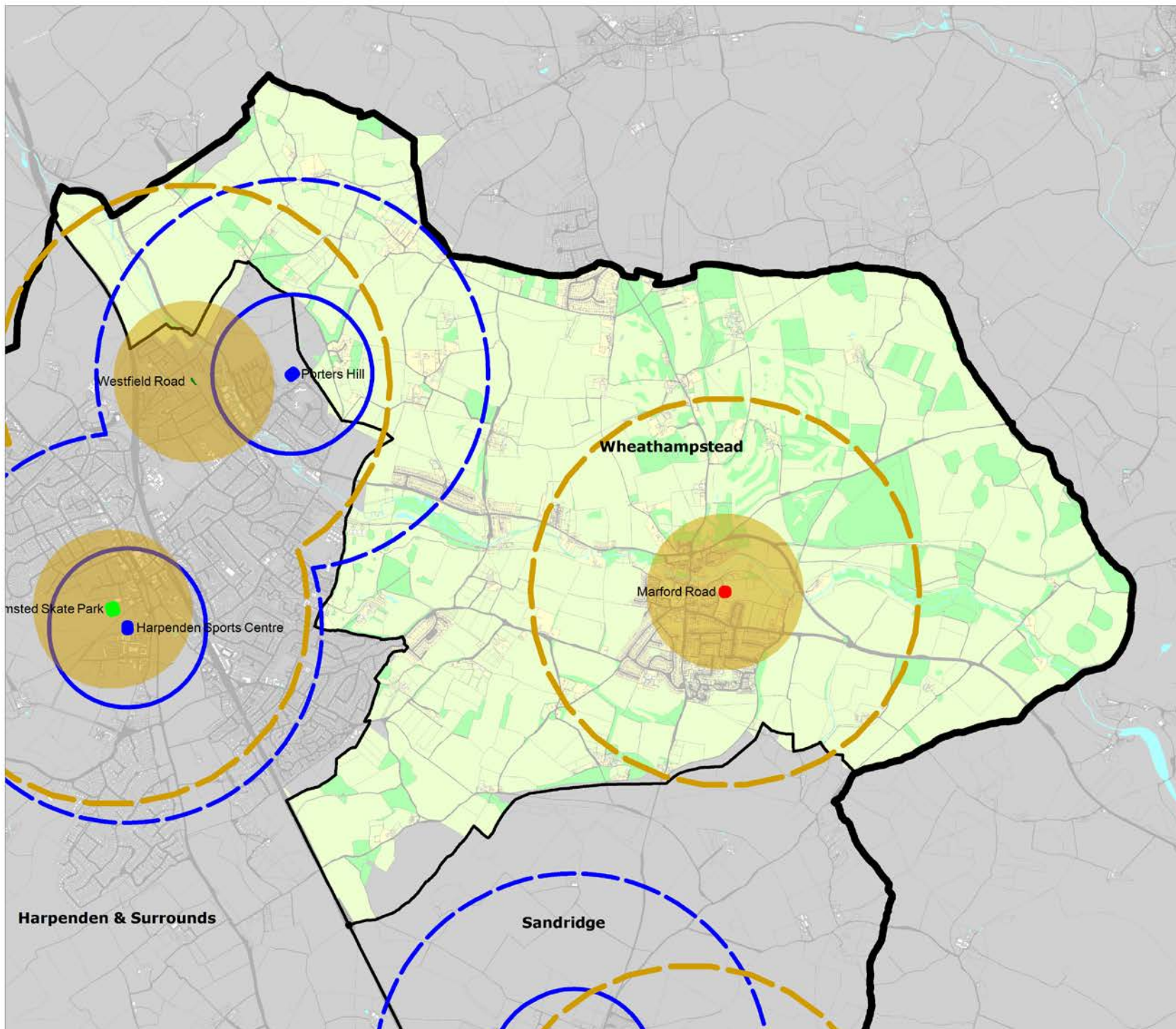
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St Albans City and District Greenspace Strategy

Map 14.7 Wheathampstead Older Children Equipped Play

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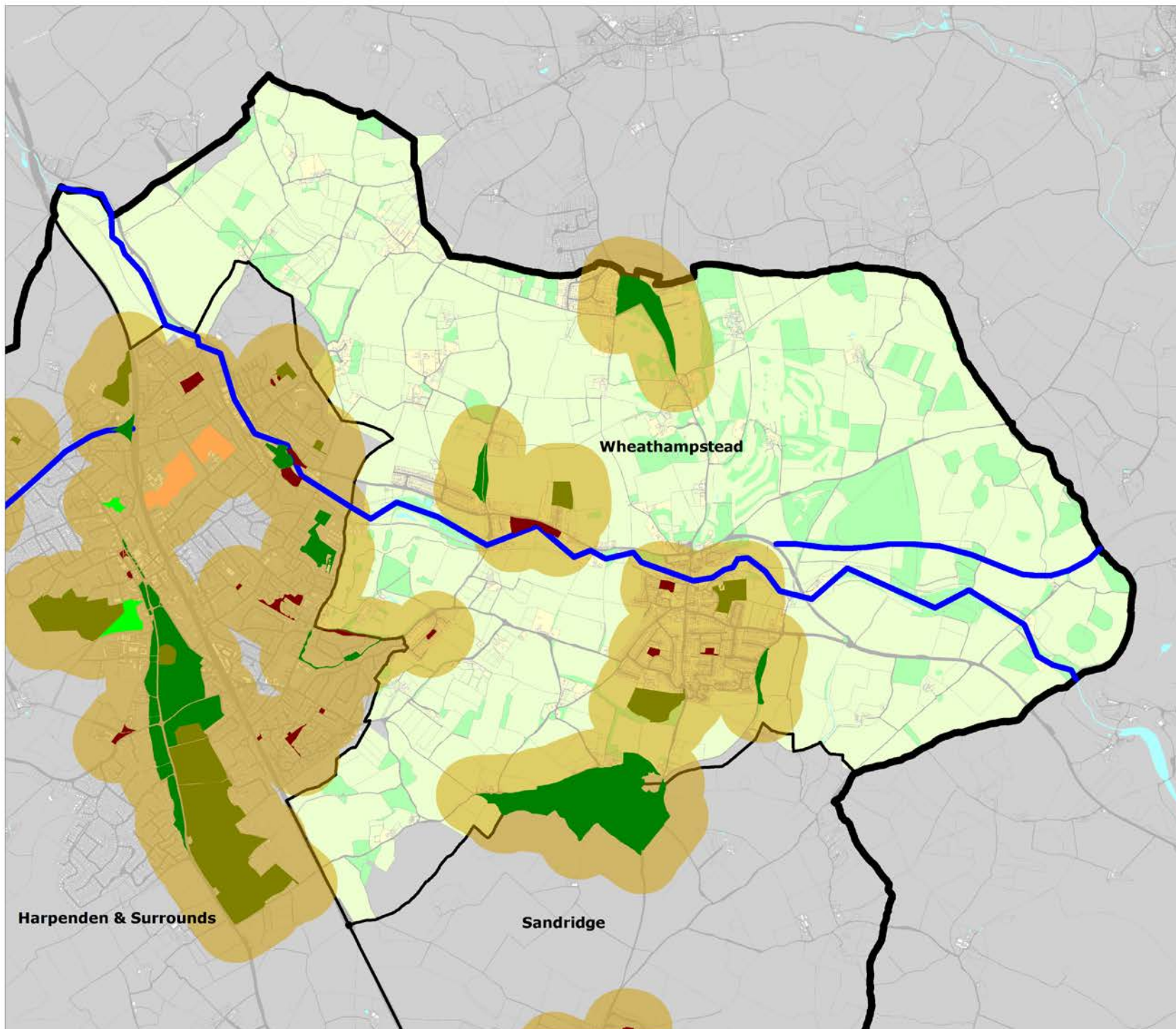


- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/1500 m cycle distance threshold
- Multi-courts
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/1500 m walk distance threshold



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy

Map 14.8
Wheathampstead
Teenage Facilities



- Amenity greenspaces
- Natural greenspaces
- Parks and Gardens
- Open access sports facilities
- Secondary school playing fields
- Green corridors
- 5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy

Map 14.9
Wheathampstead
Multi-functional greenspace

Overall, therefore, there is a surplus of natural greenspace but a deficiency in amenity greenspace and parks and gardens. However, these deficiencies are not particularly important given the small size of settlements in the parish and the proximity of open countryside.

The Accessibility of Multi-functional Greenspace

As Map 14.9 shows, the overall accessibility of multi-functions greenspace in Wheathampstead is very good. The only area in which residents lack access to a greenspace is the western part of Lea Valley, but here residents have good access to the countryside.

The Quality and Value of Multi-functional Greenspace

A number of the spaces in the Wheathampstead area have only first quartile/very poor audit scores, so it will be desirable to enhance them, but especially Cannons Field, Maltings Drive and Caesars Road as they are within Wheathampstead itself.

Action Points

- Enhance access to the countryside around Wheathampstead and Lea Valley, especially the River Lea corridor
- Work with the Parish Council and local community to enhance existing amenity greenspaces with low audit scores within Wheathampstead
- Seek opportunities to increase the quantity of amenity greenspaces and parks and gardens, if necessary by redesigning part of the natural greenspace provision

15 Sandridge

Introduction

This chapter reviews provision in the Sandridge planning area and applies the various provision standards to identify potential surpluses and deficiencies. It then goes on to make recommendations on ways of ensuring that provision meets local needs better.

The Sandridge planning area extends to slightly less than 1,500 hectares and has an estimated population of some 11,200. As map 15.1 below shows, the majority of Sandridge residents live on the north eastern edge of St Albans, in the village of Sandridge or along the B651 between them.

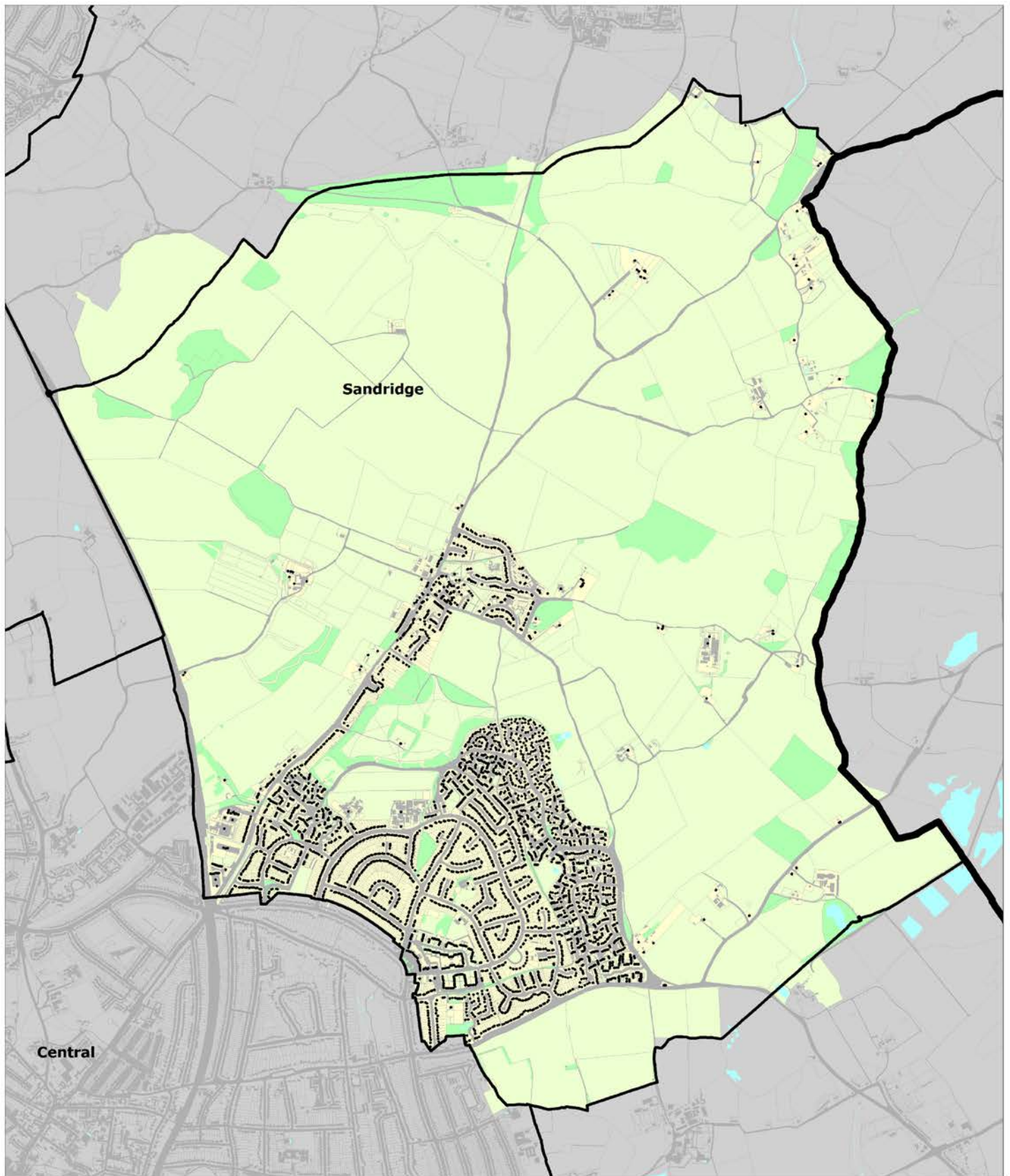
Sandridge Village Plan

Sandridge Parish Council has embarked on the preparation of a village plan and is establishing local views through a questionnaire.

Allotments

There is only one allotments site in Sandridge, at Woodcock Hill, although the Marshalls Avenue site in north east St Albans will be relevant to some Sandridge residents. Map 15.2 shows their location.

The Woodcock Hill site, which is owned by the County Council and managed by commercial agents, has only 15 plots and a waiting list of 3 people. It has a site area of a little over 0.25 ha so the average plot size, including the common areas of the site, is only 169 sq m, indicating that plots have probably been sub-divided in the past in order to accommodate more plot-holders.



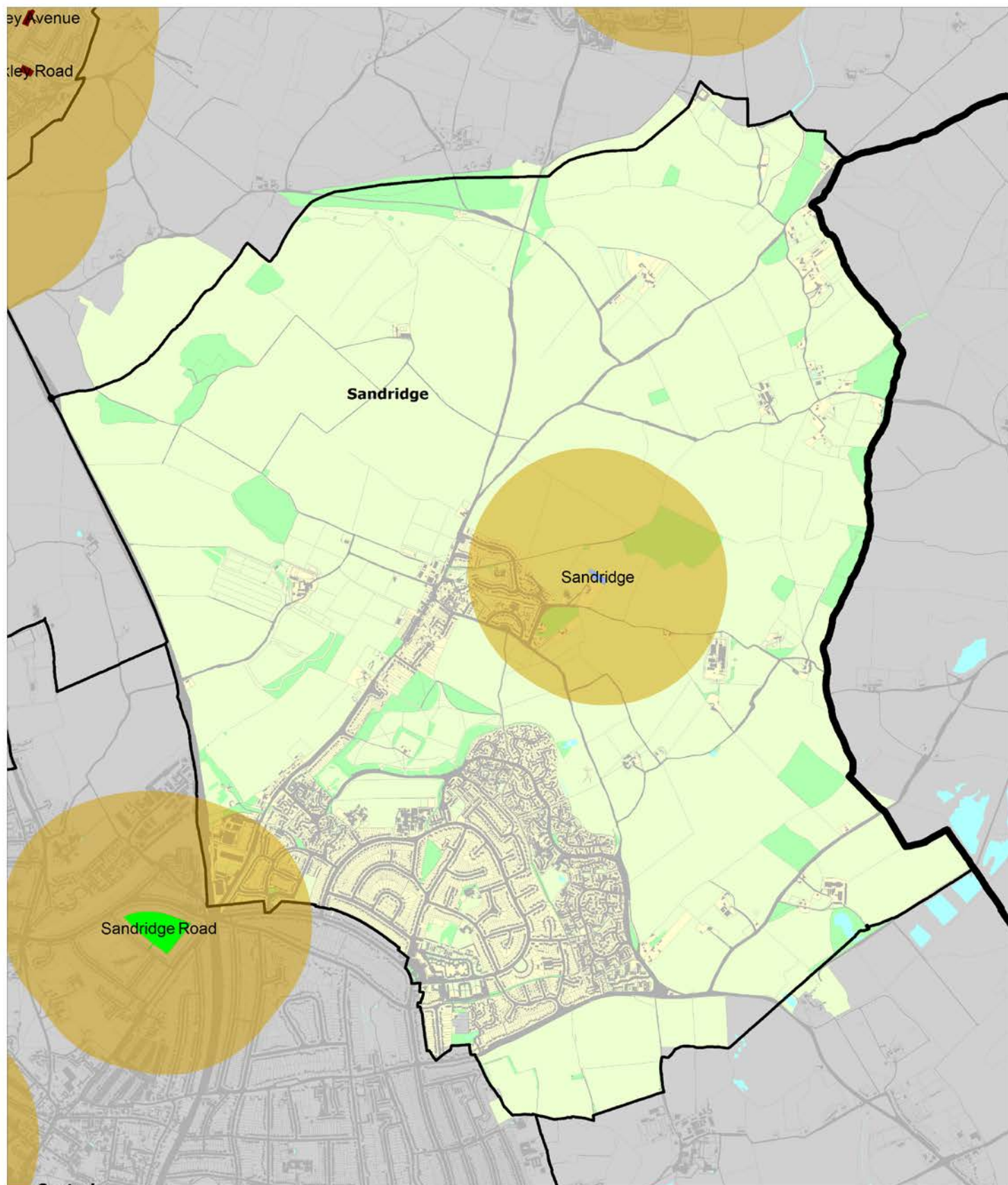
• Properties

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Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.1 Sandridge Properties

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- Sites with first quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with fourth quartile summary audit scores

- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold

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Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.2 Sandridge Allotments

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The small size of the site means that it has a low value score. Overall, it has a first quartile/very poor summary audit score indicating a need for enhancement, with the most desirable improvements being the provision of a toilet and better parking and disabled access. It is also slightly isolated with poor informal surveillance from neighbouring properties and overall only 10% of properties lie within the 10 minute walking distance threshold of either the Woodcock Hill or Marshalls Avenue sites. This results in the worst accessibility to allotments across the eight planning areas.

Applying the quantity standard for allotments to the Sandridge population suggests a need for some 5.25 ha of allotments compared with the 0.25 ha currently available, a shortfall of some 5.0 ha.

Action Points

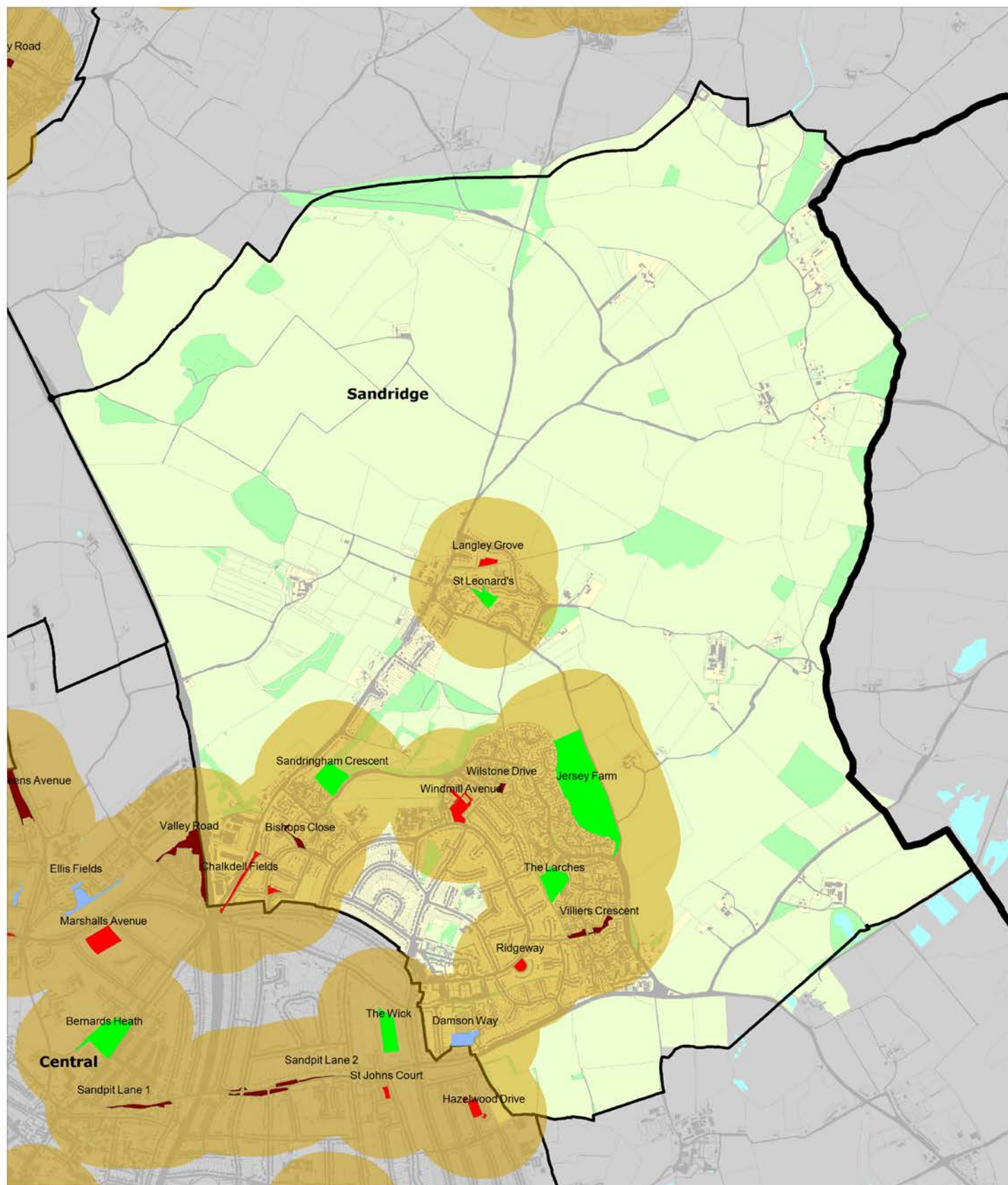
- Work with Sandridge Parish Council to identify the possible need for additional allotments and potential site(s)

Amenity Greenspace

Map 15.3 shows the location of the amenity greenspaces in the Sandridge area. Overall 86% of properties lie within the distance threshold of at least one space. However, only three of the 13 spaces have a third quartile/fair or fourth quartile/good summary audit score and the other ten are first quartile/poor. Only 19% of properties lie within the distance threshold of a space with a fourth quartile/good summary audit score. Accordingly there is a need significantly to enhance most of the existing amenity greenspaces, with the priority being on the periphery of St Albans as this area contains a concentration of poor quality and value spaces. There is an overall slight deficit of 1.75 ha of amenity green space but a surplus of natural green space

Action Points

- Work with the Parish Council to enhance those sites with the lowest composite audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Seek to increase the amount of amenity green space.



Sites with fourth quartile audit score

Sites with third quartile audit score

Sites with second quartile audit score

Sites with first quartile audit score

5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold

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Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.3 Sandridge Amenity greenspaces

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Churchyards and Cemeteries

There are two churchyards and cemeteries in Sandridge, both linked to St Leonard's Church in Sandridge Village. Both have third quartile/fair summary audit scores and therefore require only limited enhancement.

Natural Greenspaces

Map 15.4 shows the natural greenspaces in the Sandridge planning area. Overall some 95% of properties lie within this distance threshold of at least one existing natural greenspace. However, only Nomansland Common on the northern boundary of the area achieved a fourth quartile/good summary audit score.

The area currently contains two major natural greenspaces, Nomansland Common and Jersey Farm Woodland Park between Sandridge Village and the northern part of St Albans. The Woodland Trust's development of the Heartwood Forest immediately to the north of Sandridge Village, parts of which are already open, is creating a third that should be of high quality and value. The percentage of properties within the distance threshold of at least one natural greenspace will then rise to 100%.

Action Points

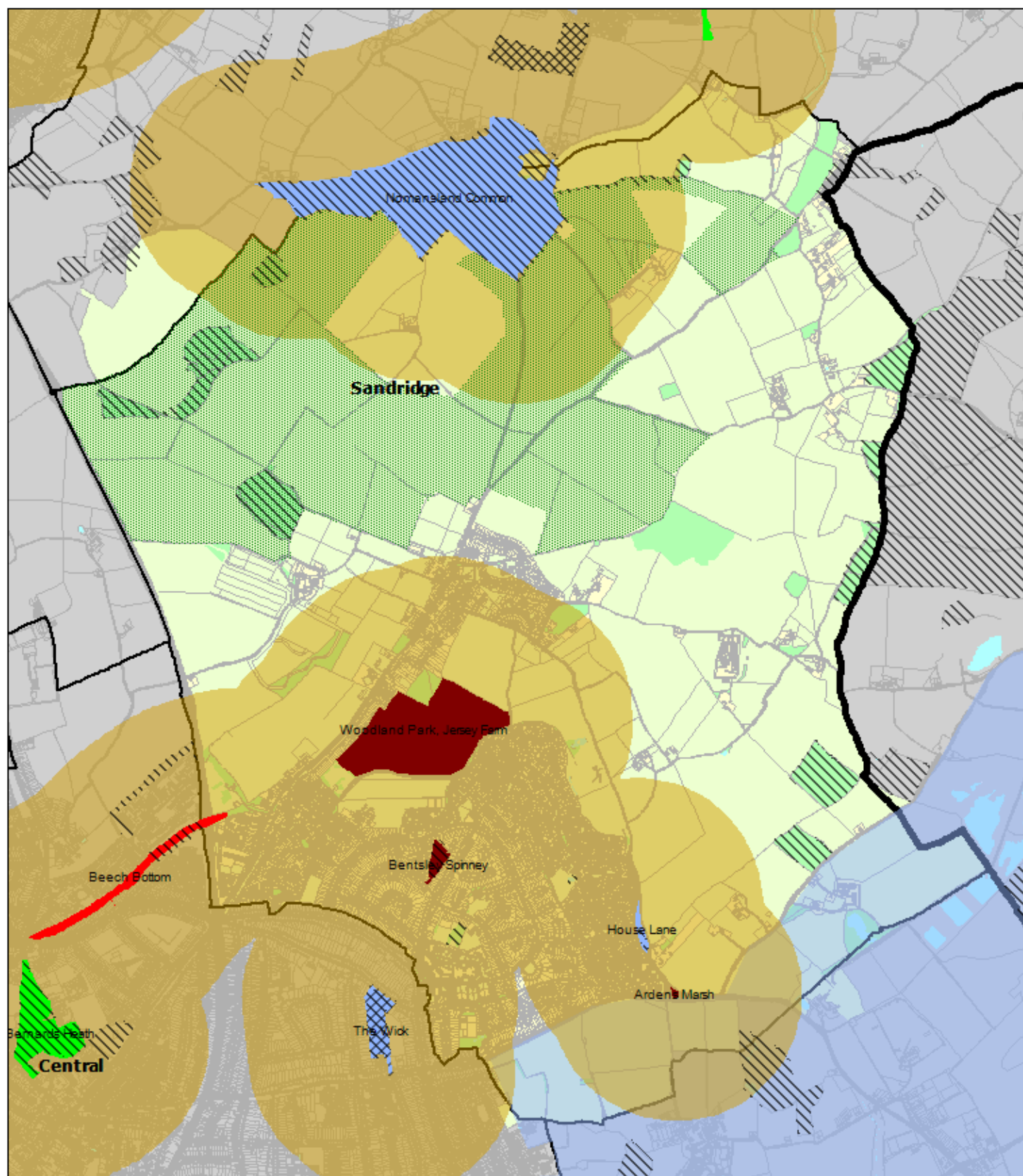
- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C

Parks and Gardens

There are no parks or gardens in the Sandridge area and none within the walking distance threshold of any part of it. However, most of it lies within the driving distance threshold of a District Park in an adjoining planning area.

Action Points

- Although there are no parks in the Sandridge planning area, it will be desirable to consider the provision of one (see Multi-functional Greenspace, below)



- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites
- Heartwood Forest
- Watling Chase Community Forest
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold

St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.4 Sandridge Natural Greenspace

Green Corridors

There is one green corridor in the Sandridge Planning area, the Jersey Lane Footpath.

Action Points

- Extend the Jersey Lane Footpath north to the Heartwood Forest and south east to the Watling Chase Community Forest
- With the Parish and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Children's Play Areas

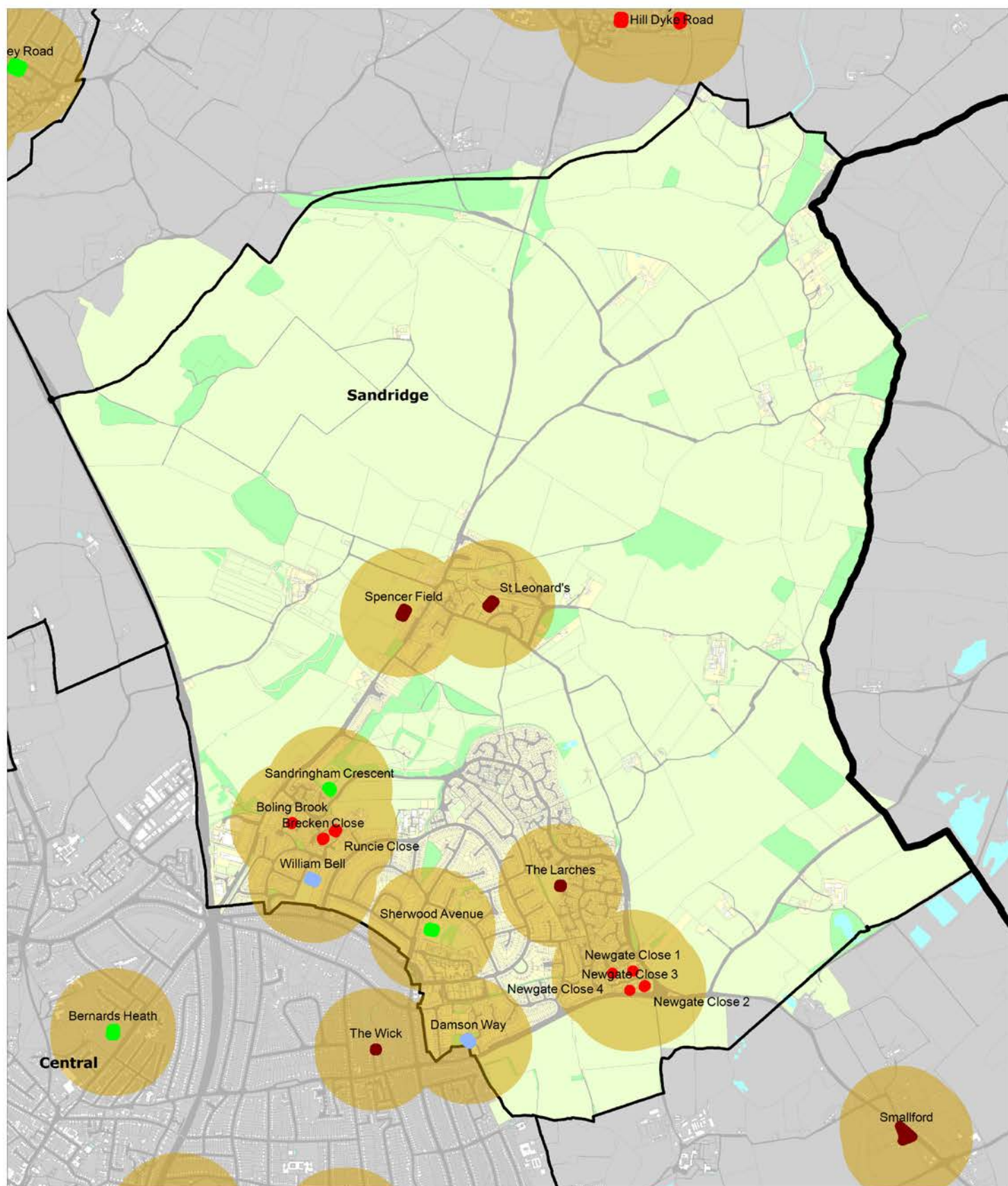
Map 15.5 shows the location of equipped play areas for children aged under 6 and Map 15.6 similar information but for children aged 6-11 and 8 minute/450 m distance thresholds.

Play Areas for Toddlers

Fourteen of the 15 equipped play areas in the Sandridge planning area contain equipment suitable for young children and 69% of properties lie within the 300 m walking distance threshold of at least one of them. However, only two of them – Sandringham Crescent and Sherwood Avenue - have fourth quartile/good summary audit scores. Two other sites – Damson Way and the William Bell play area – have third quartile/fair scores, but seven sites have first quartile/very poor scores. There are two noticeable clusters of poor play provision: the four play areas in Newgate Close, and the Brecken Close and Runcie Close facilities. Given their poor quality, and the small size of the Newgate Close sites (they have only five pieces of equipment between them) and Brecken Close (less than 150 sq m) it will be sensible to consider rationalising them into two larger but better facilities.

There is an obvious gap in play provision for young children in the area around Sandringham Crescent to the west of House Lane.

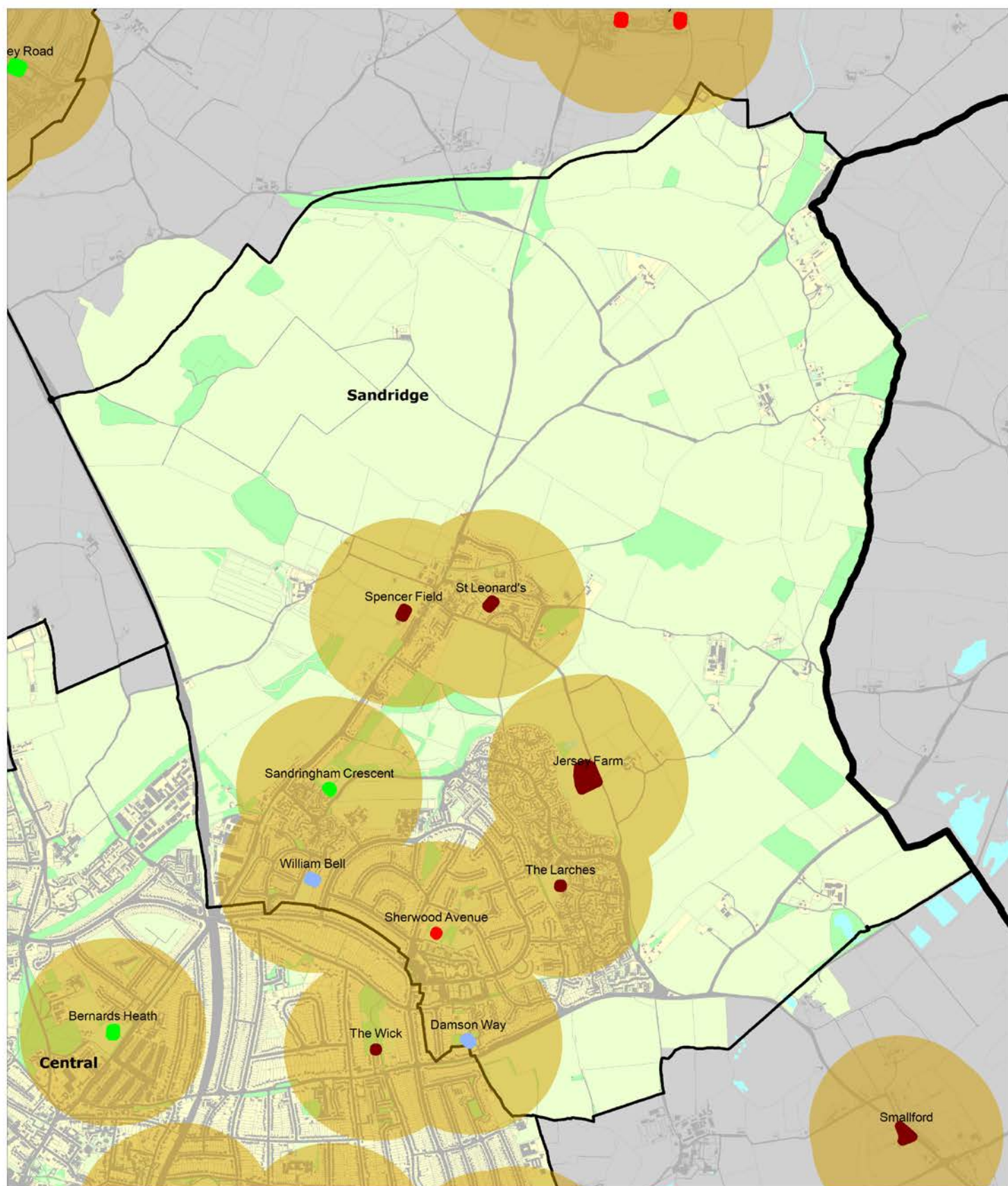
Applying the quantity standard of 0.5 sq m per person suggests a need for some 0.6 ha compared with the 1.25 ha available. However, the Jersey Farm Adventure Play Area is just over 0.8 ha so overall the quantity of the remaining provision is about right.



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.5 Sandridge Toddlers' Play



- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

8 minutes/450 m walk distance threshold

St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.6 Sandridge Older Children Equipped Play

Play Areas for Older Children

Eight of the play areas have equipment intended for older children and, in spite of the lesser number of sites for this age group, 87% of properties lie within the higher distance threshold of it. However, the quality and value of some of the sites is poor, with only the Sandringham Crescent site achieving a fourth quartile/good summary audit score.

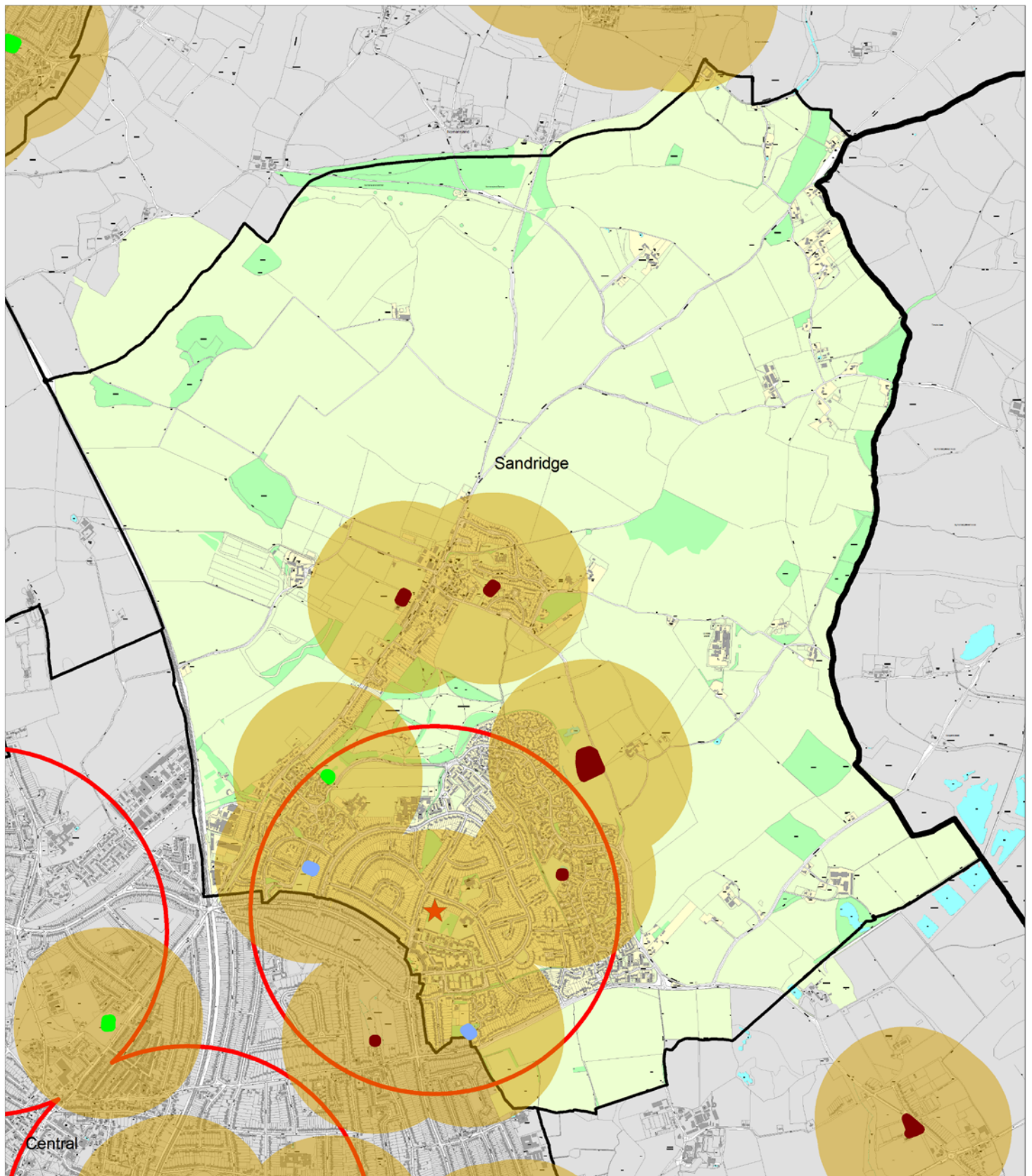
Chapter 11 suggests a need for a limited number of “strategic” children’s play facilities in the areas with the greatest concentrations of population. The southern part of the Sandridge area meets this requirement, especially as some of the existing facilities are poor, and there are two possible sites: Sherwood Avenue and, perhaps, the Jersey Farm Adventure Play Area. Sherwood Avenue will be better because there will be more potential users within walking distance of it. Map 15.8 shows how a strategic play area at this location has the potential to serve most of the southern part of the Sandridge planning area. 73% of properties in the planning area lie within a 900 m of it.

Action Points

- Work with Sandridge Parish Council and the local community to rationalise (a) the four Newgate Close play areas and (b) the Brecken Close and Runcie Close facilities into larger but better facilities. An alternative for Brecken Close and Runcie Close will be to remove both facilities and enhance the William Bell and/or Sandringham Crescent facilities.
- Work with Sandridge Parish Council to develop a strategic play area at Sherwood Avenue, or, if this site is not acceptable to the Parish Council or local residents, a suitable alternative site
- Encourage Sandridge Parish Council to upgrade those of its play areas with low audit scores, particularly Sherwood Avenue and St Leonards
- Seek to negotiate contributions to the development of a strategic play area within Sandridge from housing developers

Teenagers

Sandridge has a single teenage area, the Jersey Farm Adventure Play Area, but it achieved only a first quartile/very poor audit score. Map 15.8 shows its location and also that almost all of Sandridge (and 94% of properties) lies within a 10 minute cycle ride of the site. There is also a multi-court at the Spencer Playing Field, but there is a charge for its use.



- Sites with fourth quartile/
good summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile/
fair summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile/
poor summary audit scores
- Sites with first quartile/
very poor summary
audit scores

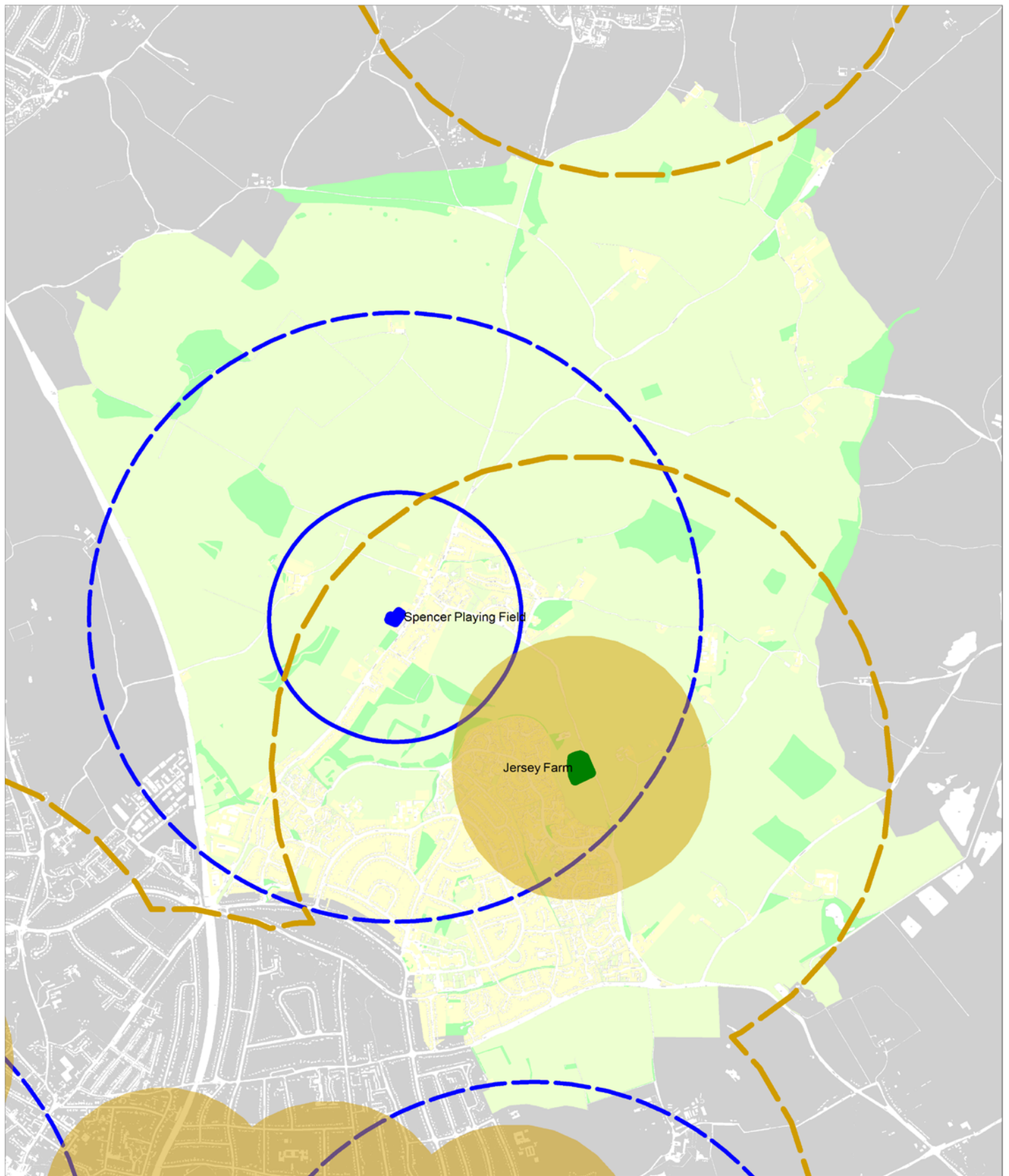
- Strategic Play Area
- 8 minutes/450 m walk
distance threshold
for older children
- 900 m/15 minutes walk
distance threshold for
strategic play area

St Albans City and District Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.7 Sandridge Strategic Play

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Teenage facilities



Multi-courts



10 minutes/600 m walk
distance threshold



10 minutes/600 m walk
distance threshold



10 minutes/1500 m walk
distance threshold



10 minutes/1500 m walk
distance threshold

St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.8
Sandridge
Teenage Facilities

Applying the quantity standard of 0.18 sq m per person suggest a sizeable surplus in the amount of provision as a result of the large size of the Jersey Farm site. However, there are some walking accessibility deficiencies in the south east and south west of the planning areas and in the adjacent areas of St Albans.

Action Points

- Enhance the quality and value of the Jersey Farm adventure play area to teenagers
- Identify sites for additional teenage facilities in the south east and south west of the Sandridge area (or close by in the St Albans planning area) and work with local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facilities.

Multi-functional Greenspace: Overview

Map 15.9 shows the multi-functional greenspace in the Sandridge planning area, including secondary school playing fields.

The Quantity of Multi-functional Greenspace Provision

The total amount of different types of multi-functional greenspace provision – amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens – in Sandridge compared with the amount required by the application of the quantity standards derived earlier in this report is:

	Required sq m	Available sq m
Amenity greenspace	167,790	150,236
Natural greenspace	55,930	257,063
Parks and gardens	134,232	0
Totals	357,952	407,299

Note: the area of natural greenspace excludes Nomansland Common because it is not immediately adjacent to a developed area

Overall, therefore, there is ample multi-functional greenspace in the Sandridge area for the current population. However, while there is a surplus of natural greenspace there are no parks or gardens. Most of the natural greenspace provision consists of the Nomansland Common and the Woodland Park at Jersey Farm. The Heartwood Forest is also in the Sandridge planning area, although it was not included in the audit.

The Accessibility of Multi-functional Greenspace

The accessibility of greenspace in the Sandridge area is very good with only isolated dwellings outwith the distance threshold of at least one space. Including the Sandringham School playing fields in the analysis

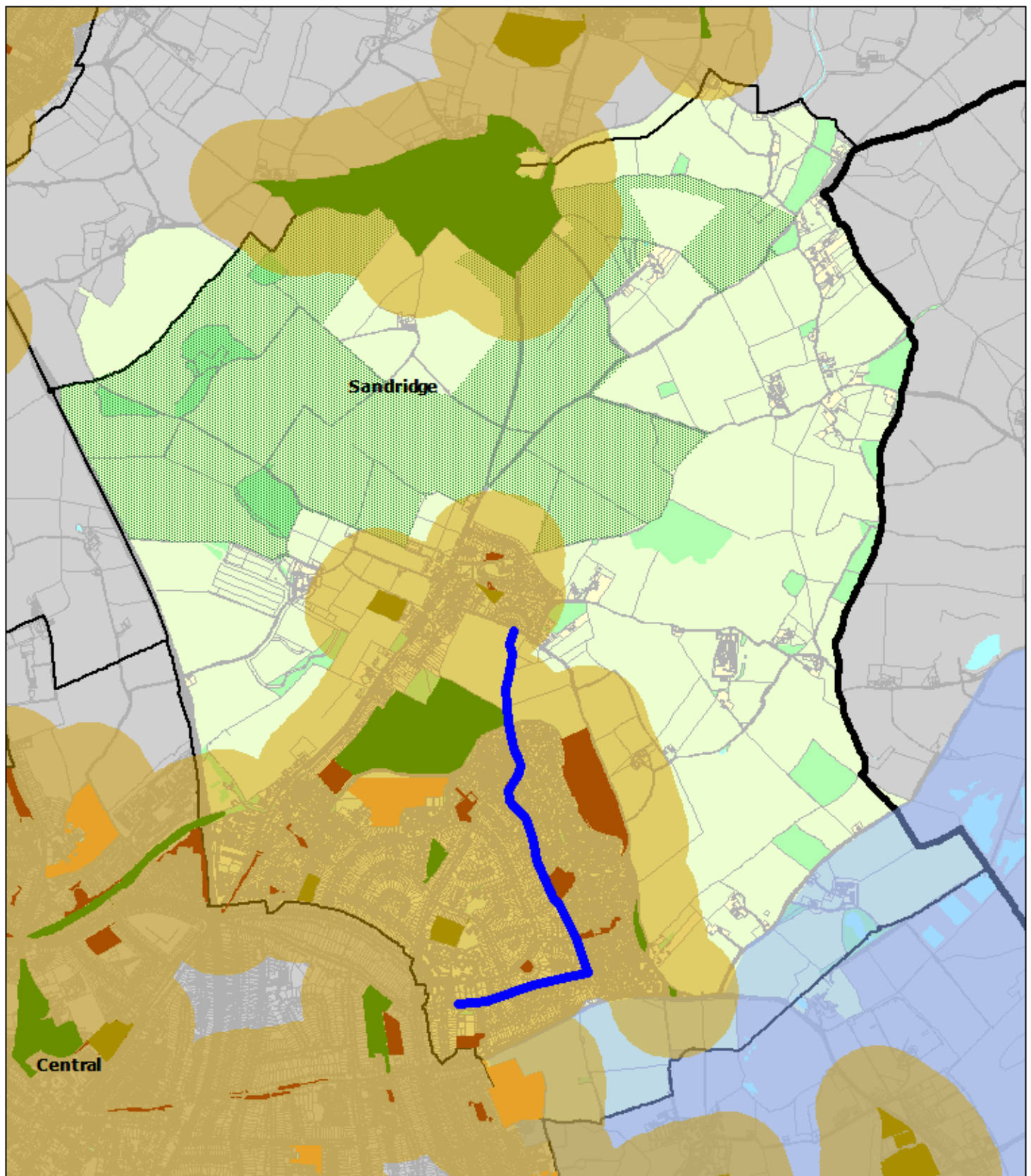
therefore make no significant difference, although those residents living next to them will obviously appreciate the open-ness they provide. While Nomansland Common is remote from most Sandridge residents, the Woodland Park is highly accessible to many of them. The Heartwood Forest also provides an important and sizeable natural greenspace which is close to the main developed area of Sandridge.








The Quality and Value of Multi-functional Greenspace

A number of the amenity greenspaces in the Sandridge area have only first quartile/very poor summary audit scores and therefore it will be desirable to enhance them. The natural greenspaces are of significantly better quality and value.

Action Points

- Work with the Parish Council and local community to promote the enhancement of the amenity and natural greenspaces with the lowest audit score
- Seek to create a park for the Sandridge area, for example at Jersey Farm
- Seek to address the deficit of amenity green space and parks and gardens
- Explore opportunities for extension of the green corridor to Heartwood Forest and Nomansland



- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---|---|
|  | Amenity greenspaces |  | Green Corridors |
|  | Natural greenspaces |  | Secondary School Playing Fields |
|  | Parks and gardens |  | Heartwood Forest |
|  | Open access sports facilities |  | Watling Chase Community Forest |
| | |  | 5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold |

St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 15.9
Sandridge
Multi-functional Greenspace

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16 The Central Area

Introduction

The Central planning area extends to approximately 11% of the total area of the City and District but contains some 40% of its population. Map 16.1 shows the distribution of properties and highlights two important green wedges that almost link together and connect the southern part of the centre of the city to the countryside to the south and west of it:

- To the west of the main railway line in the south of the city
- Verulamium Park

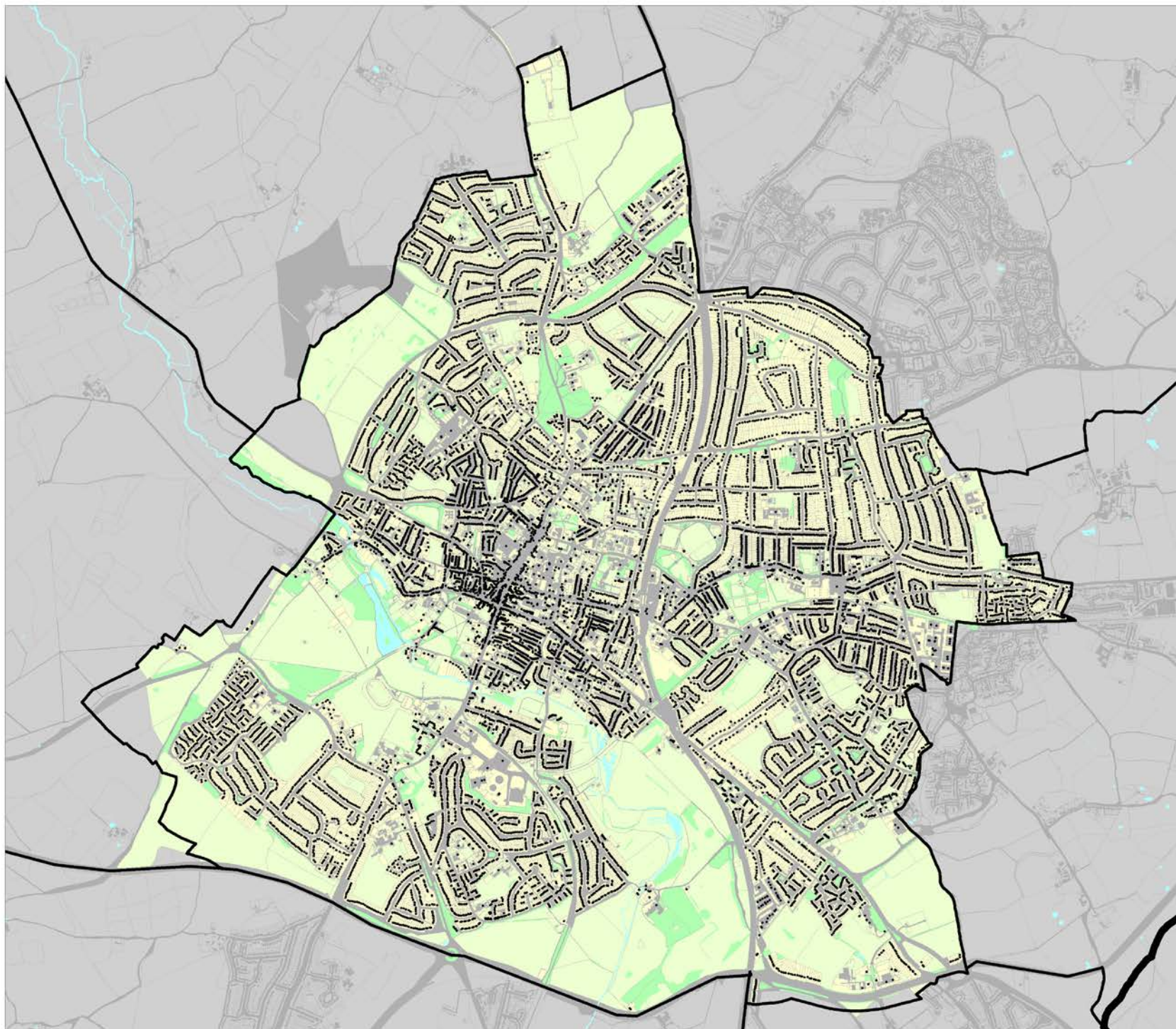
City Vision

The City Vision provides an important part of the planning context for greenspace in the Central Area and is summarised in Appendix B. The most significant proposals relating to greenspace provision are:

- Enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure
- Enhanced links between the city centre and surrounding countryside
- A “green ring” around the city with links to the city centre and out to the wider countryside
- Providing more and better facilities and activities for young people

Allotments

There are ten allotments sites in the City currently providing a total of 598 individual plots. Map 16.2 shows the distribution of these sites.



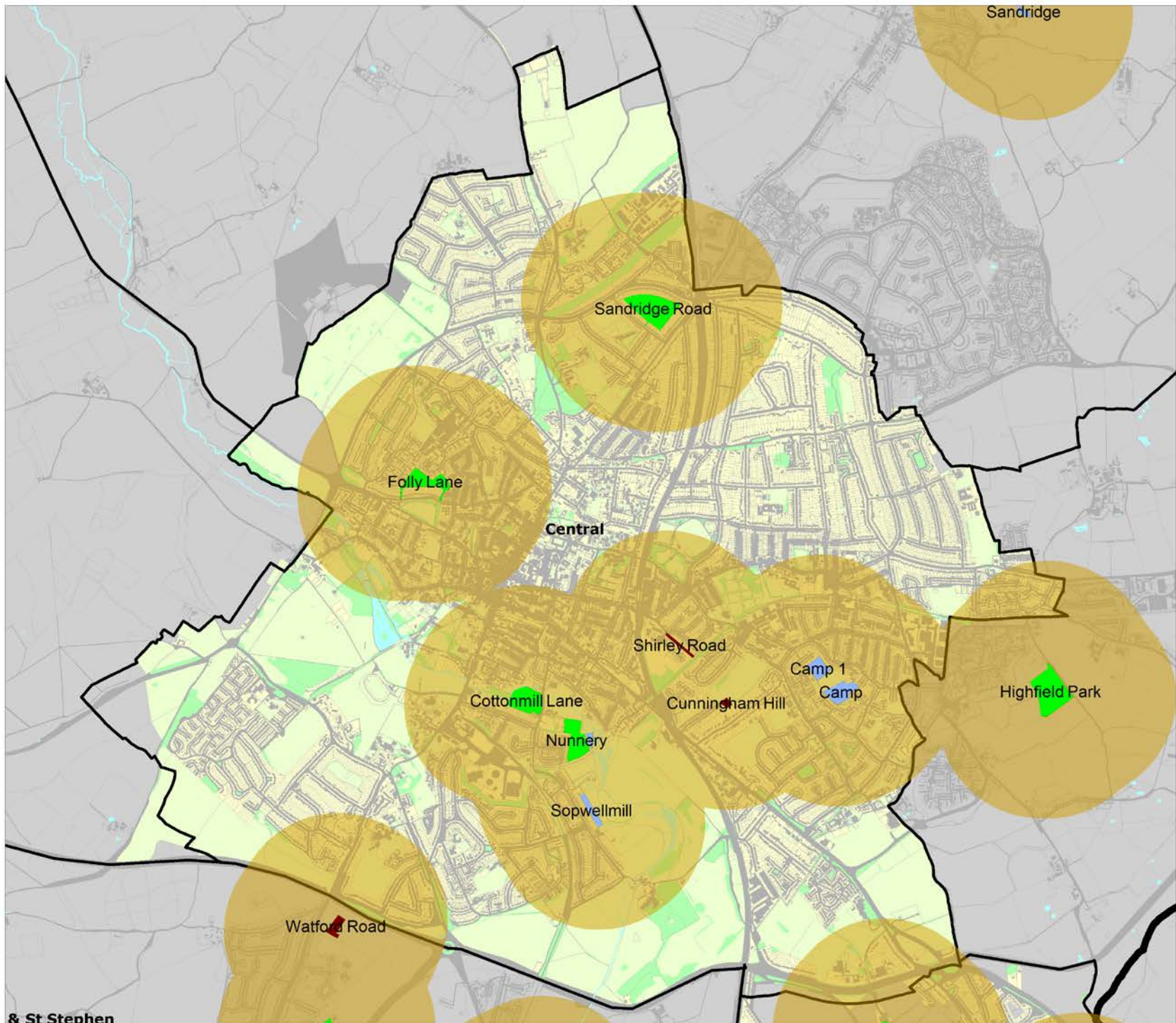
• Properties



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 16.1
Central Area
Distribution of
Properties**

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- Sites with first quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with fourth quartile summary audit scores
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 16.2
Central Area
Allotments**

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Overall, some 67% of properties lie within the 10 minutes/600 m walking distance threshold of at least one site, with the main part of the city outwith this threshold in the densely developed residential area to the east of the main railway line and north of the Hatfield Road. This area also adjoins the southern part of the Sandridge planning area in which there is also no allotment provision. Accordingly there is a significant accessibility gap in allotment provision in the north eastern sector of the City. There are also smaller and therefore secondary gaps in the north west, to the south of Verulamium Park and in the south east of the city.

All of the sites have either third quartile/fair or fourth quartile/good audit scores, except for Cunningham Hill and Shirley Road which have second quartile/poor ratings. However, they provide only 19 or 3% of the plots currently available so this is not particularly significant. However, it will be desirable to enhance the two reasonably sized sites with only third quartile/fair ratings, Buttermere Close and Springfield Road, with 61 and 37 plots respectively. The desirable improvements include better signage and security.

As the average plot size is low, quite a few of the traditional 10-rod (250 sq m) plots have obviously been subdivided. As there is currently a waiting list of 336 people it is clear there is a significant shortfall in provision in the City. The current provision equates to some 2.7 sq m per person, compared with the quantity standard of 4.7 sq m. This results in a shortfall in provision against the standard of just over 10 ha, of which 8 ha is required to meet current demand and 2 ha to allow for additional demand in the future.

Action Points

- Identify and allocate land for additional allotments, either within the City or one of the adjacent planning areas
- Enhance the Camp and Springfield Road sites so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C

Amenity Greenspace

Map 16.3 shows the location of the various amenity greenspaces in the city. In total 78% of properties lie within the distance threshold of at least one space, but only 16% within the threshold of a space with a fourth quartile/good score. Accordingly there is a need significantly to enhance most of the existing spaces. As the map shows, the poor and very poor spaces are dispersed across the city. The priority should therefore be to enhance the larger spaces that are furthest away from good quality spaces, such as:

- South western quadrant: St Stephens Avenue Recreation Ground or St Stephens Hill
- South eastern quadrant: Cunningham or Foxcroft greenspace
- North eastern quadrant: Sandpit Lane
- North western quadrant: Valley Road or Oysterfields

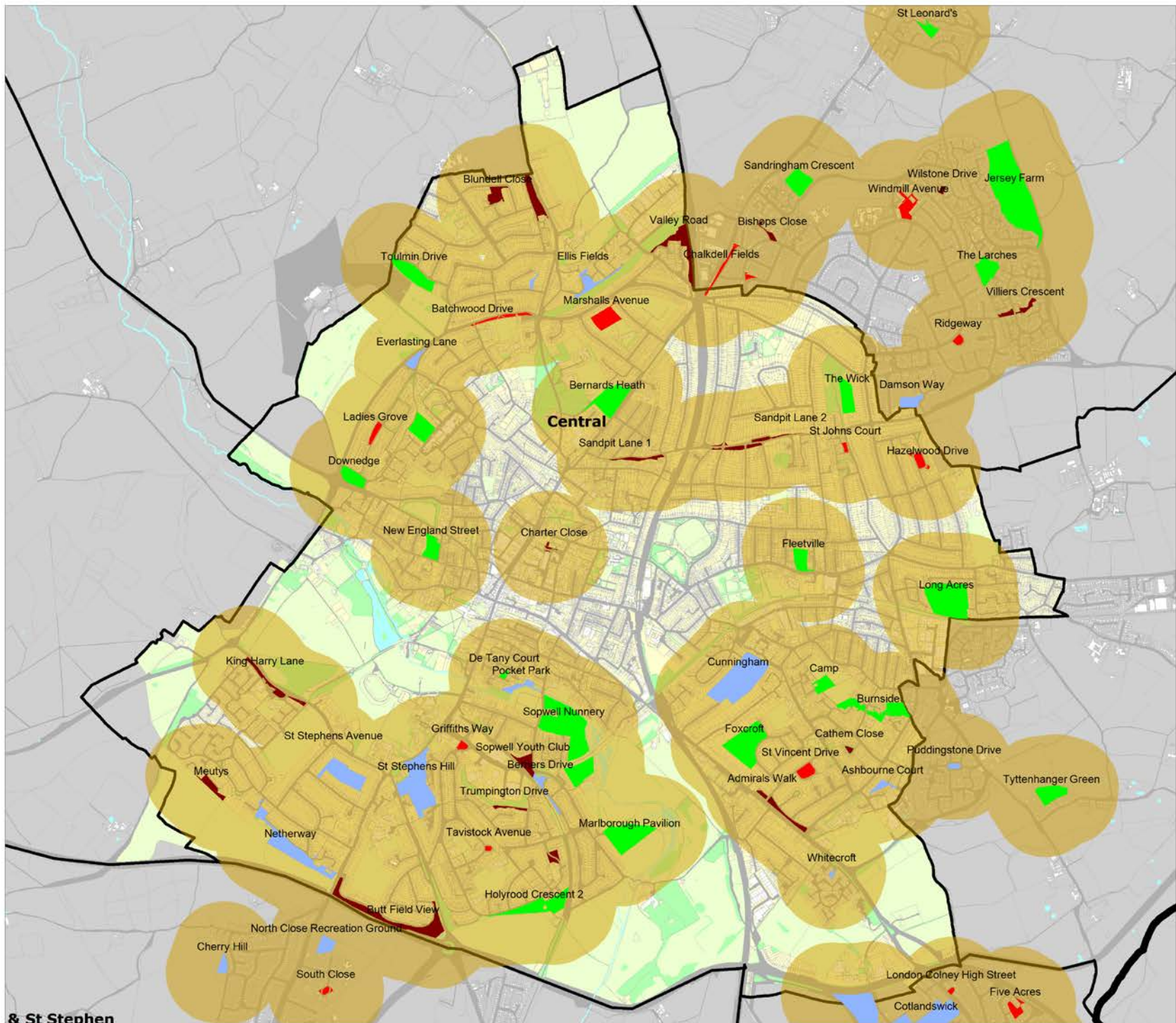
The main areas without ready access to a local amenity greenspace – mainly to the east and north west of the city centre – are served by other types of space that also serve an amenity purpose; see below. Overall there is a deficit of some 10.5 ha of amenity space within the Central area.

Action Points

- Protect all existing greenspaces in St Albans, irrespective of their audit scores, as there is an overall shortfall in provision, unless development proposals affecting one or more existing greenspaces will deliver over-riding benefits to the local community.
- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C, concentrating in the first instance on larger spaces which are not close to other spaces with a good score
- Seek to identify opportunities for and secure additional amenity green space provision through new development.

Churchyards and Cemeteries

Map 16.4 shows the location of the churchyards and cemeteries in the city. Two stand out as having first quartile/very poor audit scores: the Hatfield Road and London Road cemeteries. However, both sites actually have quite reasonable absolute scores; it is only by comparison with other similar sites that they are poor. The churchyards attached to St Peter's, St Michael's and St Stephen's churches are all of historic significance.



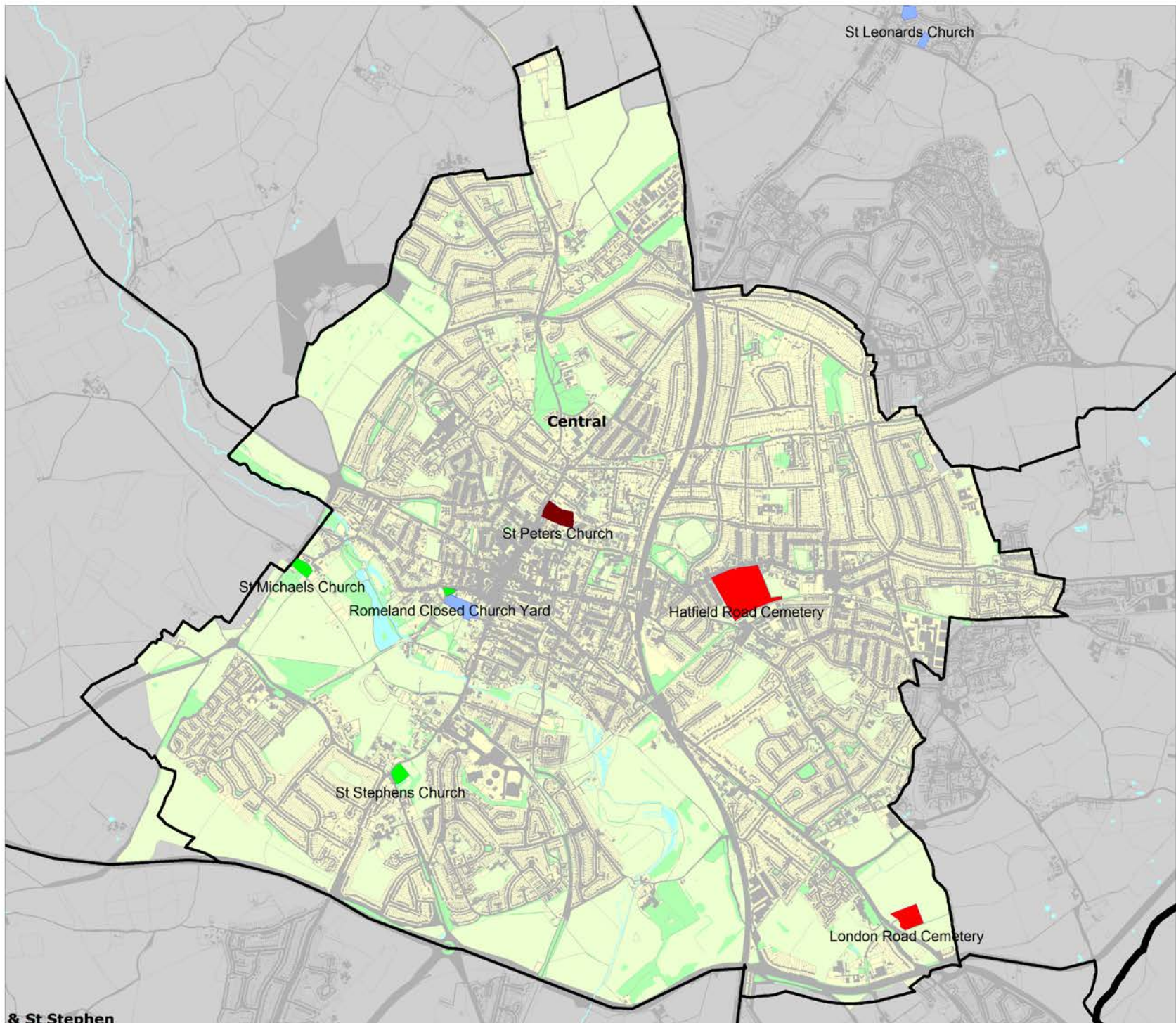
- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- 5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold



**St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 16.3
Central area
Amenity greenspace**

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- Sites with first quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with fourth quartile summary audit scores



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 16.4
Central Area
Churchyards and
Cemeteries**

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Natural Greenspaces

Map 16.5 shows the distribution of the natural greenspaces in the audit plus Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites. It indicates that the Central area has relatively few natural greenspaces – especially in and around the city centre, which is not particularly surprising – although most of those that do exist are at least fairly good. However, there are also few natural greenspaces around the periphery of the area that are readily accessible to Central residents, although the Council's forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy and Proactive Green Belt Management Strategy will identify ways to improve access to the wider countryside. The sites in the audit with the lowest scores are:

- Beech Bottom
- Heron's Way Spinney
- Birklands Meadow

Action Points

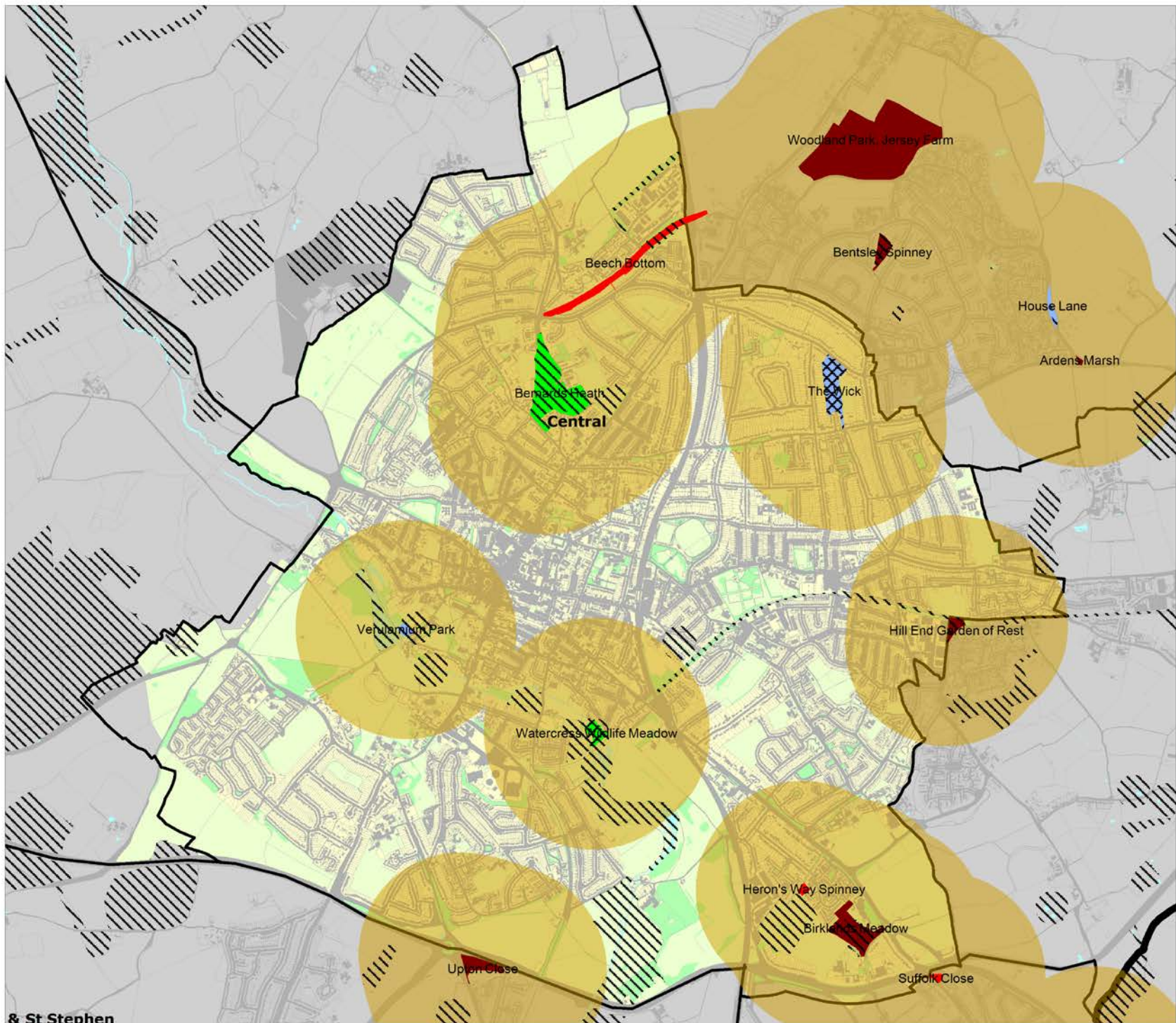
- Enhance the sites with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural green space section of Appendix C
- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Improve access to the urban fringe and wider countryside

Parks and Gardens

The Central area contains the main concentration of Parks and Gardens in the District, with the main sites obviously being Verulamium Park and Clarence Park. Highfield Park in Colney Heath is also within walking distance for some residents in the south eastern part of the City. Map 16.6 shows their location. Overall, 39% of Central area properties lie within the 12 minute walking distance threshold of a District Park but 51% within the same distance of at least one park or garden. 88% of properties lie within the 1800 m cycling threshold of a District Park and the whole of the Central area within the 12 minute drive time of a District park. 56% of properties lie within the 500 m walking distance threshold of at least one park or garden but only 43% within the same distance of one with a fourth quartile/good audit score. The main areas without ready access to a local park are in the north west and north east.

Action Points

- Enhance the parks and gardens with low audit scores so that they accord with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C, but give priority to Verulamium Park as the premier park in the City and District



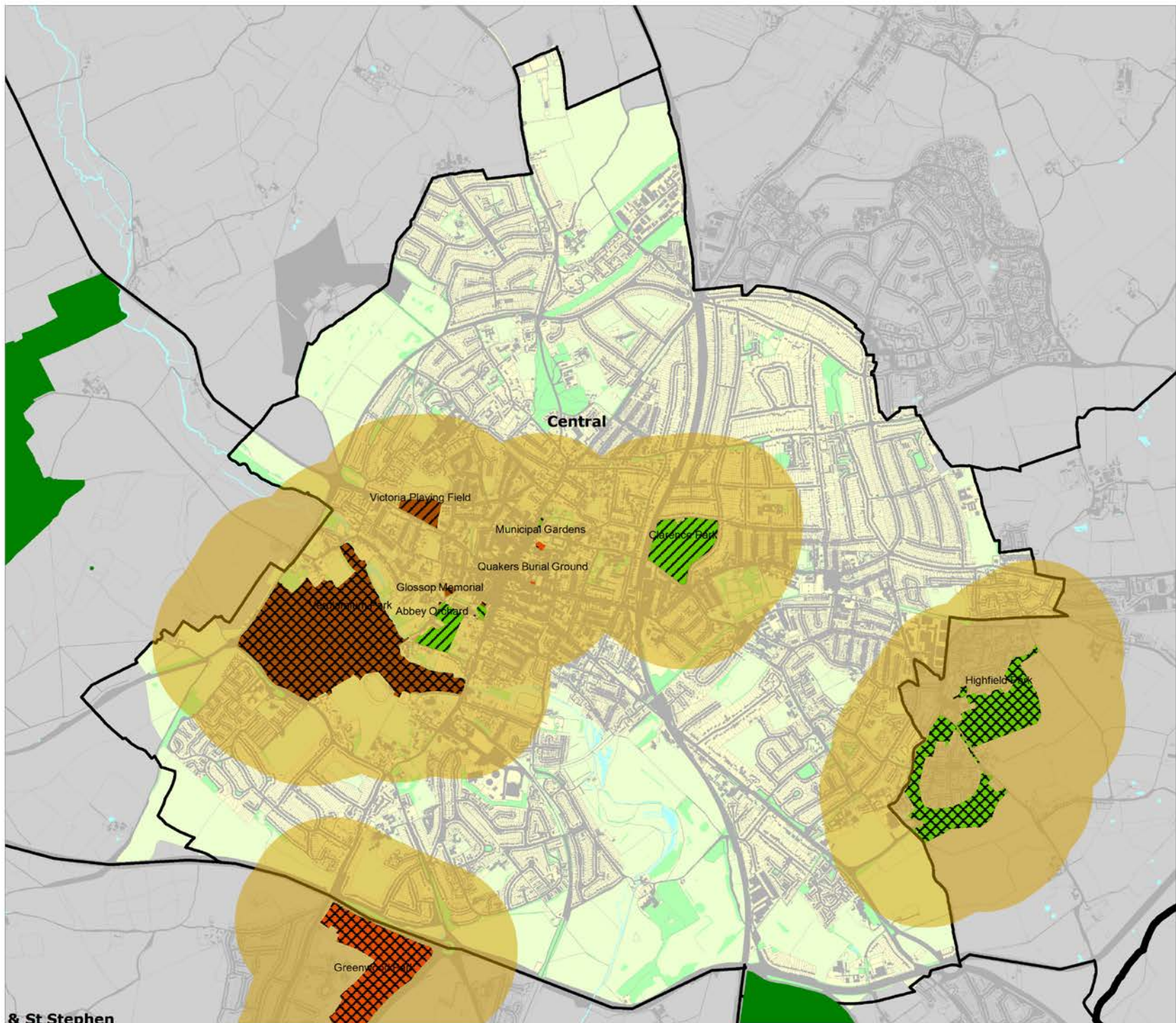
- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 16.5
Central Area
Natural greenspace**

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- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

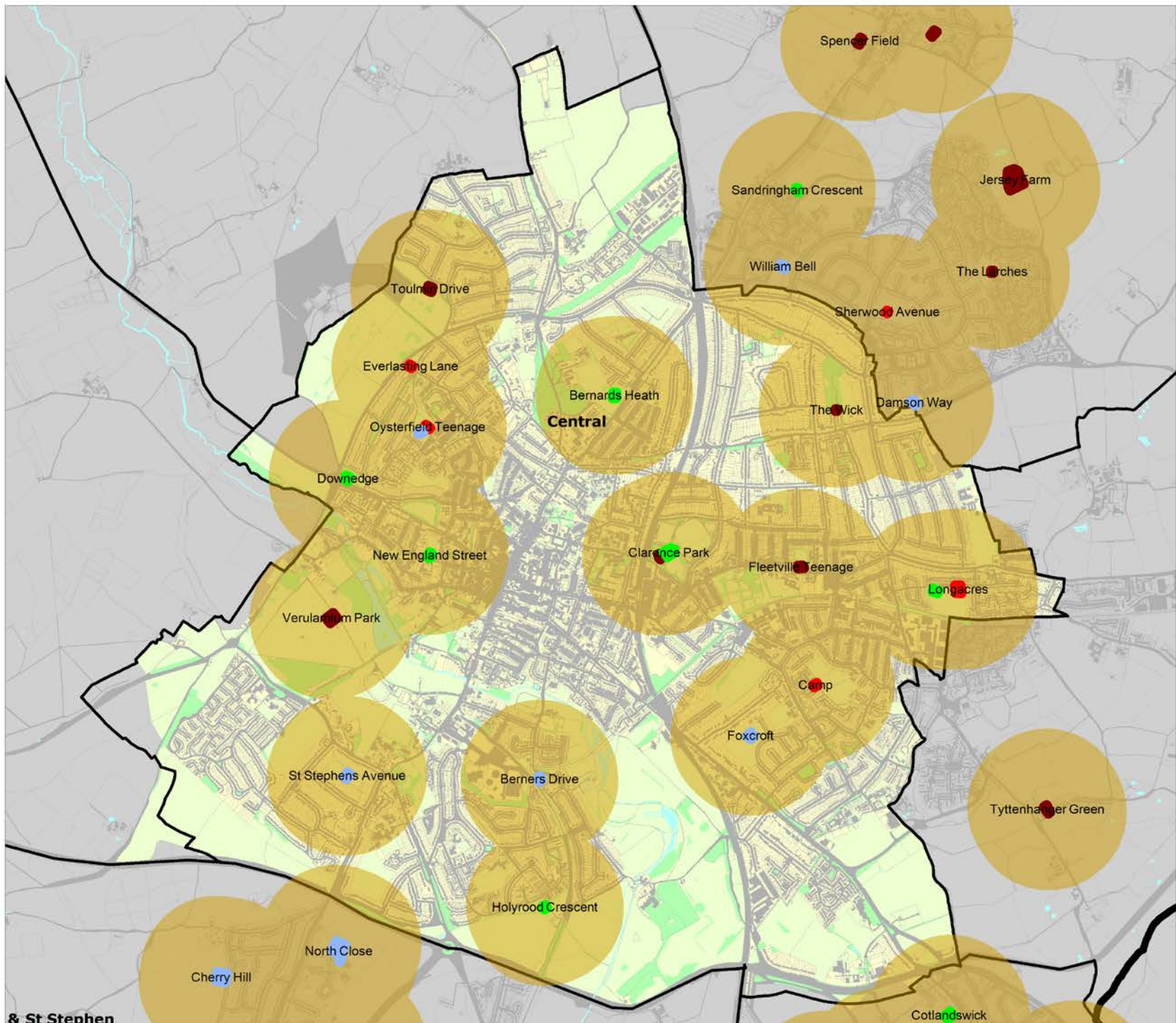
- Local Parks
- Local Garden
- District Park
- 8 minutes/500 m walk distance threshold



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy

Map 16.6
Central area
Parks and Gardens

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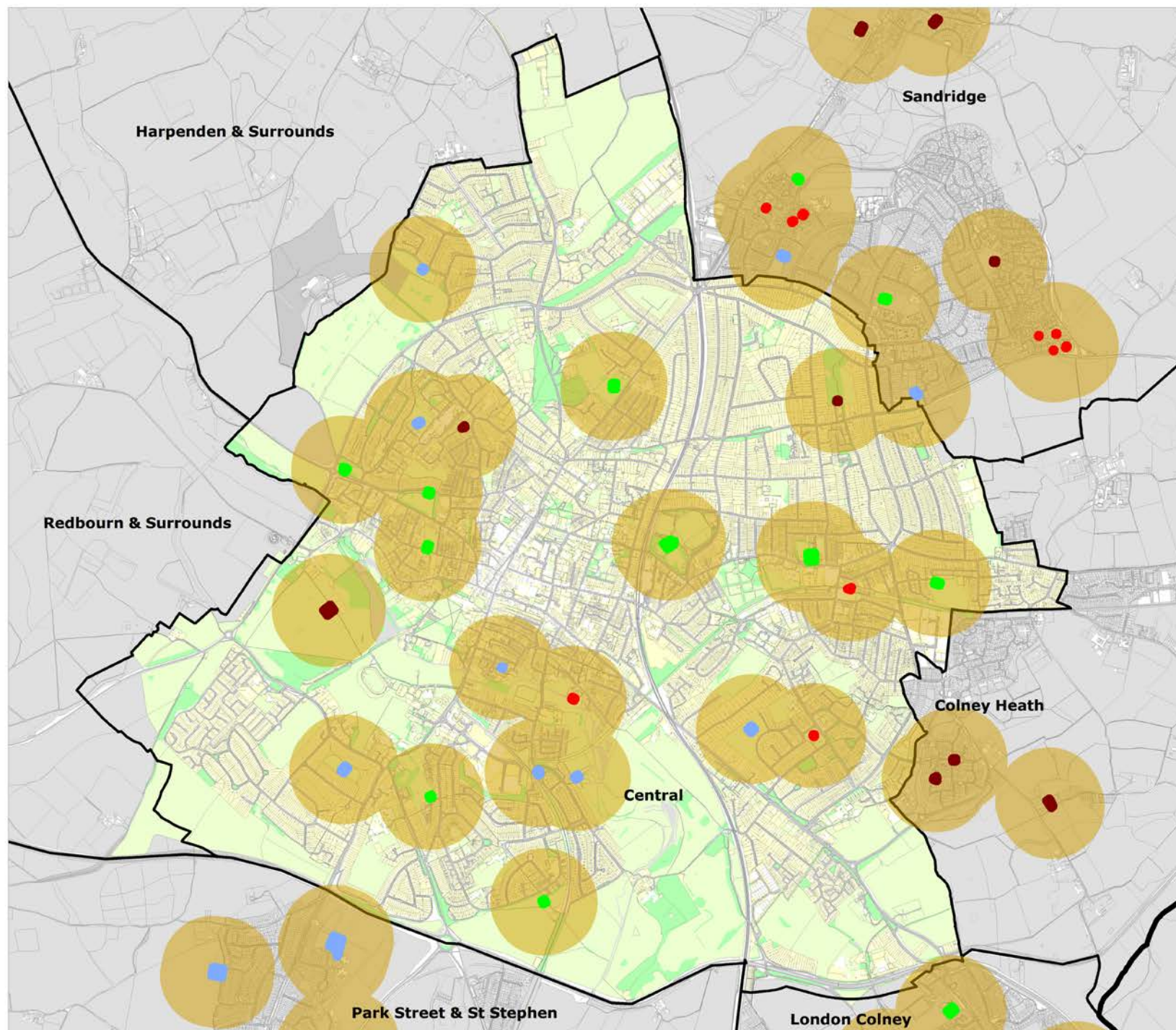
- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- 8 minutes/500 m walk distance threshold



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 16.8
Central area
Older Children Equipped
Play**

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- Sites with fourth quartile/
good audit scores
- Sites with third quartile/
fair audit scores
- Sites with second quartile/
poor audit scores
- Sites with first quartile/
very poor audit scores

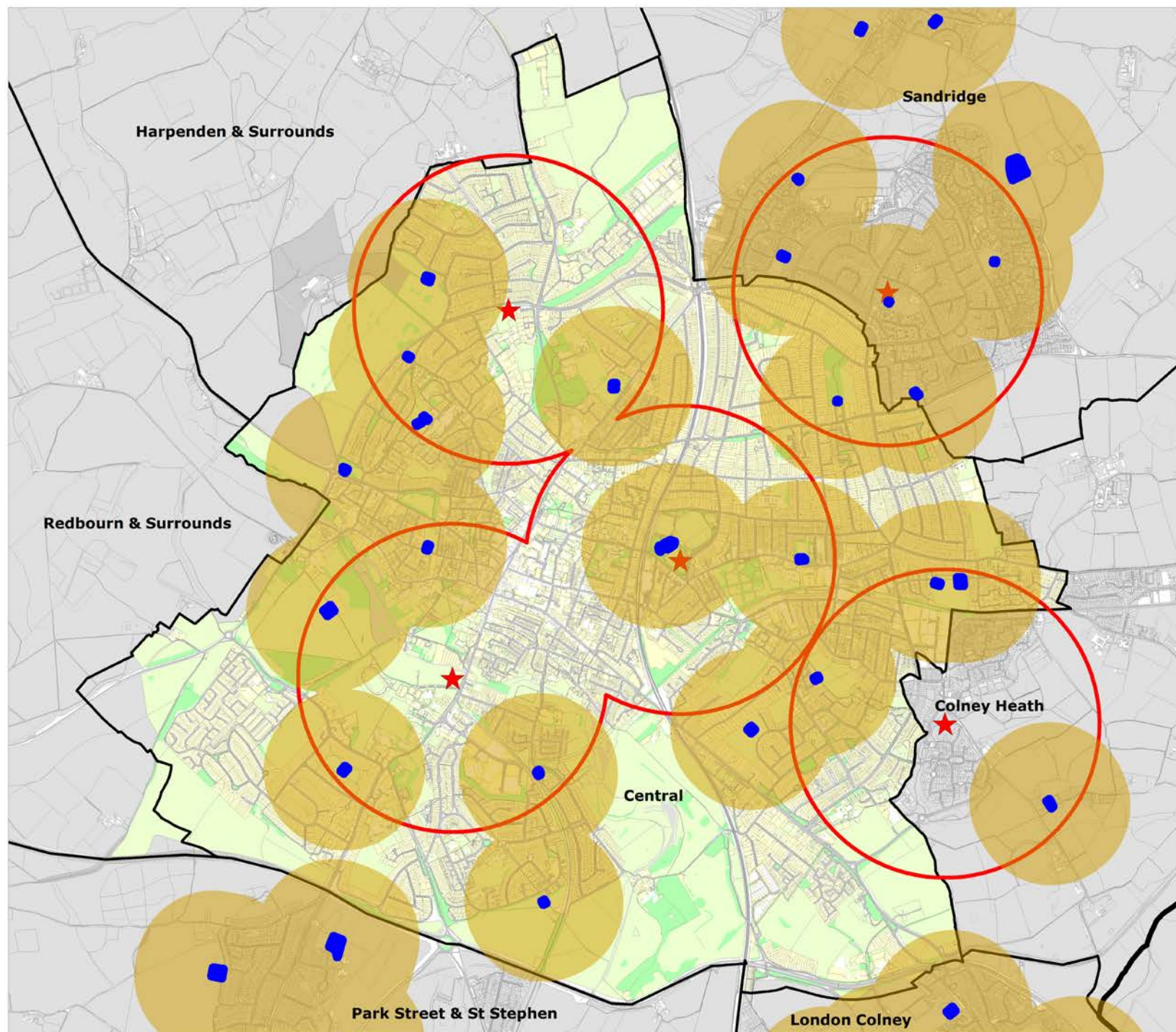
■ 5 minutes/300 m walk
for toddlers and
young children



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 16.7
Central Area
Play for Toddlers and
Young Children**

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- Sites with fourth quartile/
good audit scores
- Sites with third quartile/
fair audit scores
- Sites with second quartile/
poor audit scores
- Sites with first quartile/
very poor audit scores

- Play areas for older
children
- 8 minutes/450 m walking
distance threshold
- ★ Strategic Play Areas
- 15 minutes/900 m walking
distance threshold



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 16.9
Central Area
Strategic Play Areas**

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- Seek opportunities to create new local parks that will serve residents in the north west and north east parts of the City; they may be in one of the adjacent planning areas, for example on the Oaklands Smallford Campus site.

Green Corridors

There are four green corridors in the Central planning area: Everlasting Lane and the River Ver walk, both on the west side; the Alban Way, which extends from London Road east to Colney Heath; and the Camp Cycle Path in the south eastern part of the City.

Action Points

- Progress the initiatives for additional pedestrian and cycling routes set out in the City Vision strategy
- With the County Council, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Children's Play Areas

Map 16.7 shows the distribution of play areas for toddlers and young children.

Play Areas for Toddlers

There are 22 play areas with equipment suitable for toddlers in the Central area but only 44% of properties lie within the 8 minutes/300 m walking distance threshold. The main areas with only limited play provision for toddlers are generally around the periphery of the area and in the city centre. However, most of the facilities achieved good audit scores, with only three in the first quartile/very poor category – Aldwick Court, Riverside Road and Sutton Road. Conversely, nine sites achieved a fourth quartile/good score.

Play Areas for Older Children

There are 19 sites in the central area with equipment intended for older children but only four achieved a fourth quartile/good audit score. There are also four sites with a first quartile/poor score – Camp, Everlasting Lane, Longacres and Oysterfield. In spite of the slightly lower number of sites, 58% of properties lie within the 8 minutes/450 m walking distance threshold. The main areas with only limited or no provision are essentially the same as for toddlers' play.

Strategic Play Facilities

The various equipped play areas aggregate to some 1.7 ha compared with 2.6 ha that the application of the quantity standard of 0.5 sq m per person suggests is likely to be needed, a shortfall of some 0.9 ha. The

Council's play strategy highlights a desire to rationalise play provision onto fewer but better sites and the central area is obviously the most appropriate location for strategic play provision. Map 16.9 shows that just three such facilities, plus one in Colney Heath and another in Sandridge, could serve most of the area, although the locations in which they are shown are intended merely to be illustrative of possible broad locations and not in any way firm proposals. In total, 67% of properties lie within the 15 minutes/900 m walking distance threshold of the sites shown on this map. However, there would still be a gap in provision in the south western part of the area which could be reduced by siting a strategic play further west in Verulamium Park, although this would also move it further from the central area of the City.

Assuming each strategic play area within the City is approximately 1500 sq m, the shortfall in provision will reduce to some 0.45 ha.

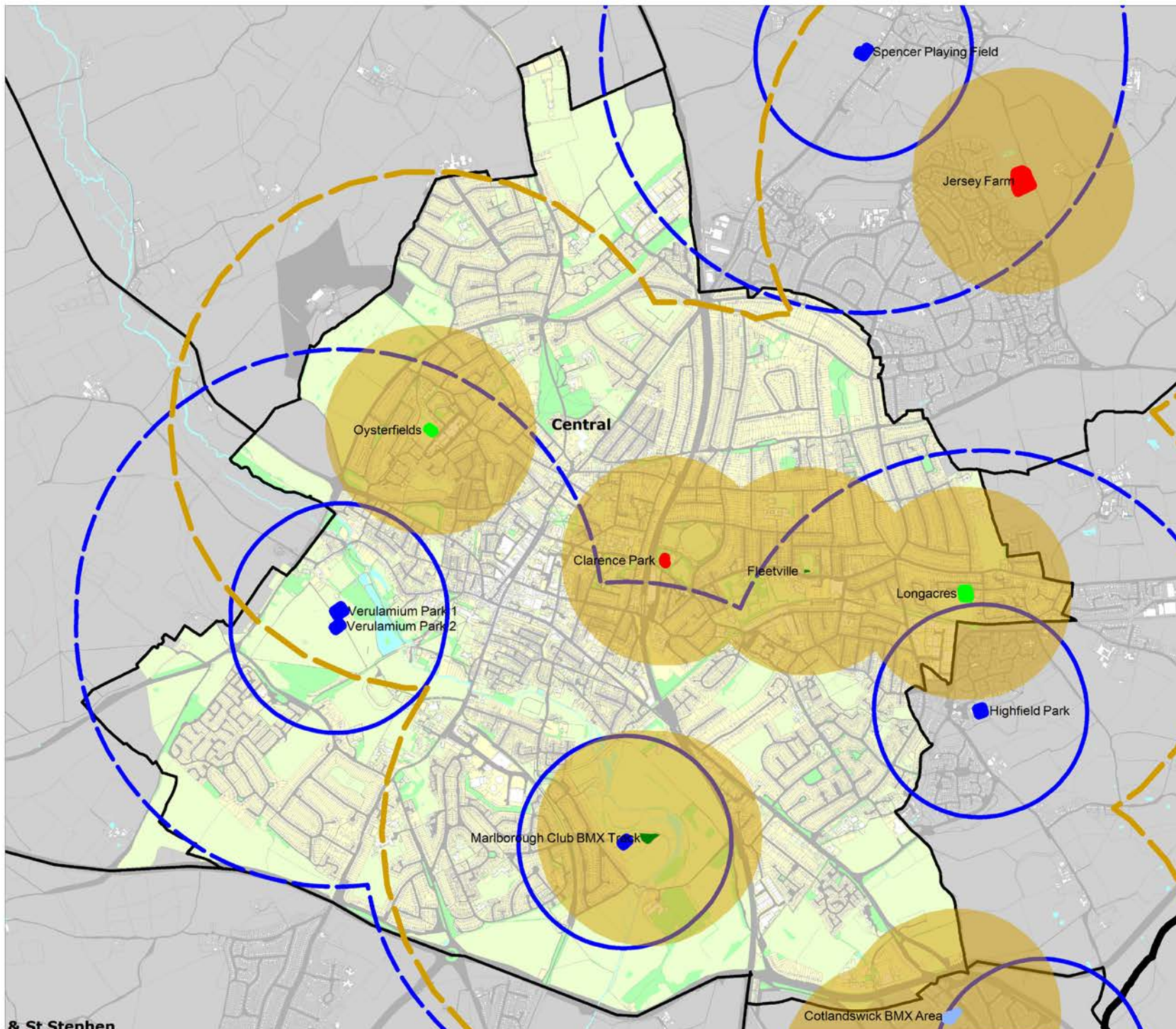
Action Points

- Identify potential sites for strategic play facilities and consult local communities over their design
- Enhance suitable greenspaces to make them interesting and attractive to children for natural play or seek to identify sites for possible additional play facilities in the northern part of the city, close to the St Albans Girls School; the Highfield area; the area centred on New House Park; and the Verulam Estate
- Rationalise existing play sites to provide fewer but better facilities wherever possible
- Enhance the quality of the sites with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the children's play section of Appendix C
- Seek to negotiate contributions to the development of strategic play areas from housing developers

Teenagers

Map 16.10 shows the multi-courts in and around the city plus the five teenage facilities within St Albans:

- Clarence Park Play Area
- Fleetville Play Area
- Longacres Play Area
- Marlborough Club BMX track (largely overgrown)
- Oysterfields Play Area



- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/1500 m cycle distance threshold
- Multi-courts
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/1500 m walk distance threshold



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy

Map 16.10
Central area
Teenage Facilities

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Multi-courts clearly provide the main form of provision for teenagers in the southern half of the city, although the Verulamium Park courts are used for a variety of formal sports and not intended as open access facilities for teenagers.

Only two of the five dedicated teenage facilities – Oysterfields in the west and Longacres in the east – achieved fourth quartile/good audit scores while the Clarence Park facility achieved only a first quartile/very poor score. Overall, 37% of properties lie within a 10 minute walk of at least one of the five facilities, and 93% within a 10 minute cycle ride. Accordingly accessibility is very good, except for small areas in the extreme north and south west of the city.

Applying the quantity standard of 0.18 sq m per person derived for the Central area in Chapter 12 above, suggests a need for approximately an additional 0.24 ha of teenage provision, ideally in the form of several facilities. For obvious reasons, the best locations will be areas not currently within the walking distance threshold of a site.

Action Points

- Identify potential sites for teenage facilities in the south west of the City, the north of the city (this site can also meet a need in the Sandridge area), to the south west of the city centre, the south east of the city and the north of the city for possible teenage facilities and work with local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facility.

Multi-functional Greenspace: Overview

Map 16.10 shows the network of multi-functional greenspaces while Map 16.11 adds secondary school playing fields.

The Quantity of Multi-functional Greenspace Provision

The total amount of different types of multi-functional greenspace provision – amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens – in the Central area compared with the amount required by the application of the quantity standards derived earlier in this report is:

	Required sq m	Available sq m
Amenity greenspace	776,880	671,438
Natural greenspace	258,960	223,091
Parks and gardens	621,504	720,854
Totals	1,657,344	1,615,383

Overall, therefore, there is a relatively minor shortfall in multi-functional greenspace in the Central area for the current population. The large size of Verulamium Park is the main factor underpinning the surplus in parks and gardens and this helps to compensate for the shortfalls in amenity and natural greenspaces.

The Accessibility of Multi-functional Greenspace

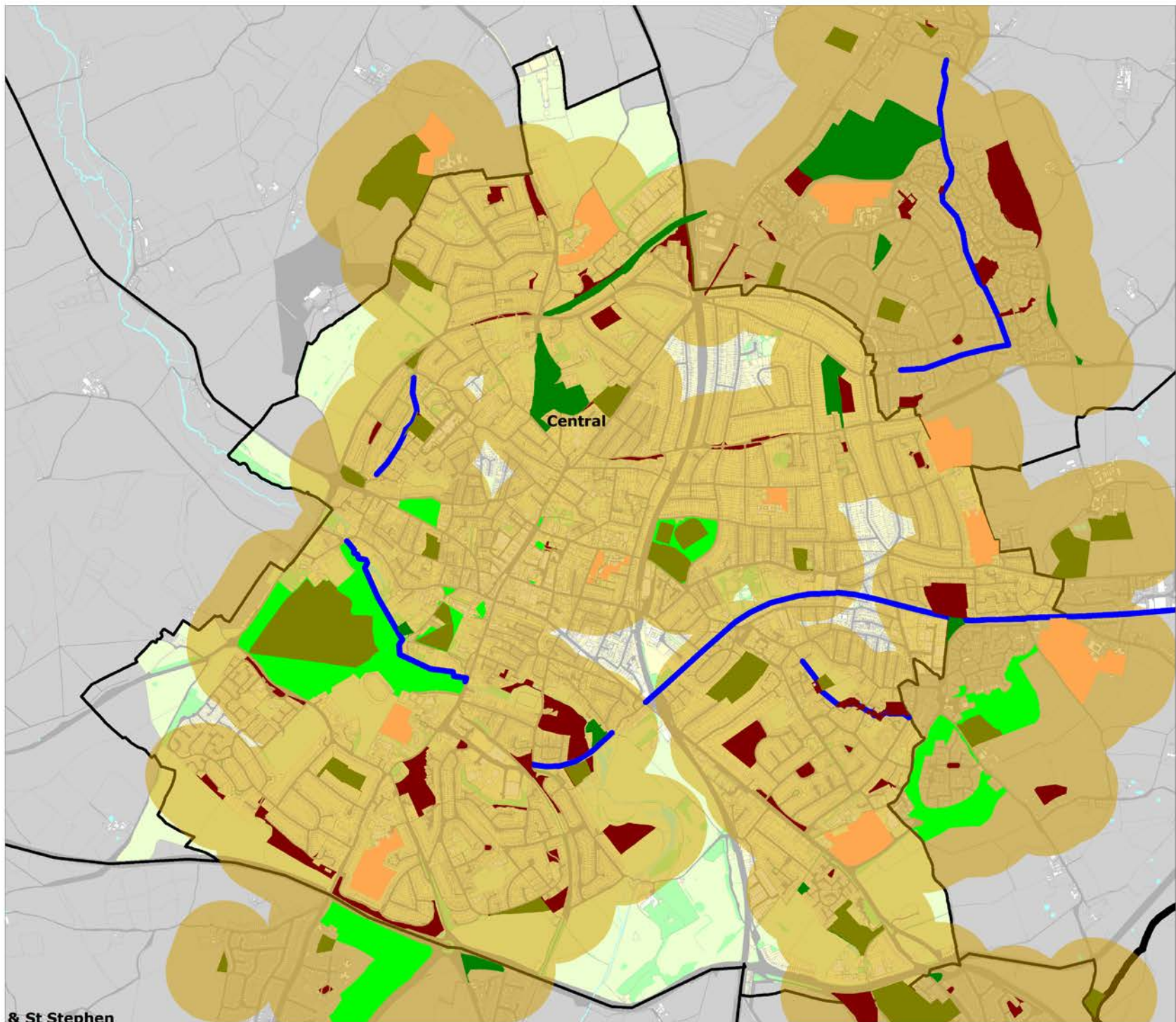
Map 16.10 shows that most of the city lies within a 5 minute/300 m walk of at least one multi-functional greenspace, although there are a few areas where the nearest greenspace is further away. However, Map 16.11 shows that opening up secondary school playing fields would make very little difference.

The Quality and Value of Multi-functional Greenspace

Maps 16.3 and 16.6 highlight that the quality of many greenspaces is poor, particularly in the south western quadrant of the city - which also contains Verulamium Park - and on its north side.

Action Points

- Protect all existing greenspaces in St Albans, irrespective of their audit scores, unless it is possible significantly to enhance some accessible but poor quality spaces by disposing of poorly used spaces
- Give priority to enhancing Verulamium Park as the most important greenspace in the south western quadrant of the city and aim to achieve a Green Flag for it as soon as possible.
- Develop a programme of enhancements for the spaces with the lowest audit scores
- Work to deliver the Watling Chase Community Forest aims and objectives
- Create new greenspaces as part of any major new developments on the edge of the City
- Ensure that the deficit and future maintenance of amenity space is addressed when planning future development.



-  Amenity greenspaces
-  Natural greenspaces
-  Parks and Gardens
-  Open access sports facilities
-  Secondary school playing fields
-  Green corridors
-  5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy

Map 16.11
Central area
Multi-functional greenspace

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17: Colney Heath and London Colney

Introduction

This chapter reviews provision in the Colney Heath and London Colney planning areas and applies the various provision standards to identify potential surpluses and deficiencies. It then goes on to make recommendations on ways of ensuring that provision meets local needs better.

The Colney Heath planning area extends to 1,117 hectares and has an estimated population of just over 5,500. London Colney is smaller, at 829 hectares, but has a higher resident population of approximately 8,250. As Map 17.1 shows:

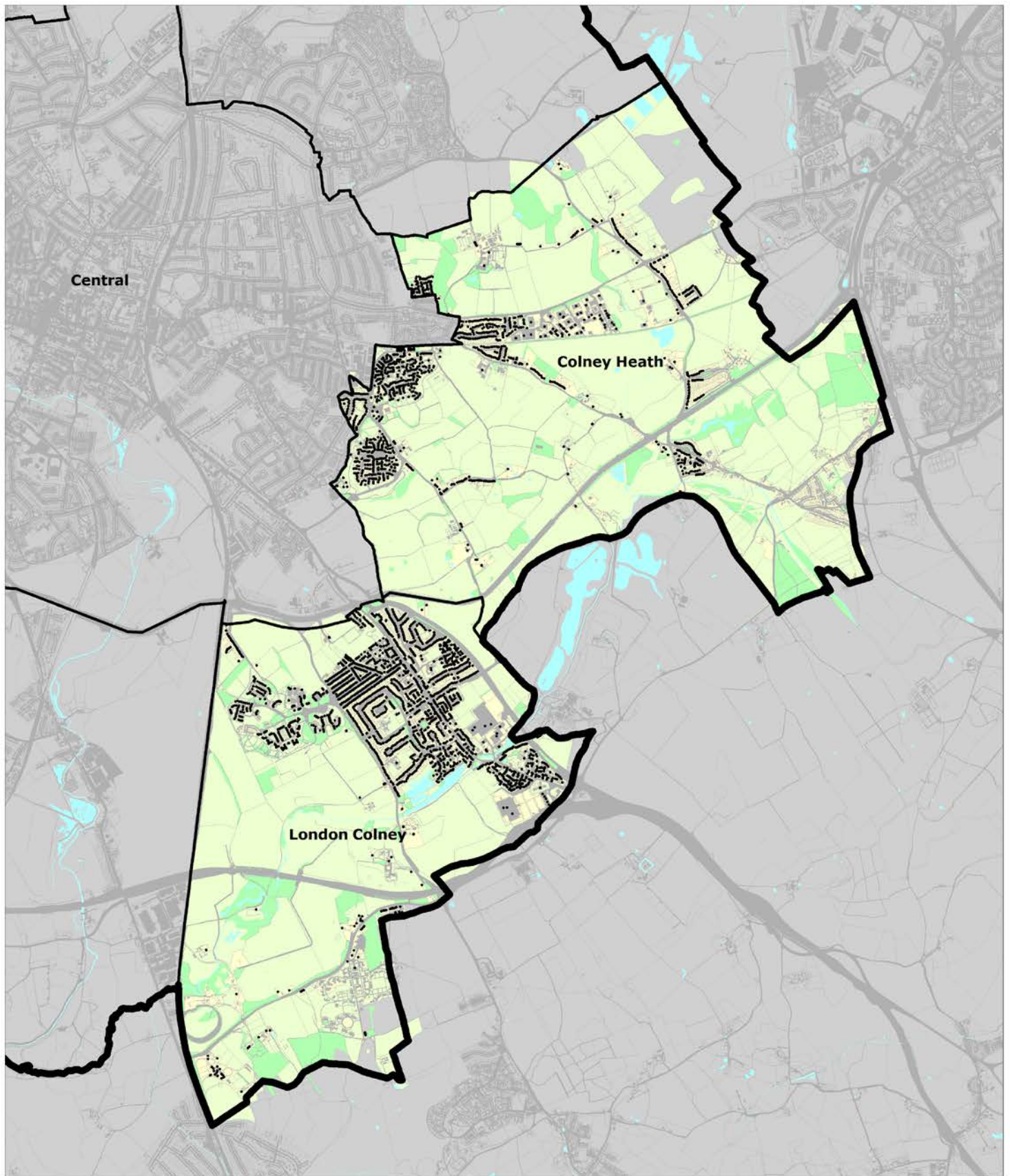
- In Colney Heath the population is concentrated in four areas: on the eastern edge of St Albans, to the south of the A1057 Hatfield Road, in the village of Colney Heath and at Sleepshyde and Smallford
- In London Colney, the population is concentrated in three areas: London Colney, Napsbury Park and along Harper Lane

Village Plans

London Colney Parish Council prepared a Parish Environment Action Plan in 2008 which includes a list of thirteen preliminary projects but none of them has any significant implications for this strategy. Colney Heath Parish Council, however, does not appear to have anything similar.

Allotments

Map 17.2 shows the location of the four allotments sites in the area



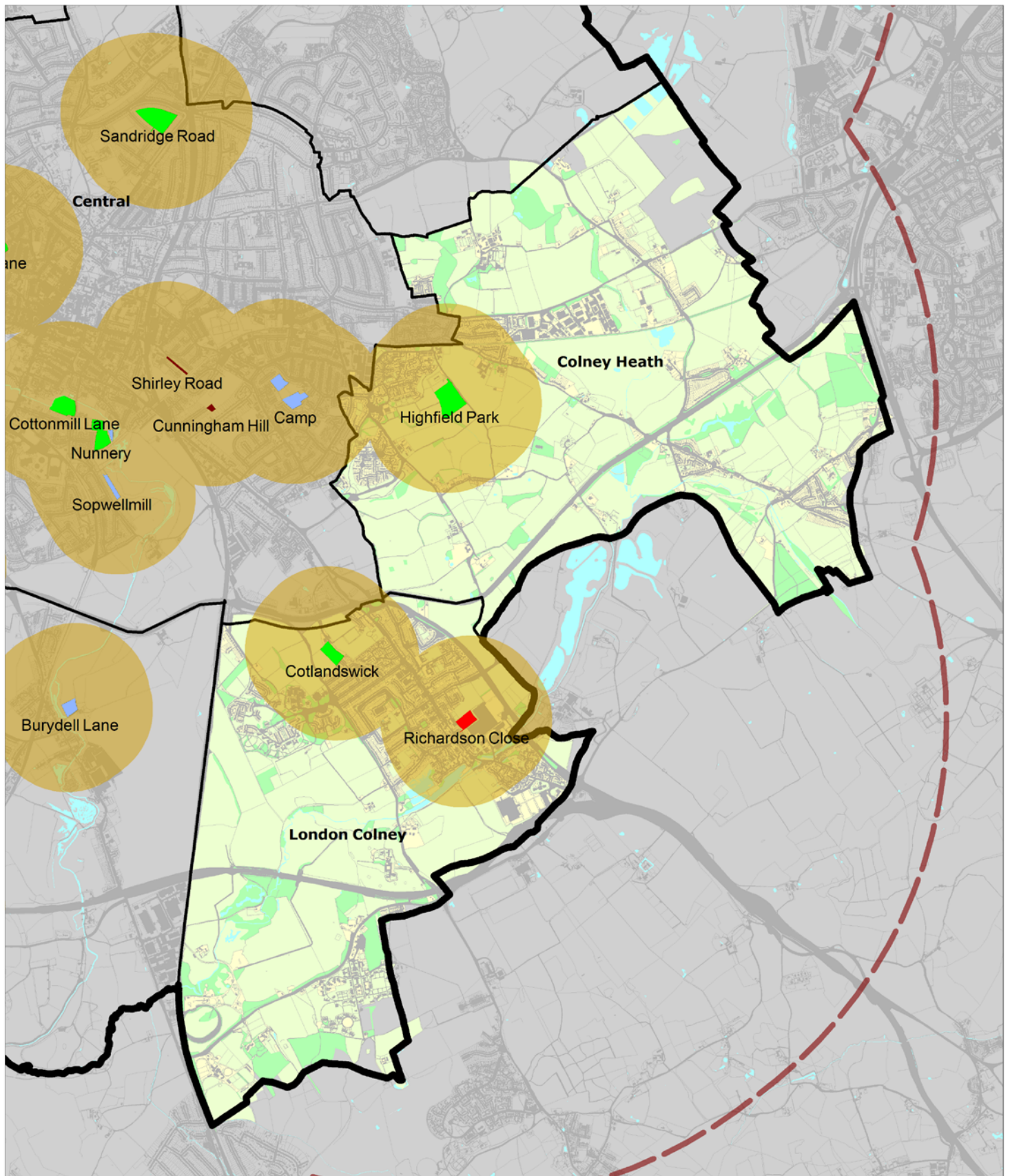
• Properties

St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy



Map 17.1
London Colney and
Colney Heath
Distribution of Properties

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- Sites with first quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with fourth quartile summary audit scores

- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold

St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy



Map 17.2 Colney Heath and London Colney Allotments

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Colney Heath

Colney Heath has a single allotments site at Highfield Park, but none in the villages of Colney Heath, Sleepshyde and Smallford. The Highfield Park Trust, which manages the site, has negotiated the lease of an adjacent additional 2 ha in order to create further plots. The current site has a fourth quartile/good summary audit score and so no enhancements are necessary, although it will be desirable to provide a better water supply.

Overall, 52% of Colney Heath properties lie within the 10 minute walking distance threshold of at least one allotments site, and 48% within this distance of a site with a fourth quartile/good summary audit score.

Applying the quantity standard of 6.0 sq m per person results in a need for 3.3 ha of allotments compared with the 1.8 ha currently available, a shortfall of 1.5 ha. Accordingly there should be enough provision when the Highfield Trust extends its current site, although it will all be concentrated in Highfield Park, leaving the villages of Colney Heath, Sleepshyde and Smallford outwith the walking distance threshold.

Action Points

- Encourage the Highfield Park Trust to lay out the extension to its existing allotments site in a way that will accord with the allotments section of Appendix C

London Colney

There is a considerable contrast between the two sites in London Colney, with Cotlandswick having a fourth quartile/good summary audit score and Richardson Close a first quartile/very poor one. In addition, the District Local Plan Review has long proposed development on roughly half of the Richardson Close site, although this dates back to a time when the demand for allotments was much lower than it is now. It will be desirable generally to enhance it, with the main improvements required relating to security and boundaries, parking and accessibility for people with disabilities and general tidying-up.

Applying the quantity standard of 4.5 sq m per person suggests a need for some 3.7 ha of allotments compared with the 2.2 ha currently available, a shortfall of 1.5 ha.

Action Points

- Enhance the remaining part of the Richardson Close

site so that it accords with the allotments section of Appendix C

- Sub-divide plots as they become available
- Allocate up to 1.5 ha for additional allotments provision at a suitable location, such as Napsbury Park

Amenity Greenspace

Map 17.3 shows the amenity greenspaces in the two planning areas.

Colney Heath

There is very limited amenity greenspace provision in Colney Heath and overall only 47% of properties lie within the 300 distance threshold of at least one space. The quality and value of some of the existing spaces are also poor, with only 13% of properties within the distance threshold of a space with a fourth quartile/good summary audit score, Longacres in St Albans. Therefore there is a need for a programme of enhancements.

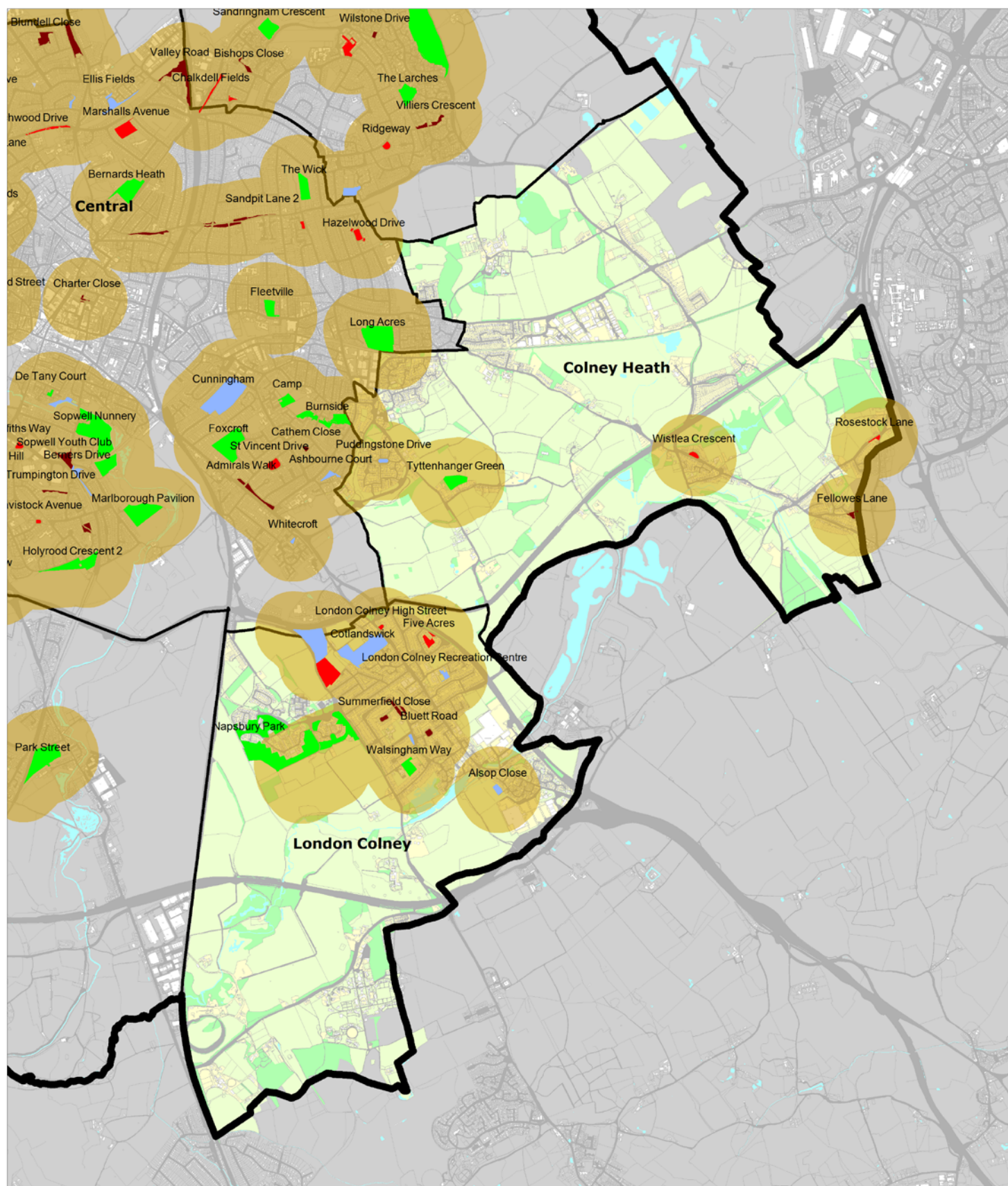
Most of the spaces are also small and therefore offer little to local residents. The only space of any size is Tyttenhanger Green; the others are all less than 0.25 ha. However, the area has two large spaces – Colney Heath Common and Highfield Park (see Natural Greenspaces and Parks and Gardens below) so this is not particularly important.

Action Points – Colney Heath

- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Seek opportunities to provide new amenity green space in conjunction with the Smallford Campus redevelopment

London Colney

London Colney has significantly more amenity greenspace provision than Colney Heath but almost all of it has a first quartile/very poor summary audit score. Overall, 82% of properties lie within the distance threshold of at least one space, but 0% within this distance of a space with a fourth quartile/good score. Therefore there is a need significantly to enhance amenity greenspace across the planning area.



- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold

St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 17.3 Colney Heath and London Colney Amenity greenspace

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There are three large amenity greenspaces in the planning area: Cotlandswick amenity greenspace (4.6 ha, although the proposed leisure centre will reduce this significantly); St Albans Irish Club (3.6 ha, although not publicly accessible); and Napsbury greenspace (13.8 ha), but they are all on the periphery of the urban area. The Morris Recreation Ground and Shenley Lane Recreation Ground are also important in terms of amenity.

Action Points – London Colney

- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Ensure that the proposed redevelopment of the Harperbury Hospital site incorporates high quality greenspaces

Churchyards and Cemeteries

The audit did not include any churchyards or cemeteries in either planning area.

Natural Greenspaces

Map 17.4 shows the location and size of the natural greenspaces in the audit plus Local Nature Reserves, County Wildlife Sites and the Watling Chase Community Forest.

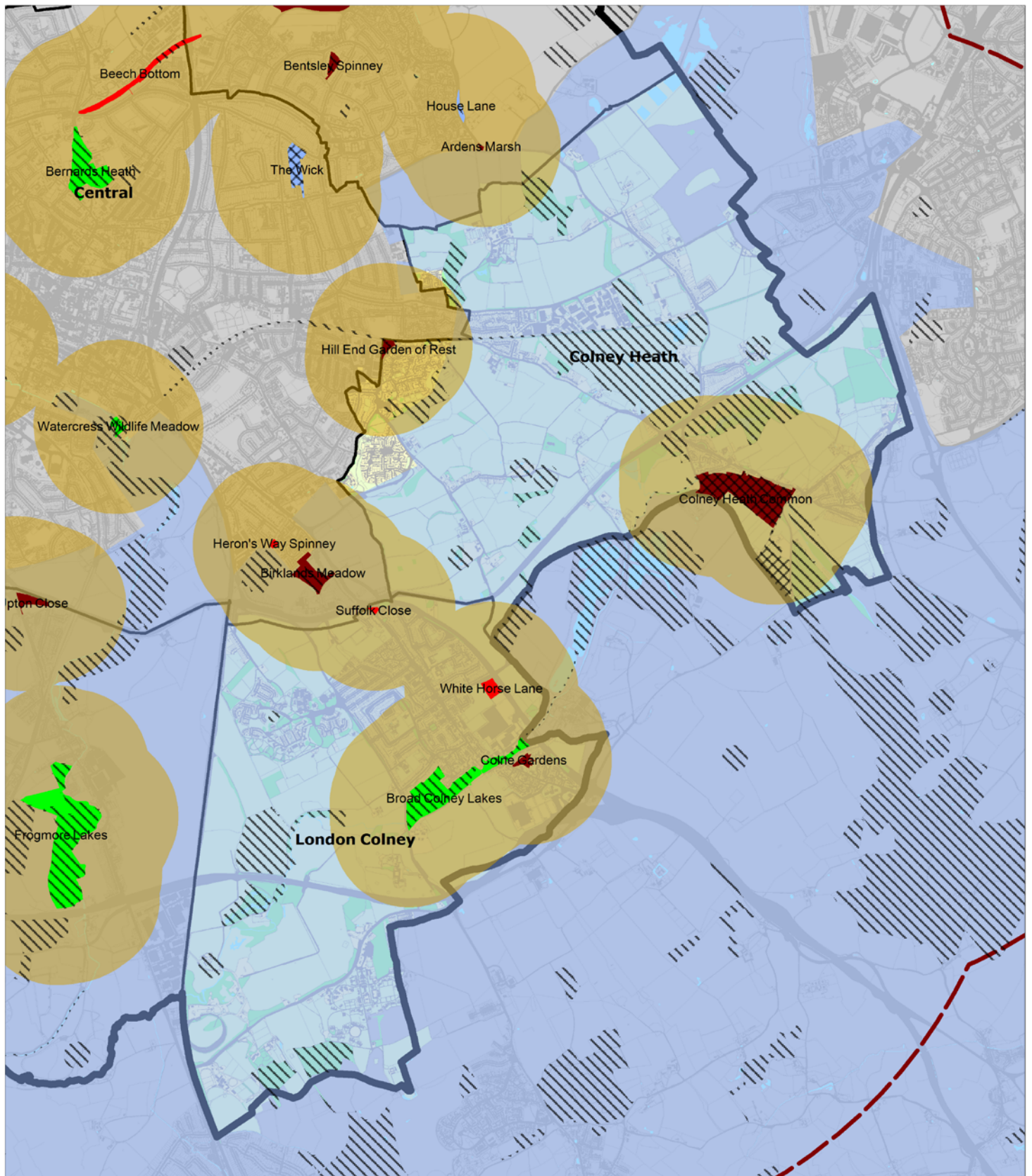
Colney Heath

The natural greenspace provision in Colney Heath is dominated by Colney Heath Common – a large space of slightly over 16 ha. The only other natural greenspace is the Hill End Garden of Rest on the edge of St Albans. Overall, 43% of properties lie within the 600 m distance threshold of at least one of them, but only 7% within this distance of a space with a fourth quartile/good summary audit score.

The quantity standard of 5 sq m per person, excluding Commons, suggests a need for 2.75 ha of natural greenspace compared with the 0.75 ha available, a shortfall of 2.0 ha.

London Colney

Natural greenspace in London Colney is also dominated by a single large site – the Broad Colney Lakes Local Nature Reserve. This is a very important site locally because it provides access to “bluespace”. As Map 17.4 shows, most of the developed area and 76% of properties lie within the 600 m walking distance threshold of at least one of the four sites. However, only the Lakes has a fourth quartile/good summary audit score, so there is a need to enhance the other sites.



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 17.4 Colney Heath and London Colney Natural Greenspaces

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Applying the quantity standard of 5 sq m per person suggests a need for some 4.1 ha of natural greenspace compared with the 4.8 ha that already exists.

Action Points – Colney Heath

- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspace wherever possible
- Enhance the natural greenspaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C

Action Points – London Colney

- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspace wherever possible
- Enhance the natural greenspaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Promote green corridor links to the Broad Colney Lakes LNR in order to enhance access to it

Parks and Gardens

Map 17.5 shows the location and extent of the only park in either of the planning areas, Highfield Park in Colney Heath. It also highlights that the park is of “District” status, has a fourth quartile/good summary audit score and identifies the approximate extent of its walking and driving catchments. The park needs little enhancement although, as one of the area’s “flagships”, it will be desirable to improve a number of its paths and achieve Green Flag status. The Park Trust is extending the allotments area as noted above.

In many ways the mature landscape of the registered historic park at the former Napsbury Hospital, now a residential development, is a local park although its design with a very clear entrance suggests that it is reserved for residents rather than publicly accessible. There is also an opportunity to develop a new park on the Oaklands Campus, in conjunction with the College’s plans to redevelop and expand it.

Action Points

- Work with the Highfield Park Trust to achieve and then retain a Green Flag for the Park
- Ensure implementation of the extension to Highfield Park
- Consider the potential to create a park as part of the Oaklands College Smallford Campus

Green Corridors

There are two green corridors in the Colney Heath and London Colney planning areas: the Alban way, which links St Albans to Hatfield and the River Colne Walk

which links London Colney south west to Colney Street and Bricket Wood.

Action Points

- With the Parishes and County Council, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority
- Seek opportunities to enhance existing greenways and create of new routes

Children's Play Areas

Map 17.6 shows the location of equipped play areas for the under-6s and Map 17.7 similar information for play areas designed for 6-11 year olds.

Colney Heath

Toddlers' Play

There are six play areas with equipment designed for young children in the Colney Heath planning area, with an aggregate area of just under 6,200 sq m, although the Sleapshyde play area accounts for nearly half of this total. Overall, only 25% of properties lie within the 300 m distance threshold of at least one facility and therefore there is a need for more provision. As Map 17.6 identifies, there are no sites with a fourth quartile/good summary audit score and the main areas outwith the distance threshold which therefore require facilities are:

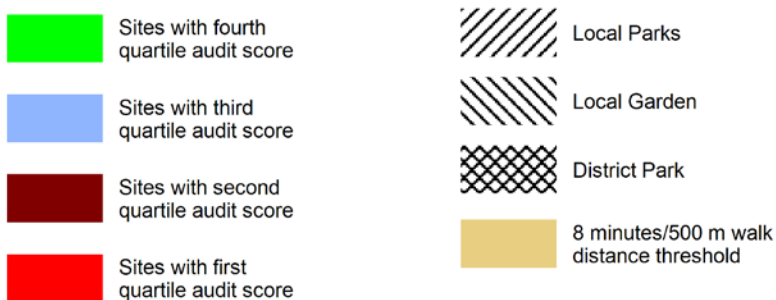
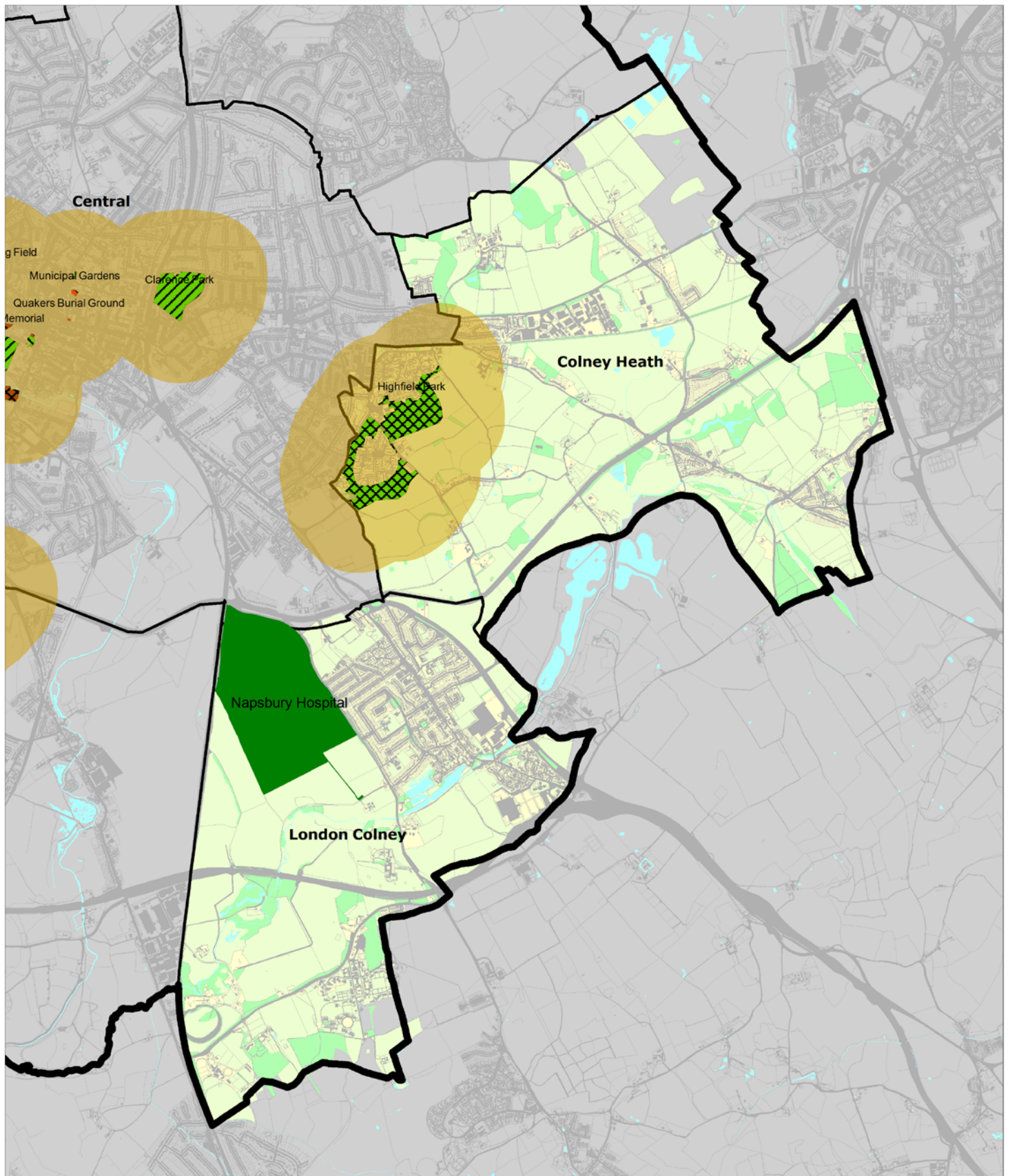
- The Highfield area on the eastern edge of St Albans
- The residential area to the south of Hatfield Road
- The eastern part of Colney Heath village

Play for Older Children

Provision for older children in Colney Heath is only slightly better than for young children. Overall, 34% of properties lie within the 450 m distance threshold of at least one of the five play areas. The accessibility deficiencies are broadly similar to those for young children, except that there is a more extensive deficiency south of Fleetville in the Highfield area.

Action Points – Colney Heath

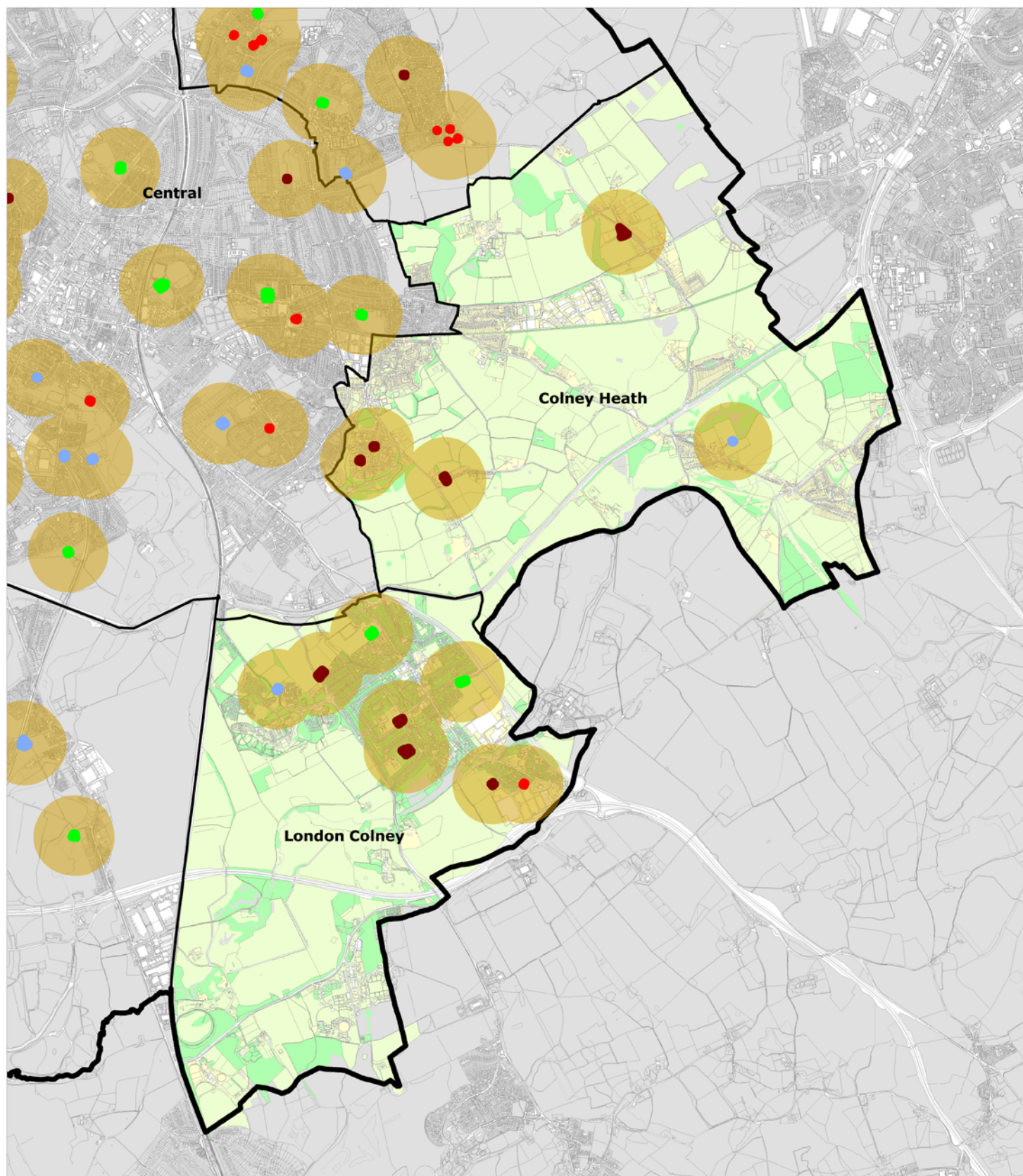
- Enhance or replace existing low quality and value play areas so that they accord with the children's play section of Appendix C
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance suitable greenspaces to make them interesting and attractive to children for natural play or create new play facilities in those areas outwith the distance threshold of existing facilities



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 17.5 Colney Heath and London Colney Parks and Gardens



Sites with fourth quartile summary audit scores

Sites with third quartile summary audit scores

Sites with second quartile summary audit scores

Sites with first quartile summary audit scores

8 minutes/300 m walking distance threshold

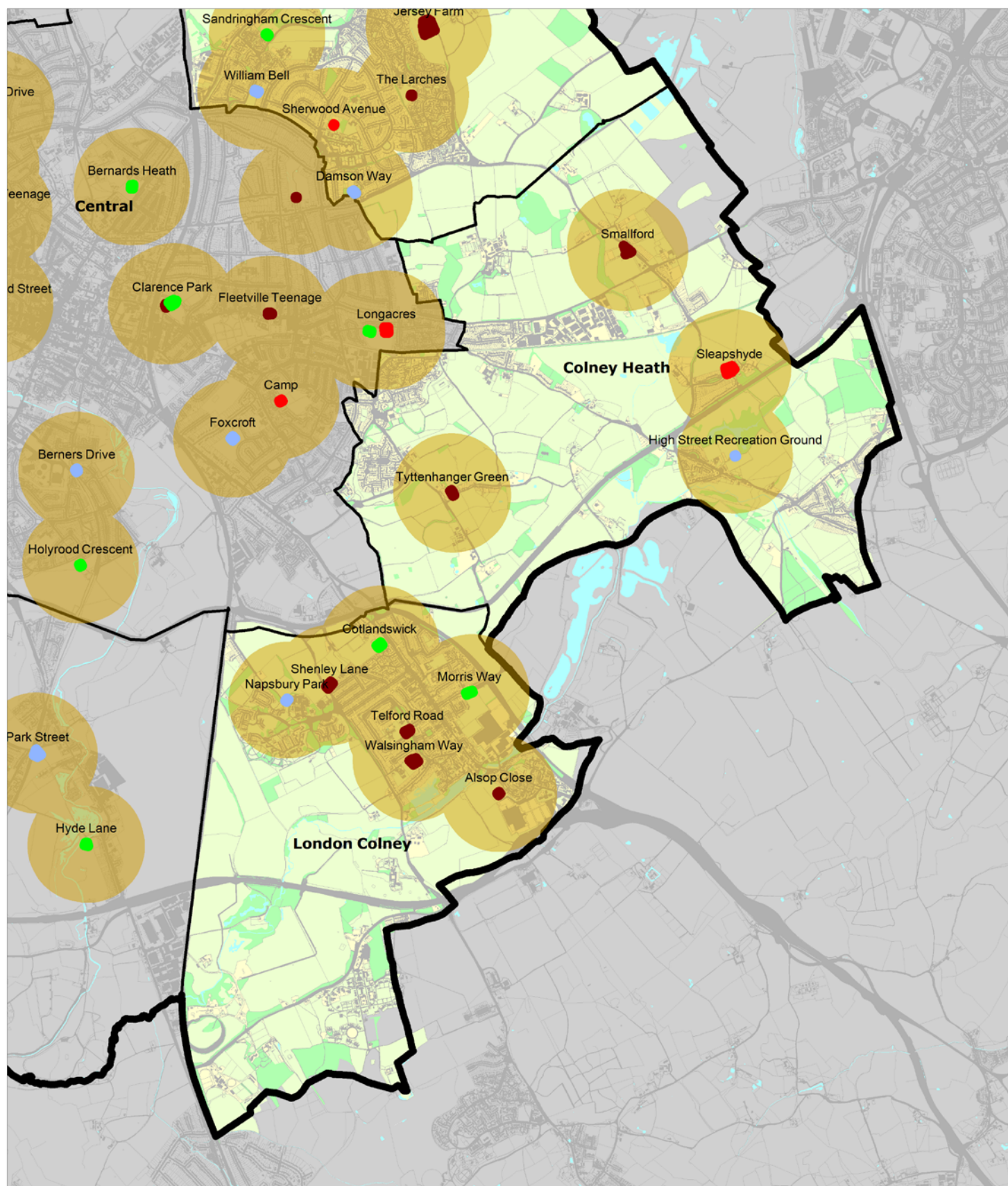
Sites shown enlarged for clarity

St Albans City and District Greenspace Strategy



Map 17.6 Colney Heath and London Colney: Play for Toddlers and Young Children

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- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

8 minutes/450 m walk distance threshold

St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 17.7 Colney Heath and London Colney Older Children Equipped Play

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London Colney

Toddlers' Play

London Colney has nine play areas with equipment for toddlers. 74% of properties lie within the 300 m distance threshold but, as Map 17.6 shows, most potential users from outwith the thresholds would have to walk only slightly further to get to at least one facility. Four of the facilities – Cotlandswick, Morris Way, Porters Hill and Walsingham Road - have fourth quartile/good summary audit scores but four of the others – Alsop Close, Halsey Park, Shenley Lane and Telford Road - require enhancement.

Older Children

The slightly higher 450 m distance threshold for older children's play areas means that 80% of properties lie within an acceptable walking distance of at least one play area, although there is one fewer than for toddlers. The summary audit scores are the same as for younger children.

Action Points

- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the children's play section of Appendix C
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance suitable greenspaces to make them interesting and attractive to children for natural play or create new play facilities in those areas outwith the distance threshold of existing facilities
- Consider the provision of a strategic play area

The Quantity of Play Provision

Applying the quantity standard of 0.18 sq m per person suggest a need for at least one teenage facility in Colney Heath but an adequate level of provision in London Colney. However, the London Colney Adventure World has an entrance charge so it will be desirable to provide a second facility in the area with free access, although the District Council intends to redevelop the site for housing and build a new leisure centre at Cotlandswick.

Provision for Teenagers

Colney Heath

As Map 17.8 shows there are no dedicated teenage facilities in the Colney Heath planning area, although there is a multi-court in Highfield Park. The nearest dedicated teenage facility is the Longacres site in St Albans and some 43% of Colney Heath properties lie

within the walking distance threshold of it and 85% within the cycling threshold.

London Colney

London Colney has two dedicated teenage facilities. However, both are likely to be lost in the reasonably near future: the Cotlandswick BMX track as a result of the development of the new leisure centre and the London Colney Adventure World basketball area as a result of a proposed housing development. There are however two multi-courts, at Napsbury Park and in London Colney itself.

Applying the quantity standard of 0.18 sq m per person suggest a need for at least one teenage facility in Colney Heath and two in London Colney.

Action Points

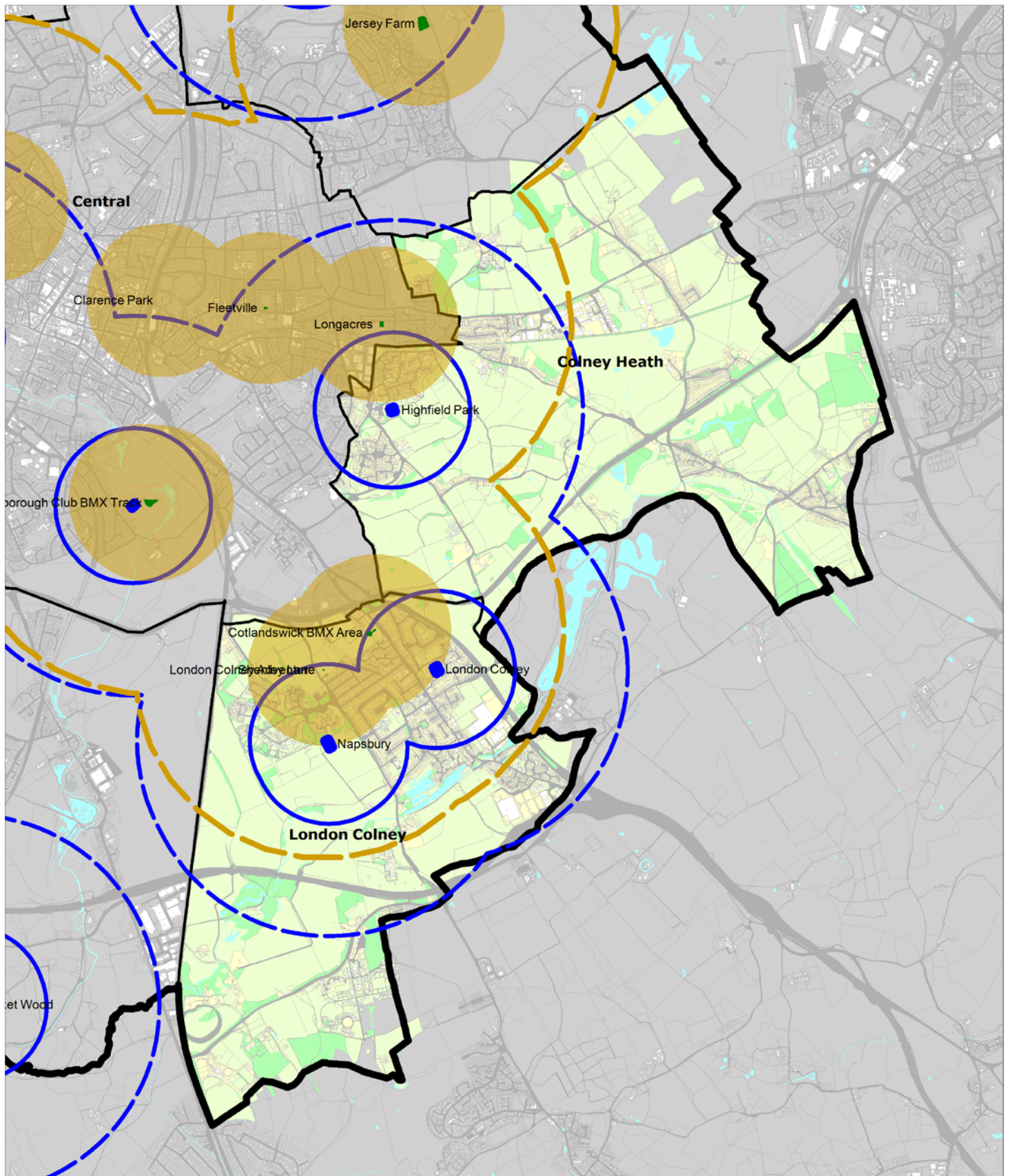
Colney Heath







- Identify a site for a possible teenage facility in Colney Heath and work with local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facility

London Colney

- Identify two sites for possible teenage facilities in London Colney and work with local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facility

Note: this assumes that both the present teenage facilities in London Colney will be lost in the near future



- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | Teenage facilities |  | Multi-courts |
|  | 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold |  | 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold |
|  | 10 minutes/1500 m walk distance threshold |  | 10 minutes/1500 m walk distance threshold |

St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy



Map 17.8
Colney Heath and
London Colney
Teenage Facilities

Multi-functional Greenspace: Overview

Map 17.9 shows the multi-functional green network in the two planning areas together with green corridors.

The Quantity of Multi-functional Greenspace Provision

The total amount of different types of multi-functional greenspace provision – amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens – in **Colney Heath** compared with the amount required by the application of the quantity standards derived earlier in this report is:

	Required sq m	Available sq m
Amenity greenspace	82,770	21,784
Natural greenspace	27,590	7,791
Parks and gardens	66,216	272,046
Totals	176,576	301,621

In Colney Heath, therefore, there is more than ample greenspace provision, but this arises as a direct result of the large size of Highfield Park and there are deficiencies in amenity and natural greenspace. However, there is likely to be an opportunity to create a new park at the Oaklands College Smallford Campus.

In **London Colney**, however, there is a slight overall deficiency in provision because of the absence of a local park:

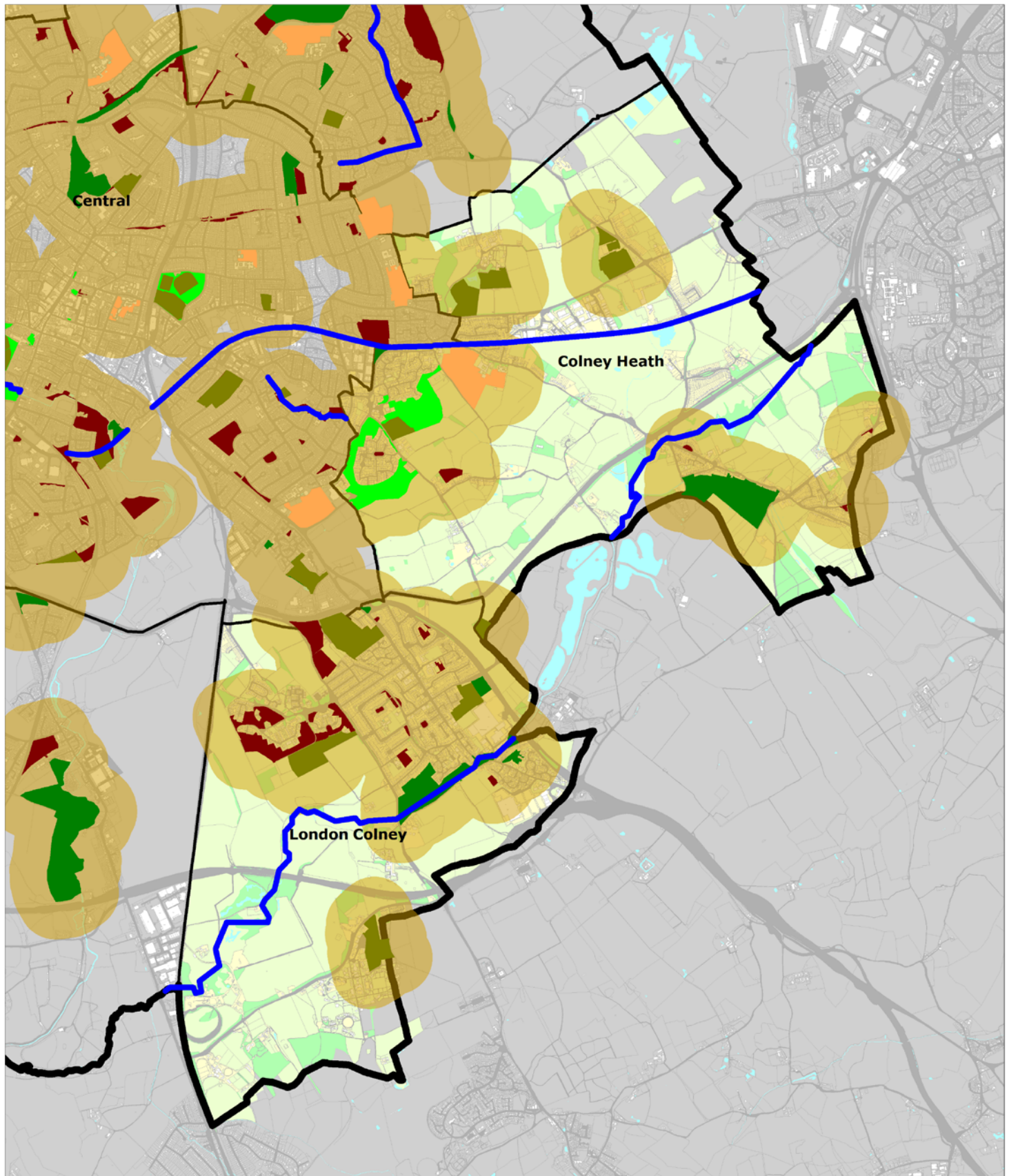
	Required sq m	Available sq m
Amenity greenspace	123,780	278,151
Natural greenspace	41,260	48,580
Parks and gardens	99,024	0
Totals	264,064	238,685








Note: a large part of the Cotlandswick amenity greenspace site, with an area of 46,233 sq m, will be lost when the new leisure centre is built

The Accessibility of Multi-functional Greenspace

The accessibility of multi-functional greenspaces in **Colney Heath** is fairly poor except in the area around Highfield Park. In particular most of the residents of Sleepshyde have no designated greenspace within an acceptable walking distance, although most of the houses have large gardens and there is good access to open countryside.

In general, **London Colney** residents have reasonably good access to amenity and natural greenspaces, although they will probably have to drive if they wish to visit a park.



- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---|---|
|  | Amenity greenspaces |  | Secondary school playing fields |
|  | Natural greenspaces |  | Green corridors |
|  | Parks and Gardens |  | 5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold |
|  | Open access sports facilities | | |

St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy

Map 17.9
Colney Heath and
London Colney
Multi-functional Greenspace

The Quality and Value of Multi-functional Greenspace

Highfield Park in the western part of the **Colney Heath** planning stands out as the only high quality and value space and therefore a very important asset. However, the only other sizeable space, Colney Heath Common in the eastern part of the planning area, requires enhancement.

Most of the amenity greenspaces in London Colney are of low quality and value and therefore require enhancement.

Action Points Colney Heath

- Encourage the Highfield Park Trust to create a Local Nature Reserve within the Park or its proposed extension
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance Colney Heath Common
- Work with Oaklands College to develop a local park on the Smallford Campus site
- Work to deliver the Watling Chase Community Forest aims and objectives

Action Points – London Colney

- With the Parish Council, consider converting Napsbury Park or Morris Recreation Ground into a local park
- With the Parish Council and local residents, develop a programme of enhancements for amenity greenspaces in the area.
- Work to deliver the Watling Chase Community Forest aims and objectives

18 Park Street and St Stephen

Introduction

The Park Street and St Stephen planning area extends to 2,579 hectares and has an estimated population of some 12,100. As map 18.1 below shows, the majority of residents live in Chiswell Green, How Wood and Bricket Wood or along the A5183/Park Street.

Village Plans

The St Stephen Parish Council has a Parish Environmental Action Plan working party, but as yet it has not published any proposals.

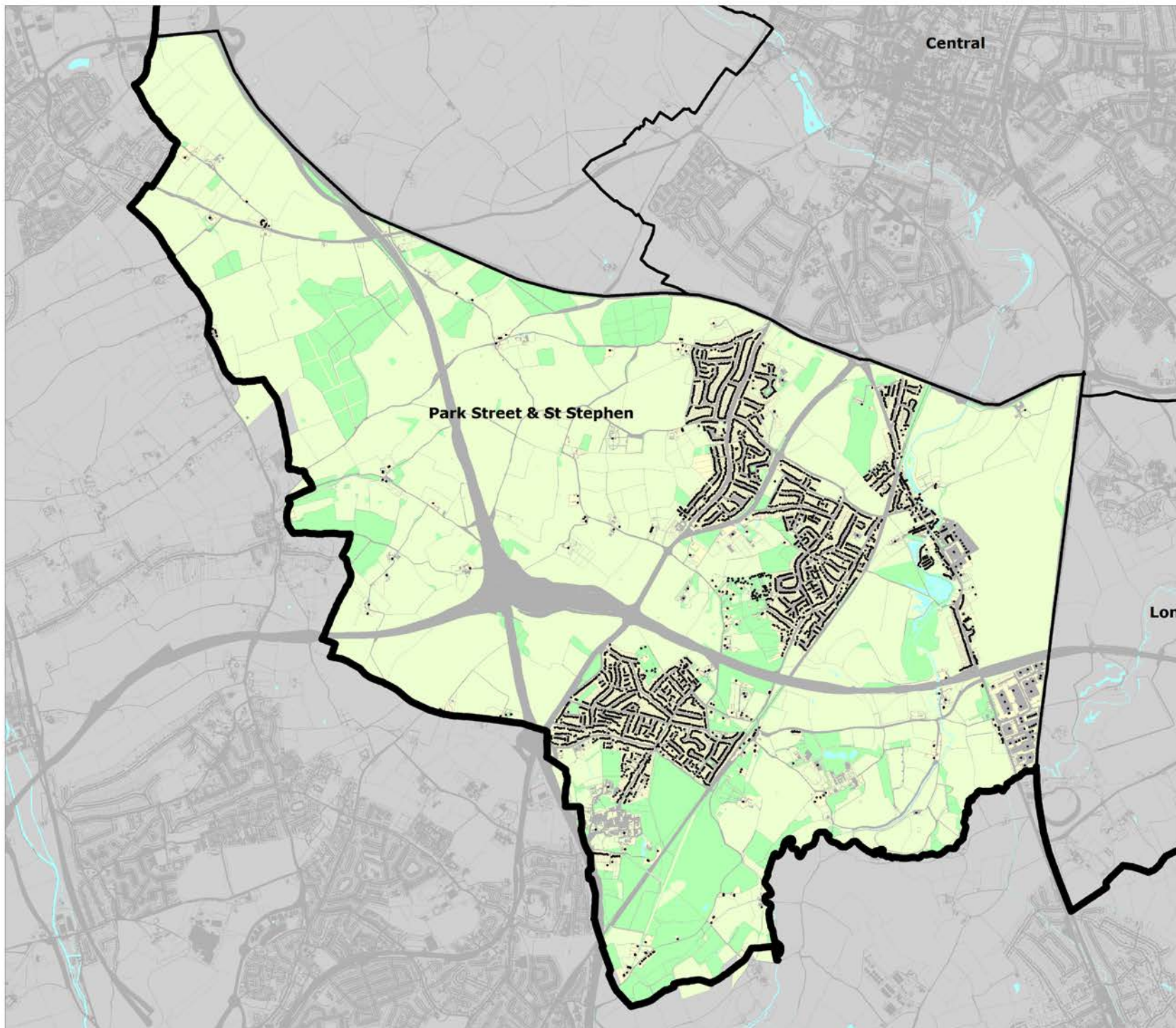
Allotments

There are four allotments sites in the area with a total of 150 plots and Map 18.2 shows their location.

There are currently 32 people on a waiting list for a plot, with 18 of them on the list for the Burydell site in Park Street managed by the City and District Council. This is the second best site in the area, with a third quartile/fair summary audit score. The best is the Tippendell site, with a fourth quartile/good score, and the other two sites have second quartile/poor scores so should be the priority for enhancement.

Overall, only 44% of properties in the planning area lie within a 10-minute walk of at least one site and 20% within walking distance of the Tippendell site. Accordingly there appears to be a need for additional provision on the grounds of accessibility, with the main areas outwith the walking distance threshold being in Bricket Wood and How Wood.

Applying the quantity standard of 4.5 sq m per person suggests a need for some 5.5 ha of allotments compared with the 2.7 ha currently available, a significant shortfall of 2.8 ha. However, this is likely to overstate the potential demand as many houses in the area have reasonably large gardens.



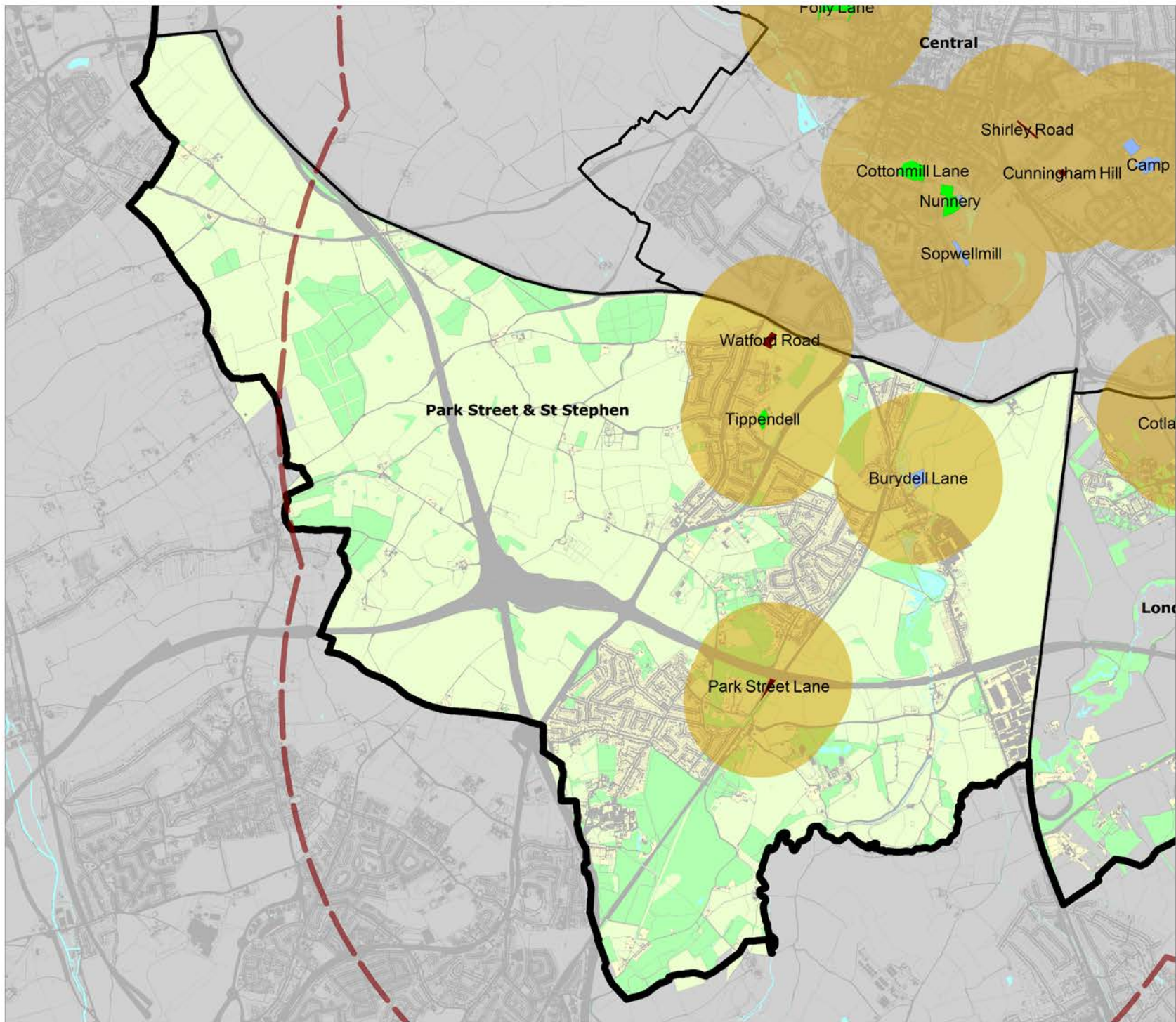
• Properties



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 18.1
Park Street and
St Stephen
Distribution of
Properties**

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- Sites with first quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with second quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with third quartile summary audit scores
- Sites with fourth quartile summary audit scores

- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 18.2
Park Street and
St Stephen
Allotments**

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Action Points

- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C
- Work with the Parish Council to identify the potential demand for allotments in How Wood and Bricket Wood and if necessary allocate land

Amenity Greenspace

Map 18.3 shows the location of amenity greenspaces in the Park Street and St Stephen area. Overall 49% of properties lie within the distance threshold of at least one space, but only 11% within this distance of the single space with a fourth quartile/good summary audit score, the Park Street greenspace. All the other sites have a first quartile/very poor summary audit score, indicating a clear need for enhancement. There is an overall deficit of some 9.5 ha of amenity green space but there is a large surplus of natural greenspace.

Action Points

- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspace section of Appendix C

Churchyards and Cemeteries

The audit did not include any churchyards or cemeteries in Park Street and St Stephen.

Natural Greenspace

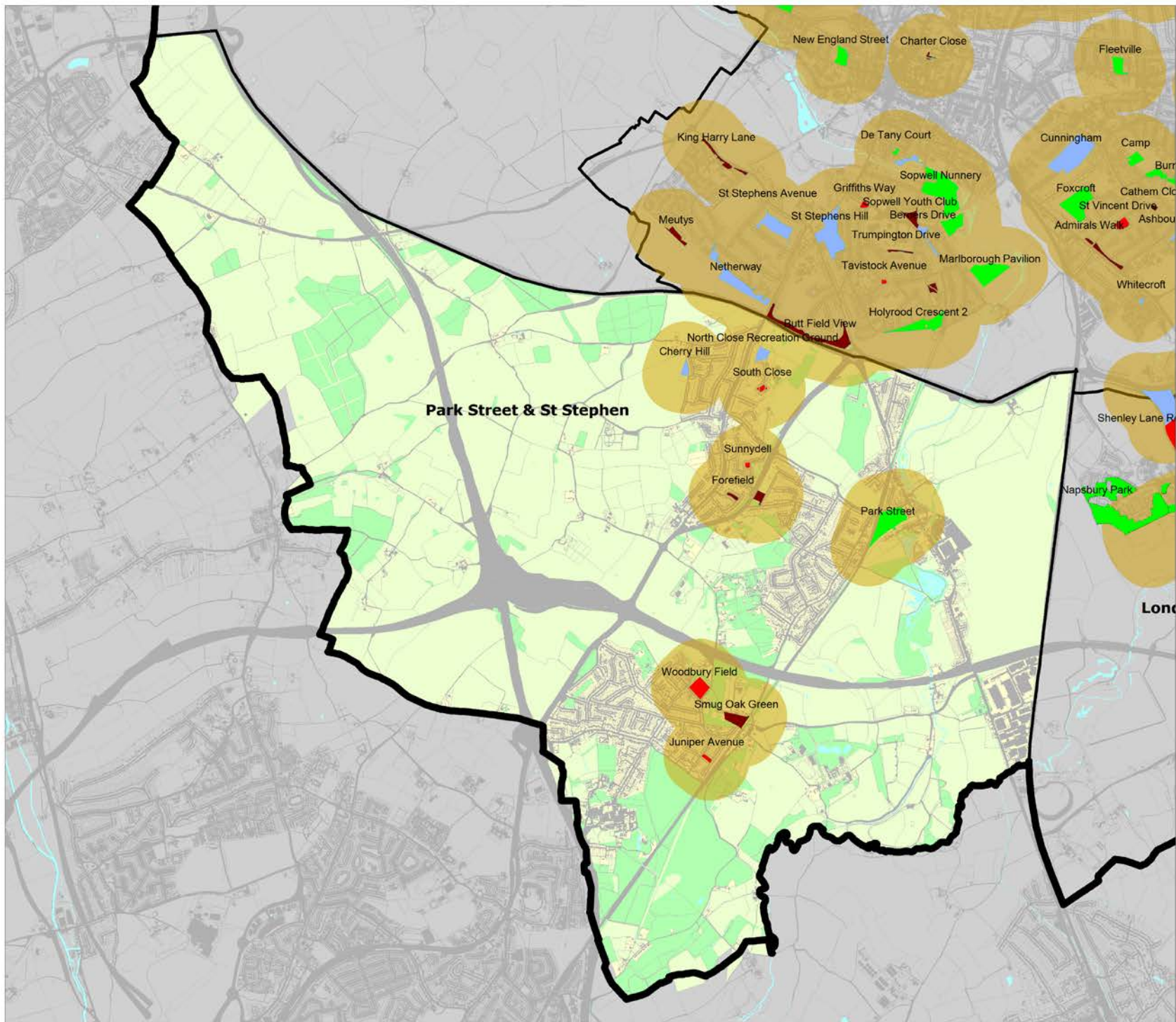
Map 18.4 shows the location of the six natural greenspaces included in the audit plus Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites.

Excluding Bricket Wood Common, the sites in the audit have a total area of nearly 108,000 sq m (10.8 ha) compared with the 6.0 ha suggested by the quantity standard. Including it, the total area of natural greenspace rises to a little over 96 ha. Overall therefore the total amount of natural greenspace in Park Street and St Stephen is likely to be more than adequate.

The two sizeable natural greenspaces, Bricket Wood Common (part of which is a site of Special Scientific Interest) and Birch Wood, have at least third quartile/fair summary audit scores and only one site – off Old Watford Road - had a first quartile/very poor score. The Watling Chase Community Forest also covers much of the planning area.

Action Points

- Enhance Old Watford Road and the Broad Acre woodland site



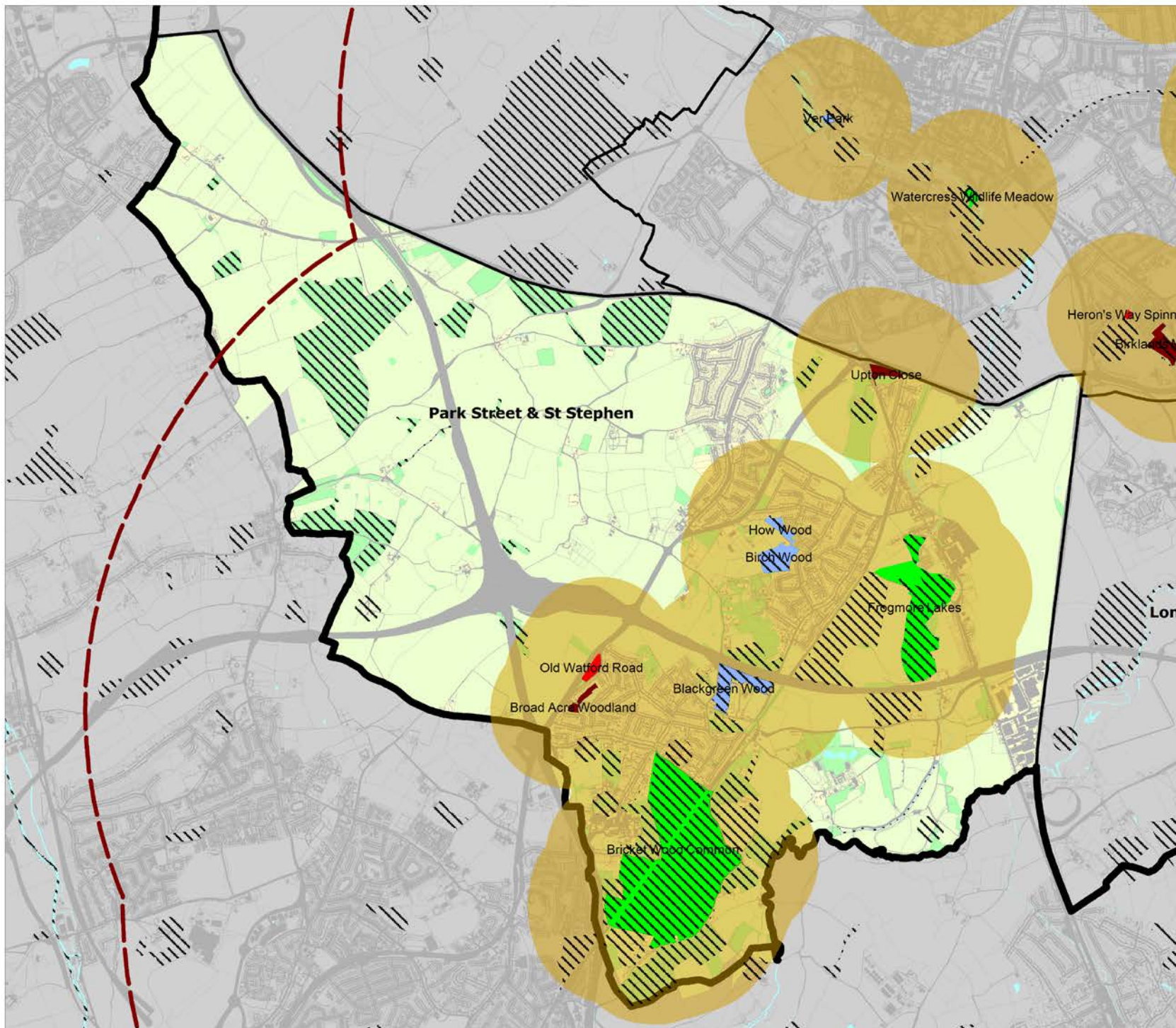
- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- 5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 18.3
Park Street and
St Stephen
Amenity Greenspaces**

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- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m drive distance threshold



**St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 18.4
Park Street and
St Stephen
Natural greenspaces**

Parks and Gardens

Map 18.5 shows that there is only one public park in the area, Greenwood Park. It is sufficiently large to be a District Park, and in the green belt, but achieved only a first quartile/very poor audit score, primarily because it consists mainly of sports pitches and does not have many of the other features that would normally be associated with a park of this size. The Gardens of the Rose and Butterfly World also provide some park-like spaces but were not included in the audit.

Only 21% of properties lie within the 12 minutes/700 m walking distance threshold of the park, although the whole of the planning area lies within the 12 minutes/4500 m driving threshold. As the park had a very poor audit score, there are no properties within the planning area within either distance threshold of a good park. Bricket Wood is the part of the planning area most remote from Greenwood Park, but as local residents have ready access to the large Common there is no need for a park.

Action Points

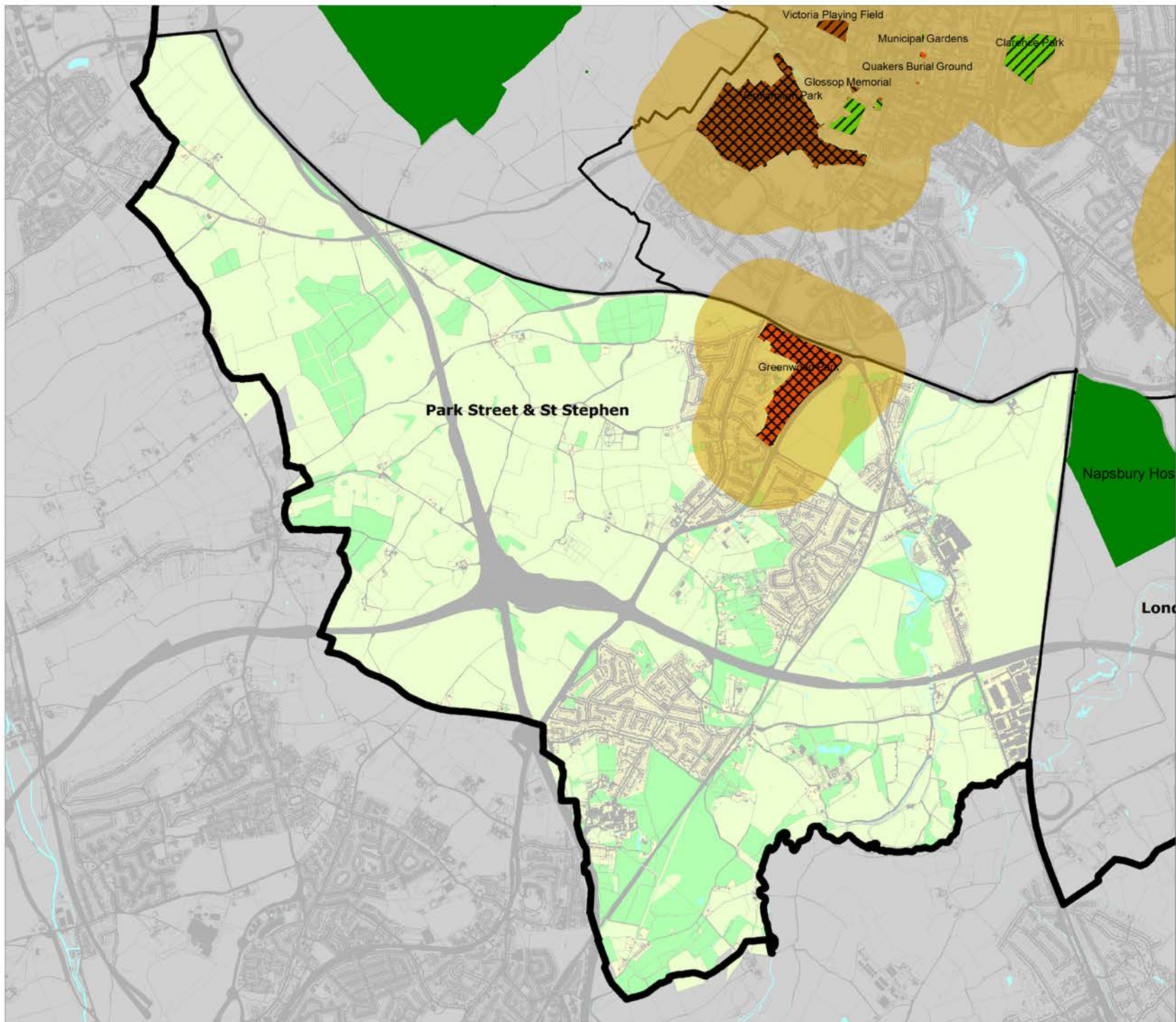
- Enhance Greenwood Park, possibly through the disposal of a small part of it to fund the enhancement of the remainder, so that it accords with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C

Green Corridors

The Ver Colne Valley Walk runs through the eastern section of the Park Street and St Stephen planning area.

Action Points

- Investigate the potential to create a green corridor linking Chiswell Green with Gorhambury and Napsbury Hospital
- With the Parish and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority



- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score

- Local Parks
- Local Garden
- District Park
- 8 minutes/500 m walk distance threshold



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy

Map 18.5
Park Street and
St Stephen
Parks and Gardens

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Children's Play

The Park Street and St Stephen planning area has a total of seven play areas, all of them with equipment designed for both toddlers and older children. Greenwood Park and Hyde Lane have fourth quartile/good audit scores; North Close, Park Street, Cherry Hill and Mayflower Road have third quartile/fair scores; and Woodbury Field has a second quartile/poor score. Map 18.6 shows the location of these play areas and Map 18.7 similar information but for children aged 6-11 and 8 minute/450 m distance thresholds. They have a total area of 2.6 ha, although the large Greenwood Park play area accounts for 1.1 ha of this. Applying the quantity standard of 0.5 sq m per person to the planning area's population suggests a need for around 0.6 ha in total, so there is an apparent surplus of some 2 ha. However, the area is fairly low density so accessibility is more important than quantity.

Play Areas for Toddlers

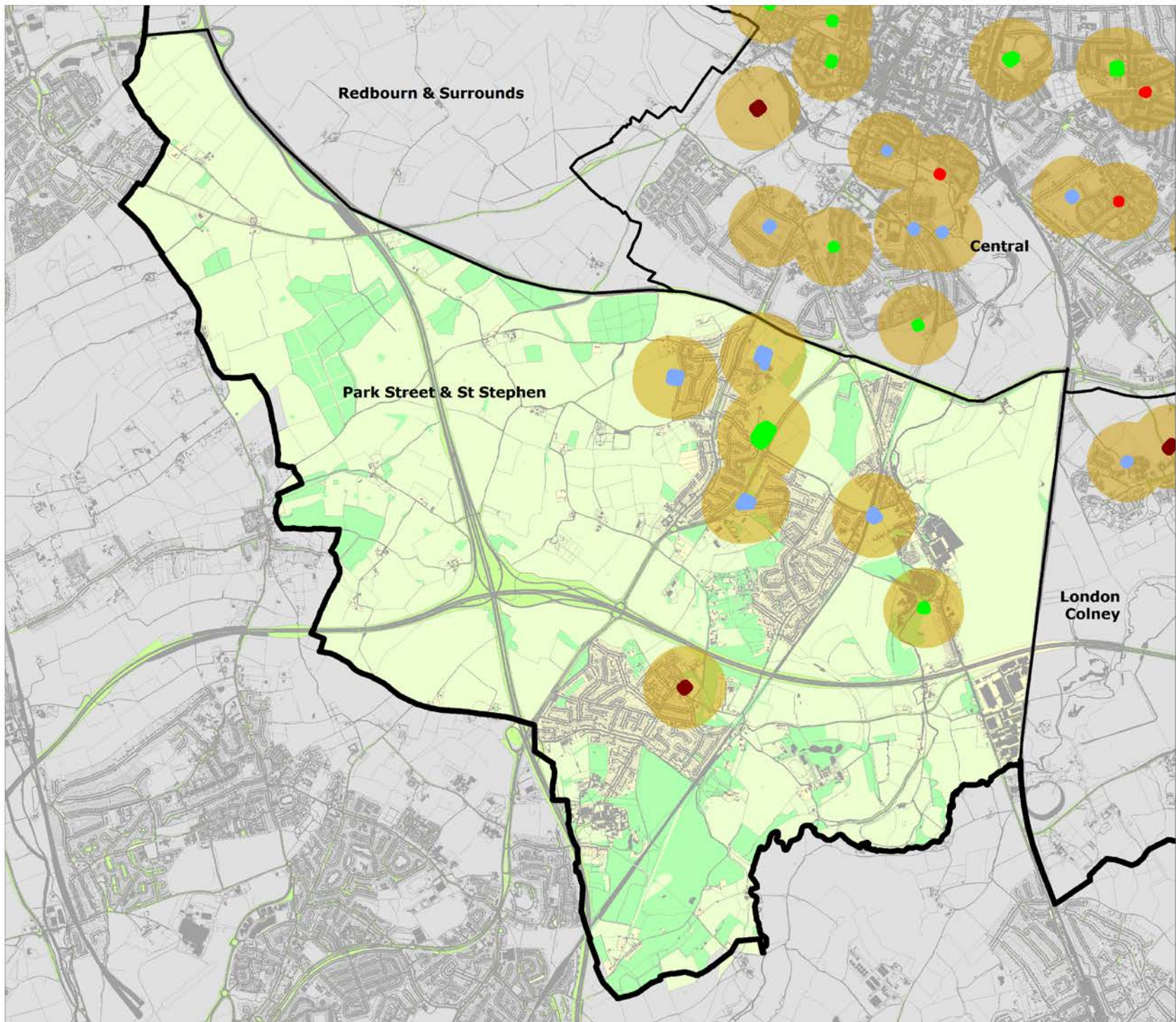
Overall, only a third of properties lie within the 8 minutes/300 m walk of at least one play area, with the main gaps in provision being in the northern part of Park Street, the southern half of How Wood and much of Bricket Wood. However, only 7% of properties lie within the distance threshold of a site with a fourth quartile/good audit score.

Play Areas for Older Children

The higher distance threshold of 8 minutes/450 m walking for older children almost doubles the proportion of properties within the threshold to 57% but still leaves accessibility gaps in the southern part of How Wood and Bricket Wood.

Action Points

- Enhance the sites with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the children's play section of Appendix C
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance suitable greenspaces outwith the distance threshold of existing play areas to make them interesting and attractive to children for natural play or identify opportunities for additional equipped play sites in the southern half of How Wood and the south western part of Bricket Wood
- Consider the provision of a strategic play area in the Bricket Wood area



	Sites with fourth quartile/ good audit score
	Site with third quartile/ fair audit score
	Sites with second quartile/ poor audit score
	Sites with first quartile/ very poor audit score

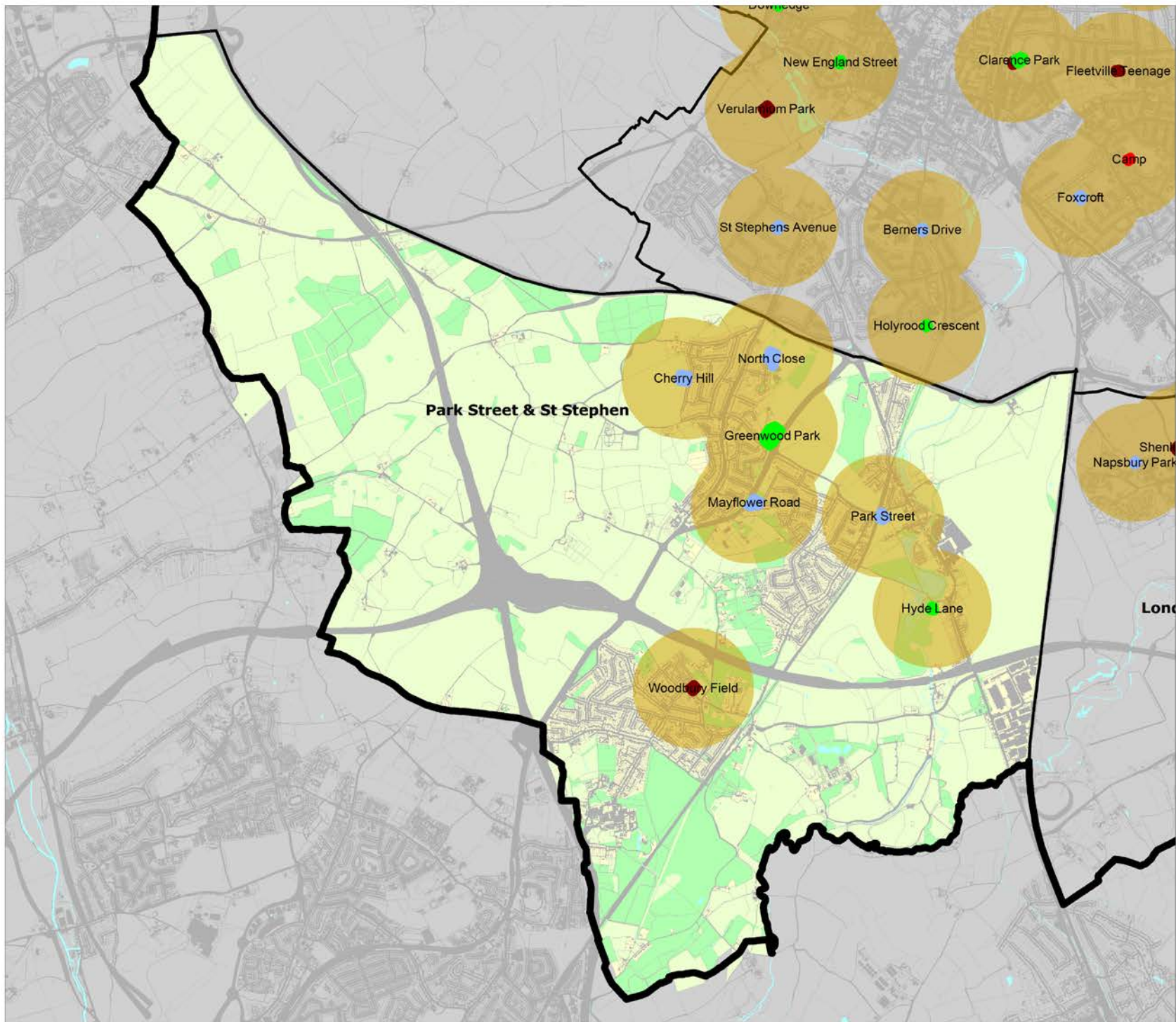
	5 minutes/300 m walk for toddlers and young children
--	--



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 18.6
Park Street
and St Stephen:
Toddlers' Play Areas**

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- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- 8 minutes/500 m walk distance threshold



**St Albans City and District
Greenspace Strategy**

**Map 18.7
Park Street and
St Stephen
Older Children Equipped
Play**

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Teenagers

Map 18.8 shows that there are no dedicated teenage facilities in Park Street and St Stephen although there is a multi-court at the Bricket Wood Sports Centre. Applying the quantity standard of 0.18 sq m per person suggest a need for at least 0.21 ha of provision, which will best be configured as two or three separate areas.

Action Points

- Identify potential sites for teenage facilities in Chiswell Green/How Wood and Bricket Wood and work with the Parish Council and local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facility. Greenwood Park is likely to be a good possible location.

Multi-functional Greenspace: Overview

Map 18.9 shows the network of multi-functional greenspaces in the planning area. There are no secondary schools in the area.

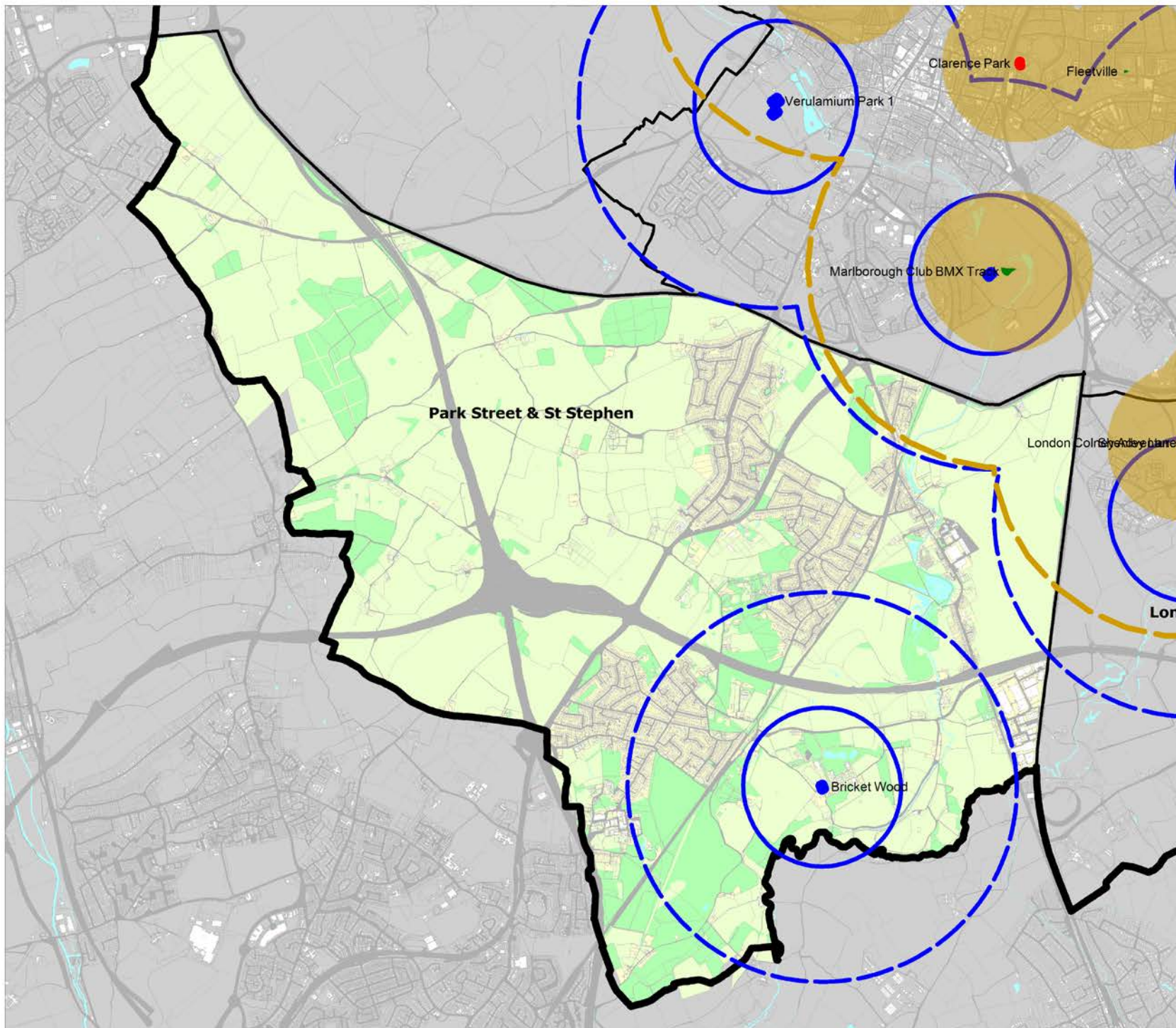
The Quantity of Multi-functional Greenspace Provision

The total amount of different types of multi-functional greenspace provision – amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens – in Park Street and St Stephen compared with the amount required by the application of the quantity standards derived earlier in this report is:

	Required sq m	Available sq m
Amenity greenspace	181,935	86,468
Natural greenspace	60,645	439,570
Parks and gardens	145,548	243,302
Totals	388,128	437,601

Note: Bricket Wood Common, with an area of 854,7905 sq m (89.5 ha), is included in this calculation because it is adjacent to a developed area

Overall, therefore, there is an overall surplus of multi-functional greenspace in Park Street and St Stephen for the current population but this masks a deficiency in amenity greenspace. However, there is a sizeable surplus in both natural greenspace and parks and gardens and this more than compensates for the deficiency, at least in quantitative terms.

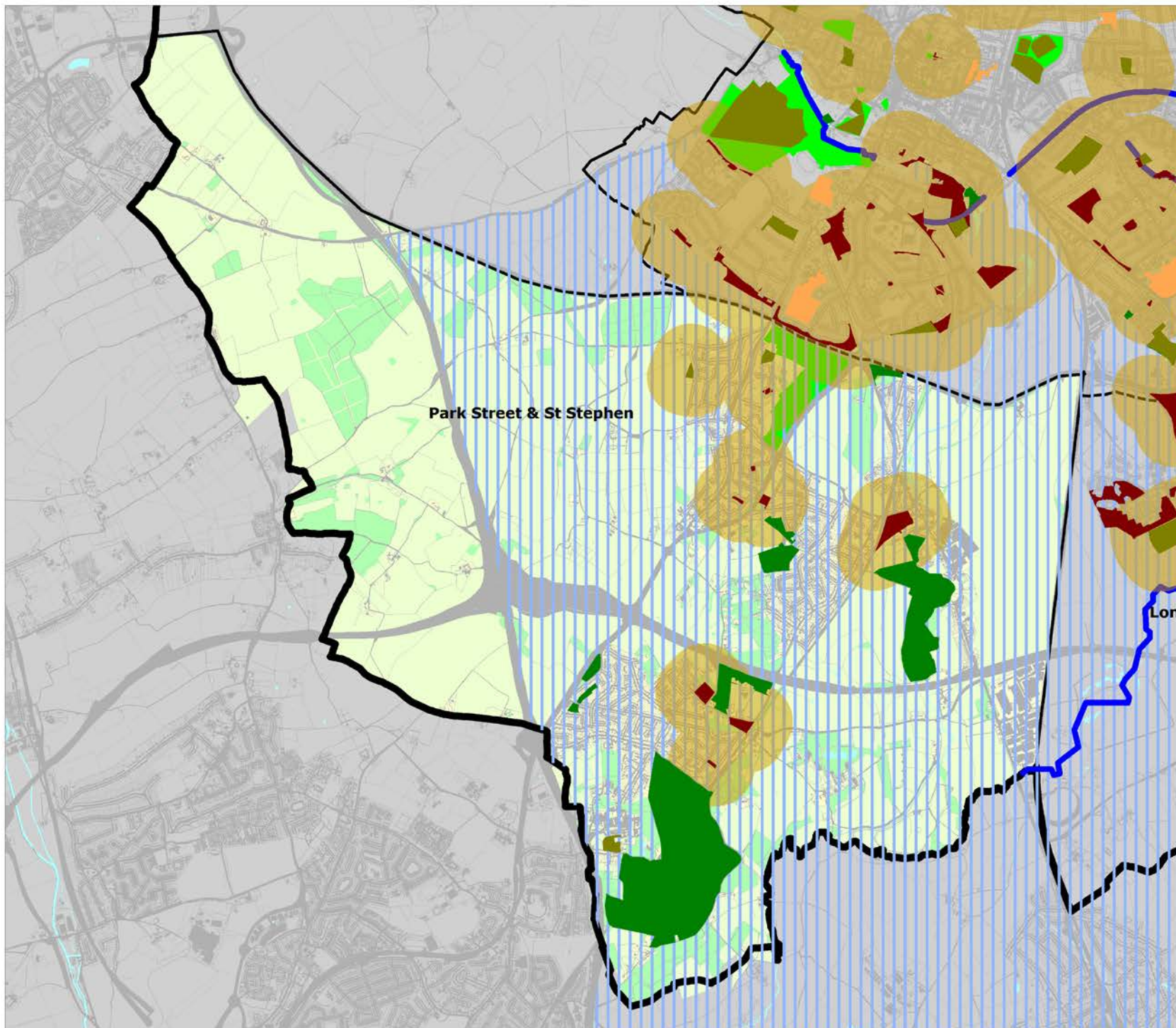


- Sites with fourth quartile audit score
- Sites with third quartile audit score
- Sites with second quartile audit score
- Sites with first quartile audit score
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/1500 m cycle distance threshold
- Multi-courts
- 10 minutes/600 m walk distance threshold
- 10 minutes/1500 m walk distance threshold



St Albans City and District Council
Greenspace Strategy

Map 18.8
Park Street and
St Stephen
Teenage Facilities



- Amenity greenspaces
- Natural greenspaces
- Parks and gardens
- Open access sports facilities
- Secondary school playing fields
- Green corridors
- Watling Chase Community Forest
- 5 minutes/300 m walk distance threshold



St Albans City and District Greenspace Strategy

Map 18.9 Park Street and St Stephen Multi-functional greenspace

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The Accessibility of Multi-functional Greenspace

Most residents in the developed areas of Park Street and St Stephen have ready access to at least one greenspace with 5 minutes walk, apart from those living immediately to the west of the railway line in the southern part of How Wood.

The Quality and Value of Multi-functional Greenspace

Apart from Bricket Wood Common, and to a slightly lesser extent Birch Wood, most of the greenspaces in Park Street and St Stephen area are of low quality and value. The area is also bisected by the A414 and as a result parts of the area suffer from poor air quality and noise.

Action Points

- Work with the Parish Council and local communities to develop a programme of local greenspace enhancements
- Develop a programme of additional tree planting along the A414 road corridor in order to improve air quality and absorb traffic noise as part of the Trees against Pollution campaign
- Work to deliver the Watling Chase Community Forest aims and objectives

Strategic Direction

19 Key Issues

Introduction

In the course of the above analysis it has become clear that there are a range of issues that the City and District Council and its partners need to tackle. This chapter therefore summarises these issues and recommends what the Council should do about them. There are two main groups of them:

General cross-cutting issues

- Adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change
- Public education
- Resources
- Localism
- Creative thinking and long term planning
- Monitoring progress

Greenspace issues

- Ensuring adequate provision
- Access to the urban fringe and wider countryside
- Promoting biodiversity and nature conservation
- Allotments
- Local parks
- Provision for children and young people
- Provision for Teenagers

Cross-cutting Issues

Cross-cutting Issue 1: Adapting to and Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change

Why is it important?

- Hotter summers will lead to increased water stress on plants and trees (and possible losses as a consequence) plus a need to water grassed areas in summer – when there may be water shortages and hosepipe bans
- Milder winters and longer growing seasons will require additional expenditure on grounds maintenance; for example, additional grass cuts will be needed in spring and autumn

- More winter depressions and gales, with the danger of losing trees to windblow
- Changes to habitats, likely to result in the loss or migration of some currently common species
- Higher levels of atmospheric pollution from traffic, although the trend towards “greener” vehicles will counter this to some extent
- Increased waterlogging and unplayability of grass pitches for significant parts of the year

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Develop and implement a green infrastructure strategy to identify opportunities to harness natural systems and processes in order to make the City and District, its residents and its flora and fauna more environmentally sustainable
- Seek to reduce the dependence of the pitch sports on grass areas
- Require developers to locate and design greenspaces and vegetation where they will have the greatest effect in terms of ameliorating the negative impacts of climate change, for example in terms of providing shade, shelter for buildings and absorbing or holding rainfall
- Increase the number of trees across the District, but particularly in the developed areas, as a way of providing additional shade from the sun and mitigating the “heat island” effect and pollution; however, this must be done in a way that will not make maintenance more difficult or expensive
- Actively plan and create additional “green corridors” for biodiversity, walking and cycling as a cost-effective way of helping to reduce the use of motor vehicles and the pollution it generates
- Investigate the use of Council-owned land for floodplain management and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS)

Cross-cutting Issue 2: Public Education

Why is it important?

- The importance of the sustainable use and management of the natural environment is becoming a more and more important part of the school curriculum and accessible greenspaces can be used as “outdoor classrooms” by schools. Pupils will benefit particularly from spaces that are of high value and biodiverse.
- New approaches to greenspace management and maintenance, such as the creation of wildflower meadows and allowing grass to remain long in some areas will lead inevitably to changes in the

appearance of spaces. As some people may assume this is poor maintenance, rather than deliberate and designed to promote biodiversity, there is a need to ensure that the public understands and appreciates the need for these changes. Similarly, it will be necessary to explain the Council's new approach to play provision for children to local residents accustomed to traditional play areas.

- The development of the Heartwood Forest and Watling Chase Community Forest will create new opportunities for informal countryside recreation but there is a need to ensure that people are aware of them and will act responsibly and follow the Countryside Code.
- Climate change is likely to encourage more people to enjoy open-air recreation, so there are opportunities to educate them in relation to issues such as the importance of biodiversity and the opportunities greenspaces and the countryside offer for active and passive recreation.

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Work with local communities to develop and publicise management plans for local greenspaces that will enhance biodiversity
- Work with landowners to promote responsible access to the countryside
- Encourage schools to develop nature areas
- Encourage and educate the public in how to manage gardens for nature conservation and biodiversity
- Provide appropriate information and interpretation at key sites
- Promote guided walks
- Encourage the training of volunteers so they can help manage and maintain appropriate local sites

Cross-cutting Issue 3: Resources

Why is it important?

- Public expenditure is likely to be extremely constrained over the next decade. As greenspace provision and management is not a statutory service it may not be seen as a priority in spite of the multiple benefits it generates for people and wildlife.

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Embed green infrastructure thinking and the need for high quality greenspace provision in planning policy
- Promote the development of "Friends" groups and encourage local communities to take greater responsibility for their local greenspaces

- Require developers to make arrangements for the long term management and maintenance of new greenspaces that will not impact on the Council's revenue budget, for example by making new house purchasers (and subsequent owners) responsible for appointing and paying grounds contractors to maintain on-site communal greenspaces
- Constantly make the case for the multiple benefits that high quality, accessible greenspace can generate for local communities
- Seek to develop additional income streams, for example from car parking at countryside sites
- Ensure that the Council makes the best possible use of whatever mechanisms may exist now and in the future (eg planning conditions, planning obligations, the Community Infrastructure Levy or Development Tariffs and carbon offsetting) to ensure that new developments enhance their local environment
- Review and amend maintenance regimes wherever practicable in order to encourage biodiversity and provide information to the public on the resulting changes

Cross-cutting Issue 4: Localism

Why is it important?

- The Coalition Agreement makes clear that one of the new Government's priorities is to give communities greater control over their local environments

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Support Friends and other local community groups that wish to take responsibility for local greenspaces while also persuading them that not all greenspaces must inevitably be protected (see the next cross-cutting issue)
- Create mechanisms that will allow local communities to influence Council-managed maintenance regimes
- Work closely with the Town and Parish Councils

Cross-cutting Issue 5: Creative Thinking and Long Term Planning

Why is it important?

- The Council has finite resources and has to deliver a growing range of statutory services. Lack of resources could result in a significant decline in the quality of local greenspaces

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Dispose of greenspaces that are not required to meet local needs and re-invest the capital receipts in more valuable sites
- Cease adopting on-site spaces provided by developers unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise
- Seek new ways to generate resources for the effective management and maintenance of Council-owned greenspaces, such as encouraging and training volunteers, charging for parking and guided and health walks

Cross-cutting Issue 6: Monitoring Progress

Why is it important?

- As resources get scarcer, it will be more and more important to demonstrate that Council expenditure is delivering worthwhile results and excellent value for money

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Keep the greenspace audit and strategy up to date; ideally, review 20% of the audit each year so as to refresh the whole of it every five years
- Agree a limited set of key indicators, such as the proportion of properties within the distance threshold of one or more spaces with a fourth quartile/good audit score, and monitor the performance of the Council and its partners against them

Greenspace Issues Greenspace Issue 1: Ensuring Adequate Provision

Why is it important?

- Greenspace contributes significantly to wellbeing and the quality of life in urban areas; as such it is essential to delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy vision of St Albans as *A progressive, unique and vibrant District, which values its environment, heritage and culture, and cares for the future: an outstanding place to live where everyone can flourish*
- Greenspace is essential in terms of biodiversity and providing habitats for wildlife
- Greenspaces are a focal point for community activities – bringing together members of communities and providing opportunities for social interaction. They play a vital role in promoting healthy living and in the social development of children through play, sporting activities and

interaction with others. Greenspaces and local sports and recreational facilities also contribute to the quality of life and wellbeing of rural communities and the countryside provides many opportunities for recreation.

What should the Council and its partners do to tackle it?

- Frame planning policy for greenspace in a way that emphasises the prime importance of accessibility, quality and value
- Protect spaces and facilities that are accessible to large numbers of potential users and of high quality and value
- Seek to remove the qualitative, quantitative and accessibility deficiencies in provision identified in this strategy. However, in built up areas it will often not be possible to overcome deficiencies in the amount of greenspace and therefore also accessibility deficiencies. In such instances enhancing the quality and value of the poorest spaces will be vitally important.
- Use the locally determined provision standards to ensure that greenspace provision keeps pace with new development
- Harness development to enhance existing greenspaces rather than require developers to provide new ones except in areas where there is a clear accessibility deficiency as identified in this strategy
- Retain the District's existing Green Flag Awards and seek to gain more of them

Greenspace Issue 2: Access to the Urban Fringe and Wider Countryside

Why is it Important?

- Visiting the countryside provides a means of "recharging the batteries" for people as they get busier and more stressed
- Walking, cycling or horse riding in the countryside, away from traffic, provides fresh air, healthy recreation and opportunities to see nature at work and learn more about the natural environment
- The size of the City and District makes it possible to cycle from one settlement to another reasonably easily, whether for work or leisure
- The development of the Heartwood Forest and Watling Chase Community Forest will create significant new opportunities for outdoor recreation and it is desirable that local residents should be able to avail of them on foot or by bicycle

What should the Council and its partners do to tackle it?

- Promote traffic-free routes through settlements that link to the urban fringe and on to the wider rights of way network
- Work with the County Council to identify the most valuable rights of way and encourage it to concentrate resources on them
- Identify opportunities to link existing greenspaces together to create green networks
- Require developers to link their developments to existing green corridors and networks of greenspaces
- Implement the “Green Ring” proposal for St Albans and develop a network of green corridors and circular walks around the other main settlements in the City and District
- With the County Council as Highways Authority, plan and deliver a network of cycling and other paths that link each of the settlements with their surrounding countryside and with each other and the national cycle network and make the maximum possible use of river corridors
- Promote access to historic landscapes
- Work with landowners to promote greater responsible public access across private land

Greenspace Issue 3: Promoting biodiversity and nature conservation

Why is it important?

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a statutory duty on the Council to promote biodiversity.

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Adopt approaches to the management and maintenance of greenspaces that will support and enhance biodiversity and provide habitats for wildlife

Greenspace Issue 4: Allotments

Why is it important?

- The demand for allotments has increased significantly and there are waiting lists throughout the City and District
- The location of most allotments is more an accident of history than planned
- Allotment gardening is a healthy activity that also supports healthy eating

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Work with the Parish and Town Councils and developers to identify and deliver new sites where this strategy has identified significant waiting lists and/or a clear accessibility deficiency

Greenspace Issue 5: Local Parks

Why is it important?

- Parks are probably the most inclusive and popular form of publicly funded leisure provision
- As many residents of the City and District as possible should be able to walk to their nearest park; this will encourage walking and create benefits in terms of health and well-being

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Seek to develop more local parks in areas of the City and District where this strategy has identified an accessibility deficiency
- Create “wild areas” to promote biodiversity

Greenspace Issue 6: Provision for Children and Young People

Why is it important?

- Play facilities allow opportunities for children to learn basic movement skills and interact with each other

What Should the Council Do to Tackle it?

- Implement the Council’s Play Strategy
- Require housing developers to ensure that any new on-site greenspaces are designed to stimulate children’s imagination and encourage outdoor play
- Provide a limited number of strategic play facilities at key accessible locations
- Promote opportunities for informal and natural play

Greenspace Issue 7: Provision for Teenagers

Why is it important?

- There is very little outdoor provision intended specifically for teenagers in the City and District
- Teenagers are easily bored and can then get up to mischief
- Groups of teenagers hanging around are often seen as a threat by older people

What Should the Council and its Partners Do to Tackle it?

- Identify acceptable sites for new or enhanced teenage facilities
- Work with teenage volunteers to develop facilities that will appeal to them

20 Green Infrastructure

Introduction

Traditional “grey” infrastructure, such as utilities networks and roads, makes it possible for us to live in villages, towns and cities and travel easily and reasonably quickly between them. Green Infrastructure, or GI, makes it possible for us to live on Planet Earth. Without it we would have no oxygen to breathe or food to eat. It is therefore of absolutely fundamental importance and a key role of the planning system is to promote long term environmental sustainability.

Strategic Objective 7 in the current working draft (August 2010) of the St Albans Core Strategy states that:

An integrated and cohesive network of green and blue open spaces and corridors will be identified, protected, enhanced and managed to increase biodiversity, help address climate change and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

The Council has therefore indicated that it will work with the other Hertfordshire councils to prepare a specific GI Strategy that will build upon this assessment. Natural England has defined GI as:

... a strategic network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life in sustainable communities

The only references to green infrastructure (GI) in adopted national planning policy, however, are in paragraph 24 of the Climate Change supplement to PPS1 and paragraph 4.8 of PPS12:

In deciding which areas and sites are suitable, and for what type and intensity of development ... planning authorities should take into account ... the contribution to be made from existing and

new opportunities for open space and green infrastructure to urban cooling, sustainable drainage systems, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity (Climate Change Supplement to PPS1)

The core strategy should be supported by evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area, taking account of its type and distribution. This evidence should cover who will provide the infrastructure and when it will be provided. The core strategy should draw on and in parallel influence any strategies and investment plans of the local authority and other organisations. (PPS12)

Both of these references clearly relate GI to the growth agenda and new development, particularly PPS12 which refers to it as being required to **enable** development. However, GI also has a lot to offer to in terms of helping to increase the sustainability of established urban areas and the Natural England definition of GI was repeated in the draft Planning Policy Statement on *Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment* launched in March 2010 by the last Government. It ignored the growth agenda and instead highlighted the main natural or ecological functions that GI supports:

- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Providing wildlife corridors
- Reducing noise and air pollution
- Helping communities adapt to a changing climate through water and carbon management
- Providing sustainable drainage
- Flood storage
- Urban cooling

The Council's GI strategy should therefore aim both to set the strategic environmental context for the future development of the City and District and seek to enhance the sustainability of its established settlements. As such its main thrust should be to build on existing evidence rather than start from first principles. For example:

- The Council monitors air quality on a continuing basis and has identified areas in which pollution is a significant issue. Planting more trees and other vegetation in these areas will capture carbon and various pollutants and particulates. The Heartwood and Watling Chase Community Forests will also contribute significantly to carbon capture and air

quality.

- The Council has worked with nearby councils to commission a sub-regional Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. This identifies that flood risk is relatively low in the City and District, but there are some areas where minor flooding may occur. Therefore it needs to identify whether there are opportunities to create flood storage in these areas and introduce sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).
- The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan identifies areas in which biodiversity is at risk and suggests ways of promoting its enhancement
- The Civic Vision and Rural Vision strategies suggest opportunities for the creation of green corridors that will support and help promote sustainable travel
- It should be relatively simple to map tree cover using aerial photography and thereby identify areas in which it is limited
- The Hertfordshire Biological Recording Centre already has comprehensive information sites with a nature conservation, wildlife or geodiversity designation
- The Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) has mapped “tranquillity”, and therefore by extension particularly noisy areas, although its maps were based on desk rather than field research
- The County Council’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Local Transport Plan should identify needs to enhance existing sustainable transport routes and create new ones
- The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment should have identified distinctive and important landscapes and landscape features that it will be desirable to enhance
- Veolia (formerly Three Valleys Water) and Thames Water will be able respectively to advise on areas in which water and drainage systems have only limited spare capacity. The Council has also completed the scoping stage of a water cycle study.
- This strategy identifies the location, quality and size of existing greenspaces and also provides a broad overview of the extent to which they contribute to nature conservation and support amenity, recreation and play. It also identifies deficiencies in provision in some parts of the City and District and priorities for the future.

ANGSt

Chapter 8 highlighted Natural England’s Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt). Some councils regard it as a valuable benchmark against which to appraise local access to a particular element of GI across their area, although the extent to which a particular area satisfies ANGSt depends to a very considerable extent on the definition of “accessible natural greenspace”. The

results of the Natural England study of the extent to which Hertfordshire complies with ANGSt are summarised briefly in Chapter 8.

The Council will be considering the ANGSt aspirations as part of the Hertfordshire green infrastructure strategy, but in doing so the Council and its partner authorities will need clearly to define the greenspaces to be included in the assessment. For obvious reasons, it is not always desirable to promote access to sites with nature conservation designations.

21 Greenspace Vision, Strategic Goals and Planning Policy

Introduction

Paragraphs 4 and 5 of PPG17 note that:

4. Assessments and audits will allow local authorities to identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreation facilities in their areas. They form the starting point for establishing an effective strategy for open space, sport and recreation at the local level (tied to the local authority's community strategy) and for effective planning through the development of appropriate policies in plans.

5. Good quality assessments and audits, leading to clear strategies supported by effective planning policies, will provide vital tools for resolving the potential conflicts that arise between different uses and users of open space, sport and recreational facilities

PPG17 therefore explicitly indicates that:

- Local authorities should have a strategy for open space, sport and recreation provision
- The strategy should be tied to the Community Strategy (since renamed the Sustainable Community Strategy, or SCS)
- Planning policies should be seen as an important delivery mechanism for the strategy

As well as *Shaping Our District Together for 2021*, the Sustainable Community Strategy, this strategy also has to respond to and reflect the key issues identified in Chapter 19 and a number of other strategies adopted by the Council that link directly to the SCS and in particular:

- The Council's *Corporate Plan*
- The Play and Free-time Strategy

- The Council's Cultural Strategy, *Life and Soul*
- The Council's *City Vision*
- The Council's *Rural Vision*
- The Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy
- The Playing Pitch Strategy

This chapter therefore begins by summarising the key points from each of these strategies and plans. It then goes on to suggest a vision with six related long term goals and a planning policy framework that will help to deliver them.

Existing Plans and Strategies

Shaping Our District Together for 2021

The Sustainable Community Strategy (revised June 2009) is based on a vision of St Albans as:

A progressive, unique and vibrant District, which values its environment, heritage and culture, and cares for the future: an outstanding place to live where everyone can flourish

The strategy goes on to define what it means by each of the three adjectives in the first line of this vision, including:

- **Progressive:** maximising the potential of our built environment, natural landscape and cultural heritage
- **Unique:** recognising the unique character of our city, towns and villages, all of which are distinct and their communities have different needs and aspirations; celebrating and promoting our cultural and environmental heritage; ensuring that the District's valued landscapes, wildlife and heritage are accessible for everyone and are safeguarded for future generations to enjoy
- **Vibrant:** everyone in the district, no matter where they live, has the opportunity to enjoy the same great quality of life and access the same services and facilities; people are encouraged and supported to make positive changes to their lifestyles for better physical and emotional health

The strategy highlights a high level of public satisfaction with the City and District as a place in which to live, with high quality green spaces, parks and sports facilities. However, it also notes that it has the highest carbon footprint of all the Hertfordshire districts.

The strategy is based on four overarching priorities, each of which includes commitments that are relevant to this strategy:

Ensuring the District is a great place to be

-
- Continuing to protect our green belt
- Protecting, enhancing and promoting our historic environment, heritage and culture
- Supporting arts, leisure and sports activity
- Providing accessible facilities and activities for young people

Creating a diverse and sustainable economy for the 21st century

- Securing a well-maintained, accessible and safe network of transport links across the District, offering green travel options

Keeping the District healthy

- Encouraging and supporting healthy lifestyles and wellbeing

Supporting an active community that has pride in itself and cares for its future

- Reducing our impact on the environment
- Encouraging green and sustainable travel
- Encouraging and promoting community engagement and participation

Corporate Plan 2010-13

The Council's corporate plan has four over-arching priorities:

- Ensuring the District is a great place to be
- Creating a diverse and sustainable economy for the 21st century
- Keeping the District healthy
- Supporting an active community that has pride in itself and cares for its future

Delivery of this greenspace strategy has the potential to contribute to the achievement of all four of these priorities.

Play and Freetime Strategy 2007-12

The overall aim of the strategy is:

To provide quality play and free-time opportunities to all children and young people, all of the time, all over the District. As well as providing a strong infrastructure for play, the

Play and Freetime strategy will endeavour to change the mindset around play, promoting more positive messages about children and young people to the community, promoting the value of play to parents and professionals and involving children and young people every step of the way in creating a bright future for play and free-time in St Albans District.

Specific recommendations that the approach taken in this strategy will help deliver include

- **Action 1.6:** Develop a quality standard for fixed play provision in the District (Appendix C to this strategy sets out a recommended standard)
- **Action 2.3:** Link new play and free-time opportunities to good transport links, including green corridors, the cycle network and traffic calming and home zone areas (supported by this strategy)
- **Action 3.4:** Undertake improvement works to Oysterfields Teenage Activity Area to deliver improved provision and introduce informal football pitches to the greenspace (this strategy supports better teenage provision, not just at Oysterfields but across the City and District)
- **Action 3.7:** Review existing fixed provision to assess its play value and where a number of low value facilities are clustered together assess the viability, in consultation with the local community, of rationalising provision to provide fewer high quality play areas (this strategy suggests opportunities to do this)
- **Action 3.10:** Develop a network of natural play areas in green spaces across the District where access to physical play facilities is limited (this strategy clearly endorses the natural play approach)

Life and Soul

The Cultural Strategy seeks to set out a framework for culture across the City and District. Its strategic objectives include:

- To enable all residents and visitors to have access to a range of cultural opportunities
- To maximise the contribution culture makes to the health, well-being and safety of everyone
- To protect and enhance the environment and heritage
- To develop a sustainable cultural economy

City Vision

The aim of City Vision is to provide strategic direction for the development of the city of St Albans over the next 20 years. It is not formally a part of the proposed Local Development Framework, but an important element of the evidence base that underpins it in relation to six broad themes:

- Defining the city's identity
- Public participation and involvement
- Environmental sustainability
- Equality and disadvantages
- Partnership development
- Creation of lasting structures and delivery mechanisms

A number of broad objectives in City Vision relate directly to this strategy:

- Making St Albans a sustainable transport centre, in which walking and cycling will be mainstream ways to travel with residents enjoying high quality routes which permeate the City
- Enhanced links between the city centre and surrounding countryside
- Enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure
- Establishing sustainable drainage systems, partly through increased use of street trees and soft landscaping, and using the River Ver valley for flood storage
- Promoting sustainable food production through the creation of more allotments and community gardens
- Using green infrastructure to support adaptation to climate change
- Providing more and better facilities and activities for young people

There are also some specific proposals which also relate directly to this strategy, the most significant of which are a "green ring" around the city with links in to the city centre and out to the wider countryside and the enhancement of civic spaces.

Rural Vision

Rural Vision, as its name implies, has a broadly similar purpose to City Vision but covers the rural parts of the City and District, and particularly its towns and villages. The priorities in the vision include:

- Improving the connectivity between settlements, particularly in terms of cycling and walking

- Enhancing the role of villages in providing services for visitors to the St Albans countryside
- Protecting the green belt and improving access to the countryside
- Protecting and enhancing local distinctiveness
- Providing more and better facilities for young people
- Reducing noise and pollution from the major roads in the southern part of the District
- Encouraging greater access to the green belt
- Protecting and promoting natural and heritage assets, including the London Colney Nature Reserve; Highfield Park; the Rivers Colne, Lea and Ver; Greenwood Park; the Nicky Line cycle route; the Alban Way cycle route; Heartwood Forest; Watling Chase Community Forest; and Redbourn, Harpenden, Nomansland and Colney Heath Commons

Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy

The Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy suggests that the vision the Council should adopt is:

To enhance the wellbeing of everyone by providing quality sport and recreation opportunities at facilities that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of the community

This vision appears to be predicated on the Council being the main, if not the only, provider of sport and recreation facilities. Given the constraints on public expenditure that are likely over the forthcoming decade, however, this is unrealistic. The voluntary sector has a significant role to play, not least through sports clubs such as Old Albanians. In addition, as the St Albans community is reasonably prosperous, there is no reason why the private sector should not provide a range of facilities. The vision also assumes that everyone in the local community will wish to take part in sport and recreation but this is also unrealistic.

The strategy goes on to suggest five broad aims:

- To maximise the contribution sports and recreation facilities make to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors
- To enable all residents and visitors to have access to a range of sport and recreation facilities
- To develop customer focused sport and recreation facilities that are capable of delivering the standards our community expects
- To ensure the delivery of sport and recreation facilities is undertaken in an environmentally sensitive manner
- To develop sustainable sport and recreation facilities

that contribute to the prosperity of the district

Playing Pitch Strategy

The playing pitch strategy identifies a need:

- To protect existing pitches and secure community use of school pitches
- To enhance existing pitches, particularly in terms of improving drainage and playing surfaces; upgrading or replacing changing facilities; and fencing pitches that are subject to high levels of unauthorised use
- For more pitches in the future

A Vision for Greenspace in St Albans

If it is to be effective, this Strategy has to contribute to the delivery of all of the above visions and related aims. Therefore there is a need to set out clearly how it can do this in a way that provides a broad framework within which various Council departments, the City and District's communities and the external agencies concerned with greenspace provision, management and maintenance can work together. The Council should therefore set an aspiration that:

The City and District of St Albans will have a safe, sustainable and accessible network of high quality greenspaces that are valued and well used by residents and visitors and support wider sustainability initiatives and economic development

Strategic Goals

In order to deliver this vision the Council should set itself seven long term strategic goals and encourage its partners also to adopt them:

- Maintain an adequate supply of greenspace
- Ensure greenspaces meet local needs and are accessible, high quality, fit for purpose and well managed and maintained
- Promote pride in the City and District
- Support physical activity and mental well-being
- Promote nature conservation and biodiversity throughout the City and District
- Harness natural systems and processes in order to promote sustainability
- Promote and support economic development

"Strategic Fit"

The chart below highlights how the recommended goals of this strategy will help support the above Council strategies:

“Strategic Fit” with Other Council Strategies and Plans

			Greenspace Strategy Goals						
Strategy	Aim	Priority actions	Maintain and adequate supply of greenspace	Ensure greenspaces are accessible, high quality, valued and well used	Promote pride in the City and District	Support physical activity and mental well-being	Promote nature conservation and biodiversity	Harness natural systems and process	Promote and support economic development
Sustainable Communities Strategy	Ensure the District is a great place to be	Continue to protect our green belt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Protect, enhance and promote our historic environment, heritage and culture		✓	✓		✓		
		Support the arts, leisure and sports activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
		Provide accessible facilities and activities for young people	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Create a diverse and sustainable economy for the 21 st century	Secure a well-maintained, accessible and safe network of transport links across the District, offering green travel options	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Keep the District healthy	Encourage and support healthy lifestyles and wellbeing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Support an active community that has pride in itself and cares for its future	Reduce our impact on the environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corporate Plan 2010-13 Over-arching priorities	Ensuring the District is a great place to be	Encourage green and sustainable travel	✓	✓		✓			✓
		Encourage and promote community engagement and participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
		Creating and diverse and sustainable economy for the 21 st century		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
		Keeping the District healthy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

			Greenspace Strategy Goals						
Strategy	Aim	Priority actions	Maintain and adequate supply of greenspace	Ensure greenspaces are accessible, high quality, valued and well used	Promote pride in the City and District	Support physical activity and mental well-being	Promote nature conservation and biodiversity	Harness natural systems and process	Promote and support economic development
	Supporting an active community that has pride in itself and cares for its future		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corporate Plan 2010-13 More detailed priorities	Delivering the District Vision to address future challenges and ensure sustainability		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Continuing to protect and legally defend the Green Belt from additional housing development		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Improving the streetscene and public realm, including with Hertfordshire County Council seeking improvements to highways and pavements		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Making the District even greener with an annual District in Bloom project and further improvements to Verulamium Park, lakes and river		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Improving citizen engagement and fulfilling our promise to customers		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Play and Freetime Strategy 2007-12		Develop a quality standard for fixed play provision in the District	✓	✓	✓	✓			
		Link new play and free-time opportunities to good transport links, including green corridors, the cycle network and traffic calming and home zone areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

			Greenspace Strategy Goals						
Strategy	Aim	Priority actions	Maintain and adequate supply of greenspace	Ensure greenspaces are accessible, high quality, valued and well used	Promote pride in the City and District	Support physical activity and mental well-being	Promote nature conservation and biodiversity	Harness natural systems and process	Promote and support economic development
		Roll out a network of well-lit multi-use games areas across the district	✓			✓			✓
		Undertake improvement works to Oysterfields Teenage Activity Area to deliver improved provision and introduce informal football pitches to the open space	✓	✓	✓	✓			
		Review existing fixed provision to assess its play value and where a number of low value facilities are clustered together assess the viability, in consultation with the local community, of rationalising provision to provide fewer high quality play areas	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
		Develop a network of natural play areas in green spaces across the District where access to physical play facilities is limited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Life and Soul		Enable all residents and visitors to have access to a range of cultural opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Maximise the contribution culture makes to the health , well-being and safety of everyone	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Protect and enhance the environment and heritage	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
		To develop a sustainable cultural economy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City Vision		Make St Albans a sustainable transport centre, in which walking and cycling will be mainstream ways to travel with residents enjoying high quality routes which permeate the City	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
		Enhanced links between the city centre and surrounding countryside	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

			Greenspace Strategy Goals						
Strategy	Aim	Priority actions	Maintain and adequate supply of greenspace	Ensure greenspaces are accessible, high quality, valued and well used	Promote pride in the City and District	Support physical activity and mental well-being	Promote nature conservation and biodiversity	Harness natural systems and process	Promote and support economic development
		Enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Establish sustainable drainage systems, partly through increased use of street trees and soft landscaping, and using the River Ver valley for flood storage	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
		Promote sustainable food production through the creation of more allotments and community gardens	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
		Use green infrastructure to support adaptation to climate change	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
		Provide more and better facilities and activities for young people	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Rural Vision		Improve the connectivity between settlements, particularly in terms of cycling and walking	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
		Enhance the role of villages in providing services for visitors to the St Albans countryside	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Protect the green belt and improve access to the countryside	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
		Protect and enhance local distinctiveness	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
		Provide more and better facilities for young people	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
		Reduce noise and pollution from the major roads in the southern part of the District	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
		Encourage greater access to the green belt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

			Greenspace Strategy Goals						
Strategy	Aim	Priority actions	Maintain and adequate supply of greenspace	Ensure greenspaces are accessible, high quality, valued and well used	Promote pride in the City and District	Support physical activity and mental well-being	Promote nature conservation and biodiversity	Harness natural systems and process	Promote and support economic development
		Protect and promote natural and heritage assets, including the London Colney Nature Reserve; Highfield Park; the Rivers Colne, Lea and Ver; Greenwood Park; the Nicky Line cycle route; the Alban Way cycle route; Heartwood Forest; Watling Chase Community Forest; and Redbourn, Harpenden, Nomansland and Colney Heath Commons	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sport & Recreation Facilities Strategy		Maximise the contribution sports and recreation facilities make to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
		Enable all residents and visitors to have access to a range of sport and recreation facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
		Develop customer focused sport and recreation facilities that are capable of delivering the standards our community expects	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
		Ensure the delivery of sport and recreation facilities is undertaken in an environmentally sensitive manner	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Playing Pitch Strategy		Develop sustainable sport and recreation facilities that contribute to the prosperity of the district	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
		Protect existing pitches and secure community use of school pitches	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
		Enhance existing pitches, particularly in terms of improving drainage and playing surfaces; upgrade or replace changing facilities; and fence pitches that are subject to high levels of unauthorised use	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Planning Policy

The current Adopted Local Plan had a large number of land use policies, only some of which have been “saved” pending preparation of the Council’s Local Development Framework. Current Government guidance is that the Local Development Frameworks that will replace local plans should contain spatial objectives reflecting the aims and objectives of the local Sustainable Communities Strategy (and those other strategies and plans linked to it) plus a relatively small number of “over-arching” policies designed to deliver them. At the same time, developers naturally require reasonable certainty over how Councils will deal with planning applications.

This strategy, taken together with the Council’s adopted sport and recreation and playing pitch strategies, constitutes a PPG17-compliant assessment which should feed into the Council’s planning policy for greenspace, sport and recreation provision in its forthcoming LDF. There are various approaches the Council can take to how it sets out this policy, depending on what it decides to include in Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. However, whatever approach it decides to take, it will need:

- At least one spatial objective
- One or more over-arching core policies
- A range of delivery mechanisms
- Guidance for developers on how the Council will apply its provision standards in the context of specific development proposals

Spatial Objective

In order to be holistic, the spatial objective should encompass sport and recreation provision and not just greenspace. It should be along the lines of:

To enhance the City and District as an area in which to live and work, and to promote good health and well-being, by ensuring there is sufficient accessible and sustainable high quality and high value greenspace provision, and an adequate supply of well designed and managed, sustainable, accessible and affordable sport and recreation facilities to meet current and future community needs

Policy Principles

The principles on which the Council should base its core policy for greenspace, sport and recreation are:

Protection of Appropriate Existing Spaces and Facilities

The Council should give a higher level of protection to those spaces and facilities that are well located, well used and most valuable to communities than those which are poorly located or of relatively little value. Its strategies provide a guide as to which they are.

Development of Existing Greenspaces and Facilities

It is inevitable that development proposals will come forward that, if approved, will involve the loss of greenspaces. Accordingly the Council should set out a policy framework that will allow it to make robust decisions in relation to such proposals.

Provision Required as a Result of Development Proposals

If a development proposal will create or exacerbate a qualitative or quantitative deficiency in its vicinity, the Council should require the developer to provide or fund additional or enhanced provision within the appropriate distance threshold sufficient to meet the needs likely to arise from the development

Other New or Enhanced Greenspace Provision

Some proposals for new or enhanced greenspace provision may not be related to any other form of development, for example if the Council decides to fund the conversion of a grass pitch to an artificial turf pitch one. Alternatively, the Council may wish to use developer contributions to create or enhance existing facilities and may need to apply for planning permission in order to do so. Therefore it should have a criteria-based policy to aid consistent and transparent decision-making.

Green Corridors and Access to the Countryside

The Council should actively promote the development of sustainable transport corridors and – although it is primarily a County function – access to the countryside.

Management and Maintenance of New Greenspace

In many instances the Council will require developers to provide new on-site greenspaces or facilities and will therefore also have to determine the most appropriate way of managing and maintaining them to an acceptable standard. What is needed is an approach which:

- Is administratively simple for the Council and

- acceptable to developers and residents
- Ensures a consistent and adequate standard of maintenance for publicly accessible spaces for as long as a development exists
- Does not have long term revenue funding implications for the Council
- Does not unnecessarily increase house prices

Circular 5/2005, *Planning Obligations*, allows Councils to require developers to make arrangements “in perpetuity” for the management of spaces or facilities that are primarily for the benefit of the occupants or users of a development. In practice this will nearly always mean simply that they are on-site. The main options are:

- Adoption and subsequent management and maintenance by the Council, funded by a commuted maintenance sum provided by the developer
- Retention of the land by the developer, who appoints a grounds maintenance contractor and requires householders to pay an annual sum to a factor; this arrangement is best managed through a planning agreement plus a bond that will fund the maintenance in the event of default or unacceptable performance by the developer or contractor
- Transfer of title to the land, and responsibility for long term maintenance, to a specialist grounds maintenance company on terms approved in advance by the Council (to include a maintenance specification), plus a commuted maintenance sum or a requirement that householders pay an annual sum for maintenance to the company
- Transfer of the land to a trust with a commuted sum or an asset from which it can generate sufficient income to fund management and maintenance; this option can better involve local volunteers and ensure that the spaces within housing areas are seen as “public” rather than “private”
- Transfer of the title to the land to the householders on a joint and several basis plus a requirement that they create a residents association and appoint and pay a grounds maintenance contractor

It is fairly simple to extend the last of these options to (for example) estate lighting and entrance doors, stairways and common passages in flatted developments. This can be achieved by requiring developers to include appropriate clauses relating to the management and maintenance of common areas in the title deeds for their properties when they sell them. Any householder not contributing to the management company or committee will then be in breach of conditions in their title and so it is desirable that the title deeds should also:

- Grant the management company or committee rights to seek a court order requiring payment of maintenance contributions from any householder that defaults
- Grant the Council a right to appoint a maintenance contractor in the event of either there being no company/committee or no appointed contractor
- A right for any contractor appointed by the Council to recover costs from the householders, plus an appropriate administrative fee

Some householders will no doubt claim that an arrangement like this amounts to double taxation: their Council Tax will include an amount for general grounds maintenance across the Council area plus a specific sum for the maintenance of the greenspaces in the development in which they happen to live. The counters to this are:

- If the Council had agreed to adopt the land it would have required a commuted maintenance payment which the developer would have added to the cost of the houses – so they would have paid for the maintenance anyway
- The better the local environment in which a house is set the higher its selling price will be

In addition, of course, solicitors should make sure that potential buyers are aware of the requirement before exchanging missives.

Core Policy

Policy can be set only in the Core Strategy or a Development Plan Document so that it will be subject to public examination. However, the Council also needs to use its adopted strategies as the evidence base against which to assess proposals that may affect greenspace, sport and recreation or green infrastructure provision. This suggests the following approach to the Core Policy:

The Council will be guided by its greenspace, sport and recreation facilities and playing pitch strategies when considering proposals that involve the provision, alteration or loss of any greenspace, sport and recreation facility or playing pitch and:

- Support proposals for new green corridors within settlements or that will link settlements to the countryside around them or to each other
- Support proposals for new greenspace provision designed to meet identified local needs that is in the most accessible and sustainable location possible for

the communities it is intended to serve and designed and specified in accordance with its adopted quality standards and current best practice

- Promote and support the enhancement of spaces and facilities identified in any of its strategy documents as requiring improvement
- Promote and support proposals that will enhance access to the urban fringe, wider countryside and historic landscapes
- Promote and support proposals that will enhance the development, management and maintenance of wildlife habitats as part of developments in or adjacent to the urban fringe and green belt
- Permit proposals that involve the loss of any right of way, greenspace, sport and recreation facility or playing pitch only if:
 - The site that will be lost is clearly surplus to requirements in terms of its current use and there is no identifiable or foreseeable need for it to be used for a different form of greenspace or sport and recreation provision and it makes little or no contribution to green infrastructure; or
 - The development will result in the enhancement of other spaces or facilities that will represent a greater benefit to the community served by the space or facility that will be lost than retention of it; or
 - The development will result in replacement or compensatory provision that will be at least as accessible and at least equivalent in terms of attractiveness, quality, value and sustainability as the space or facility to be lost and capable of sustaining at least the same levels of use; or
 - The proposed development is ancillary to the current use or functions of the land and will not adversely affect the level of use it can sustain, its contribution to natural systems and processes or the overall quality of provision

The Council will impose conditions or seek planning obligations as necessary to make proposed developments acceptable in planning terms and may:

- Require developers to make or fund new or enhanced provision, either on or off site as appropriate, in order to comply with its adopted provision standards
- Require that any necessary new or enhanced provision will be delivered in phase with the implementation of the proposed development
- Require developers to make acceptable arrangements for the long term management and maintenance of any spaces or facilities intended predominantly for the use of the occupants of a

proposed development

Delivery Mechanisms

The delivery mechanisms open to the Council in support of these policy statements include:

- The Development Management process
- Refusing planning permission for any development that is unacceptable in terms of the policy
- Imposing conditions on any planning permission, including where appropriate a Grampian condition
- Negotiating planning obligations that will result in appropriate compensatory provision or appropriate contributions to compensatory or the enhancement of existing provision (note: this is likely to be only a short term approach; for the longer term, the Coalition Government has indicated that it does not support the Community Infrastructure Levy and is likely to promote legislation relating to some form of development tariff)
- The allocation of Council resources through its leisure service and the seeking of external funding, where available
- The pooling and aggregation of developer contributions
- Working in partnership with the County Council as Highways Authority, the City and District's town and parish councils, land owners and local communities
- Working in partnership with national agencies such as Natural England and Sport England

Supplementary Guidance for Developers

There will also be a need for guidance for developers on how the Council will apply its policy. Ideally this should cover at least:

- The Council's provision standards and how it will apply them, including in relation to phased developments and those that may involve more than one developer (note: it will be desirable to set out provision standards primarily in a Supplementary Planning Document in order to keep the Core Strategy reasonably short)
- How the Council will use conditions and planning obligations
- Acceptable arrangements for the management and maintenance of on-site greenspaces or sport and recreation facilities
- How the Council will require developers to build in green infrastructure systems and processes

22: Action Plan

Introduction

This final chapter provides a summary of the various action points in the planning area-specific chapters, related to the goals set out in Chapter 21:

- **Strategic Goal 1:** Maintain an adequate supply of greenspace
- **Strategic Goal 2:** Ensure greenspaces meet local needs and are accessible, high quality, fit for purpose and well managed and maintained
- **Strategic Goal 3:** Promote pride in the City and District
- **Strategic Goal 4:** Support physical activity and mental well-being
- **Strategic Goal 5:** Promote nature conservation and biodiversity throughout the City and District
- **Strategic Goal 6:** Harness natural systems and processes in order to promote sustainability
- **Strategic Goal 7:** Promote and support economic development

Strategic Goal 1	Maintain an adequate supply of greenspace
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Allotments

Local Provision Standards

Accessibility	600 m walk
Quality	As set out in Appendix C
Quantity	4.5 sq m per person (0.45 ha per 1000) except in Colney Heath (6.0 sq m per person or 0.6 ha per 1000); Harpenden (5.5 sq m per person (0.55 ha per 1000); and Wheathampstead (11.8 sq m per person or 1.18 ha per 1000)

Application of the Local Provision Standard

- Protect those allotments sites with a composite audit score of at least 38%
- Review waiting lists for allotments plots at regular intervals (eg every two years) and adjust the Council's approach to the application of its local standards in the light of prevailing demand
- Do not allocate land that is liable to frequent flooding for new allotments
- Encourage the owners of sites with a composite audit score of less than 48% to enhance them

Development Management

- Do not allow the redevelopment of any well located allotments sites unless (a) the developer or land owner seeking planning permission agrees to provide appropriate compensatory provision and, for residential development proposals, additional land to meet the additional need for plots likely to arise from the proposed dwellings and (b) the replacement site(s) will result in a better overall distribution of allotment provision. In such instances, the Council should impose a Grampian condition requiring that any compensatory provision is in at least a comparable workable condition to the site that will be lost before redevelopment starts.

Amenity Greenspace

Local Provision Standards

Accessibility	300 m walk
Quality	As set out in Appendix C
Quantity	15 sq m per person (1.5 ha per 1000)

Application of the Local Provision Standard

- Protect those sites with a composite audit score of at least 57%
- Be flexible in the application of the provision standards and take account of the location, size and quality of other multi-functional greenspaces in the vicinity of new developments – particularly natural greenspaces and parks and gardens- when deciding what to ask developers to provide or fund.
- Promote the enhancement of amenity greenspaces with composite audit scores of less than 57%

Development Management

- Do not allow the development for a non-greenspace use of any spaces with a third quartile/fair or fourth

quartile/good summary audit score unless the development will result in compensatory provision that is at least as accessible to users, at least as large and of higher quality and/or value to people and wildlife than the space or spaces that will be lost

- Seek to harness development to enhance existing greenspaces with a first quartile/very poor, second quartile/poor or third quartile/fair audit score
- Be flexible in allowing the development for a non-greenspace use of spaces with a first quartile/very poor or second quartile/poor audit score provided that (a) there are other similar spaces of the same type but with a third quartile/fair or fourth quartile/good audit score in the vicinity and (b) the benefits of the proposed development, for example in terms of securing the enhancement of one or more of these other spaces, outweigh the loss
- Seek opportunities, where there is a deficiency of one type of greenspace in an area and a surplus of another, to redesign one or more of the surplus spaces to reduce the deficiency and deliver high quality spaces with a new greenspace use
- Require developers to design and layout new on-site amenity greenspaces in accordance with the quality standards recommended in this strategy
- Review and if appropriate amend the mechanisms it currently uses to ensure that new on-site greenspaces will be well managed and maintained

Natural Greenspace

Local Provision Standards

Accessibility	600 m walk
Quality	As set out in Appendix C
Quantity	5 sq m per person (0.5 ha per 1000)

Note: this standard relates only to local natural greenspaces and not larger sites such as Commons

Application of the Local Provision Standard

- Protect those natural greenspaces with a composite audit score of at least 53%
- Be flexible in the application of the standards and take account of the location, size and quality of other multi-functional greenspaces in the vicinity of new developments – particularly amenity greenspaces and parks and gardens – when deciding what to ask developers to provide or fund.
- Promote the enhancement of natural greenspaces with an audit score of below 53%
- Support measures to enhance the biodiversity of all types of greenspace, and not only natural

greenspaces

- Work with the Hertfordshire Wildlife Trust and Hertfordshire Biological Recording Centre to improve the management of existing and new Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites

Development Management

- Do not allow the development for a non-greenspace use of any spaces with a third quartile/fair or fourth quartile/good summary audit score unless the development will result in compensatory provision that is at least as accessible to users, at least as large and of higher quality and/or value to people and wildlife than the space or spaces that will be lost
- Seek to harness development to enhance existing greenspaces with a first quartile/very poor, second quartile/poor or third quartile/fair audit score
- Be flexible in allowing the development for a non-greenspace use of spaces with a first quartile/very poor or second quartile/poor audit score provided that (a) there are other similar spaces of the same type but with a third quartile/fair or fourth quartile/good audit score in the vicinity and (b) the benefits of the proposed development, for example in terms of securing the enhancement of one or more of these other spaces, outweigh the loss
- Seek opportunities, where there is a deficiency of one type of greenspace in an area and a surplus of another, to redesign one or more of the surplus spaces to reduce the deficiency and deliver high quality spaces with a new greenspace use

Parks and Gardens

Local Provision Standards

Accessibility	500 m walk (Local Parks 4,500 m drive (District Parks)
Quality	As set out in Appendix C
Quantity	12 sq m per person (1.2 ha per 1000)

Application of the Local Provision Standard

- Protect all of the City and District's parks and gardens
- Promote the enhancement of those parks and gardens with an audit score of less than 49%
- Promote and maximise access to the historic parks
- Be flexible in the application of the standards and take account of the location, size and quality of other multi-functional greenspaces in the vicinity of new developments – particularly amenity greenspaces and parks and gardens – when deciding what to ask

developers to provide or fund.

Development Management

- Do not allow the development for a non-greenspace use of any spaces with a third quartile/fair or fourth quartile/good summary audit score unless the development will result in compensatory provision that is at least as accessible to users, at least as large and of higher quality and/or value to people and wildlife than the space or spaces that will be lost
- Seek to harness development to enhance existing greenspaces with a first quartile/very poor, second quartile/poor or third quartile/fair audit score
- Be flexible in allowing the development for a non-greenspace use of spaces with a first quartile/very poor or second quartile/poor audit score provided that (a) there are other similar spaces of the same type but with a third quartile/fair or fourth quartile/good audit score in the vicinity and (b) the benefits of the proposed development, for example in terms of securing the enhancement of one or more of these other spaces, outweigh the loss
- Seek opportunities, where there is a deficiency of one type of greenspace in an area and a surplus of another, to redesign one or more of the surplus spaces to reduce the deficiency and deliver high quality spaces with a new greenspace use

Green Corridors

Local Provision Standards

Accessibility	Not required
Quality	As set out in Appendix C
Quantity	Not required

Application of the Local Provision Standard

- Protect all existing green corridors
- Work with the County Council to promote the development of green corridors that will facilitate access to the Watling Chase Community Forest and Heartwood Forest
- Enhance access from within settlements to the urban fringe
- Identify and deliver opportunities to develop new corridors within and between settlements that will make it possible to walk or cycle safely and separated from vehicular traffic to work, leisure and other community facilities; link up with and extend the rights of way network and other path systems; and facilitate access to the urban fringe and wider countryside

- Promote the enhancement of those green corridors with a summary audit score of less than 65%
- Increase opportunities for biodiversity

Development Management

- Require developers to “plug in” their developments to the evolving corridors network s much as possible

Provision for Children’s Play

Local Provision Standards

Accessibility	Toddlers: 300 m walk Older children: 450 m walk Strategic play sites: 900 m walk
Quality	As set out in Appendix C
Quantity	0.6 sq m per person, with a notional split into 0.5 sq m per person for equipped play areas and 0.1 sq m per person for strategic play areas

Application of the Local Provision Standard

- Protect those play areas with a composite audit score of at least 66%, unless they can be converted into a strategic play area or lie within the toddlers’ distance threshold of one
- Apply the quantity standard in a flexible manner that takes account of the nature of existing play and greenspace provision in the vicinity of a proposed development. In doing so, the distance thresholds will be applicable throughout the City and District, except in relation to scattered dwellings and settlements in which application of the standards will result in very small play areas that will be of little benefit to children.
- Review the need for play areas with a composite audit score of less than 66% whenever significant equipment repairs or replacements are required

Development Management

- Encourage developers to create high quality on-site greenspaces that will be attractive as playing spaces to children of all ages in preference to on-site equipped play areas. Appendix C provides guidance on how this can be achieved for both the Council and developers.

Provision for Teenagers

Local Provision Standards

Accessibility	600 m walk or 1500 m cycle
Quality	As set out in Appendix C
Quantity	0.18 sq m per person (0.018 ha per 1000)

Application of the Local Provision Standard

- Protect all existing teenage facilities, unless an opportunity arises to relocate a facility to a more accessible or ,more suitable location
- Always consult local teenagers before deciding the form that any proposed provision should take. Teenagers can be very fickle and their preferences for facilities intended for their use can change rapidly. However, remember also that they will expect “instant results”.
- Promote the enhancement of those teenage facilities with an audit score of less than 17%
- It should be possible to allay some of the concerns that residents’ may have relating to groups of teenagers through effective community liaison

Development Management

- Require housing developers to contribute to off-site provision except in major developments of at least 1500 dwellings
- When seeking a potential location for a teenage facility, take account of:
 - Possible territorial issues between different areas – the Police will be able to advise on this
 - Teenage facilities should be visible from and reasonably close to but not located immediately adjacent to well used pedestrian routes
 - Teenage facilities will generate litter so refuse collection vehicles must be able to stop reasonably close to them
 - Teenage facilities generate noise so they should not be located immediately adjacent to dwellings

Strategic Goal 2

Ensure greenspaces meet local needs and are accessible, high quality, fit for purpose and well managed and maintained

Note: the actions relating to this goal repeat those set out in the “Application of Provision Standards” chapters.

The Harpenden and Surrounds Planning Area

Allotments

- Seek to allocate at least an additional 2.8 ha for allotments in a location that will maximise accessibility. Given that all but one of the existing sites are on the eastern side of the town, it will probably be desirable for any allocations to be to the west of the railway and in particular in or close to the West Common area.
- Encourage the Town Council to enhance its allotments sites so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C

Amenity Greenspace

- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Seek opportunities to improve the accessibility of amenity spaces, especially to the east of the railway line

Churchyards and Cemeteries

- Enhance Westfield Road Cemetery so that it accords with the churchyards and cemeteries section of Appendix C

Natural Greenspace

- Seek to enhance access to existing natural greenspaces
- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C

Parks and Gardens

- Enhance suitable spaces outwith the distance threshold of the established parks (eg Crabtree Fields) to make them more “park-like” and accord as much as possible with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C

Green Corridors

- With the Town Council, consider the potential for developing an enhanced green corridor around the western side of the town

- With the Town Council, consider the potential for creating a green corridor from the Common to the north of the town
- With the Town and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Provision for Children

- Enhance existing greenspaces to make them more interesting and valuable for children's play and/or seek sites for additional equipped play provision for both toddlers and older children:
 - To the west of the railway line and town centre. If there are no possible sites one option the Council and Town Council should consider is the creation of one or more home zones
 - To the east of the railway line, particularly south of Station Road. Given the lack of greenspaces in this area, the Council and Town Council should consider the creation of one or more home zones
 - In the Cold Harbour Lane area

Provision for Teenagers

- Work with the Town Council and local teenagers to identify needs and opportunities for additional teenage facilities especially in the south east of Harpenden

Multi-functional Greenspace

- Consult the Town Council in order to determine whether there are any worthwhile opportunities to create a small local park in the northern part of the town, for example as part of the development of a suitable housing allocation
- Seek to negotiate access to school sites outwith the school day
- Seek to enhance and ideally extend the Batford open space
- Seek to work with the town council and local community to enhancing greenspaces on the eastern side of the town. In addition, given the density of development, it will be desirable to enhance access to the urban fringe all down the eastern side of the town.
- Enhance Crabtree Fields and link the site to the Lea Valley Walk
- Seek opportunities to reduce the deficit of amenity green space and parks and gardens

The Redbourn and Surrounds Planning Area

Allotments

- Seek to allocate an additional 1.0 ha for allotments in Redbourn. Given the location of the current sites, the best location will be in the southern area of the village, although the most likely opportunities are adjacent to existing sites.
- Encourage the Town Council to enhance its allotments sites so that they accord with the relevant section of Appendix C

Amenity Greenspace

- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the relevant section of Appendix C

Churchyards and Cemeteries

- Enhance the disabled access to St Mary's Churchyard

Natural Greenspace

- Review the use of the Millennium Green and consider disposing of it to fund a new green corridor
- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Establish a green corridor from the Nickey Line along the River Ver between Harpenden Lane and the High Street

Parks and Gardens

- Investigate opportunities for creating a small local park in the northern part of the village

Green Corridors

- With the Parish Council, consider the potential for developing a green corridor from the Nickey Line into the village centre along the River Ver, possibly funded by the disposal of the Millennium Green
- Investigate the potential for creating a continuous circular walk around the village using established rights of way as much as possible
- With the Parish and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Provision for Children

- Enhance existing greenspaces to make them more interesting and valuable for children's play and/or seek sites for additional equipped play provision:
 - For both toddlers and older children to the east of the High Street
 - On the western side of the village this could be met by additional equipment at the Flamsteadbury Lane play area
- Consider rationalising the Silkmill and Brooke End sites into a single play area. The Silkmill site has plenty of space for additional equipment and currently has six items of play equipment compared with three at Brooke End.

Provision for Teenagers

- Work with the Parish Council and local teenagers to identify needs and opportunities for additional teenage facilities

Multi-functional Greenspace

- Work with the Parish Council to enhance the quality of the amenity greenspaces in the northern half of the town.
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance the green Corridor along the River Ver

The Wheathampstead Planning Area

Allotments

- Seek to allocate an additional site of around 1.5 ha on the western side of Wheathampstead
- Encourage Wheathampstead Parish Council to enhance each of its allotments sites so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C, but to give priority to The Slype and Hitchens Field. Glebe Field is owned by the Diocesan Board so the Parish Council should also seek to work with it to enhance this site.

Amenity Greenspace

- Enhance the quality of those existing spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C

Churchyards and Cemeteries

- Enhance the St Helen's Churchyard so that it accords with the churchyards and cemeteries section of Appendix C

Natural Greenspace

- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C

Parks and Gardens

- Enhance one or more existing spaces within Wheathampstead (Marford Road may be the only realistic possibility) so that they accord as much as possible with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C

Green Corridors

- With the Parish Council, consider developing a north-south corridor linking Wheathampstead north to Gustardwood Common and south to Nomansland Common and the Heartwood Forest.
- With the Parish and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Provision for Children

- Work with the Parish Council to make existing greenspaces in housing areas more interesting and valuable for children's play
- Encourage Wheathampstead Parish Council to enhance its existing play facilities so that they accord with the Children's Play section of Appendix C
- Enhance the Council-owned play facilities so that they accord with the Children's Play section of Appendix C

Provision for Teenagers

- Progress the Village Plan proposal for a multi-use games area at Marford Road (note: this assumes that the proposal was a response to the views expressed by local teenagers. If not, the Parish or City and District Council should first consult teenagers to ensure that this will be their first choice)

Multi-functional Greenspace

- Enhance access to the countryside around Wheathampstead and Lea Valley, especially the River Lea corridor
- Work with the Parish Council and local community to enhance existing amenity greenspaces with low audit scores within Wheathampstead

- Seek opportunities to increase the quantity of amenity greenspaces and parks and gardens, if necessary by redesigning part of the natural greenspace provision

The Sandridge Planning Area

Allotments

- Work with Sandridge Parish Council to identify the possible need for additional allotments and potential site(s)

Amenity Greenspace

- Work with the Parish Council to enhance those sites with the lowest composite audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Seek to increase the amount of amenity greenspace

Natural Greenspace

- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C

Green Corridors

- Extend the Jersey Lane Footpath north to the Heartwood Forest and south east to the Watling Chase Community Forest
- With the Parish and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Provision for Children

- Work with Sandridge Parish Council and the local community to rationalise (a) the four Newgate Close play areas and (b) the Brecken Close and Runcie Close facilities into larger but better facilities. An alternative for Brecken Close and Runcie Close will be to remove both facilities and enhance the William Bell and/or Sandringham Crescent facilities.
- Work with Sandridge Parish Council to develop a strategic play area at Sherwood Avenue, or, if this site is not acceptable to the Parish Council or local residents, a suitable alternative site
- Encourage Sandridge Parish Council to upgrade those of its play areas with low audit scores, particularly Sherwood Avenue and St Leonards
- Seek to negotiate contributions to the development

of a strategic play area within Sandridge from housing developers

Provision for Teenagers

- Enhance the quality and value of the Jersey farm adventure play area to teenagers
- Identify sites for additional teenage facilities in the south east and south west of the Sandridge area (or close by in the St Albans planning area) and work with local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facilities.

Multi-functional Greenspace

- Work with the Parish Council and local community to promote the enhancement of the amenity and natural greenspaces with the lowest audit scores
- Seek to create a park for the Sandridge area, for example at Jersey Farm
- Seek to address the deficit of amenity greenspace and parks and gardens
- Explore opportunities for the extension of the green corridor to Heartwood Forest and Nomansland

The Central Planning Area

Allotments

- Identify and allocate land for additional allotments, either within the City or one of the adjacent planning areas
- Enhance the Camp and Springfield Road sites so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C

Amenity Greenspace

- Protect all existing greenspaces in St Albans, irrespective of their audit scores, as there is an overall shortfall in provision, unless development proposals affecting one or more existing greenspaces will deliver over-riding benefits to the local community.
- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C, concentrating in the first instance on larger spaces which are not close to other spaces with a good score
- Seek to identify opportunities for and secure additional amenity greenspace provision through new development

Natural Greenspace

- Enhance the sites with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C
- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspaces wherever possible
- Improve access to the urban fringe and wider countryside

Parks and Gardens

- Enhance the parks and gardens with low audit scores so that they accord with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C, but give priority to Verulamium Park as the premier park in the City and District
- Seek opportunities to create new local parks that will serve residents in the north west and north east parts of the City; they may be in one of the adjacent planning areas, for example on the Oaklands Smallford Campus site.

Green Corridors

- Progress the initiatives for additional pedestrian and cycling routes set out in the City Vision Strategy
- With the County Council, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Provision for Children

- Identify potential sites for strategic play facilities and consult local communities over their design
- Enhance suitable greenspaces to make them interesting and attractive to children for natural play or seek to identify sites for possible additional play facilities in the northern part of the city, close to the St Albans Girls School; the Highfield area; the area centred on New House Park; and the area Verulam Estate
- Rationalise existing play sites to provide fewer but better facilities wherever possible
- Enhance the quality of the sites with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the children's play section of Appendix C
- Seek to negotiate contributions to the development of strategic play areas from housing developers

Provision for Teenagers

- Identify potential sites for teenage facilities in the south west of the City, the north of the city (this site can also meet a need in the Sandridge area), to the

south west of the city centre, the south east of the city and the north of the city for possible teenage facilities and work with local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facility.

Multi-functional Greenspace

- Protect all existing greenspaces in St Albans, irrespective of their audit scores, unless it is possible significantly to enhance some accessible but poor quality spaces by disposing of poorly used spaces
- Give priority to enhancing Verulamium Park as the most important greenspace in the south western quadrant of the city and aim to achieve a Green Flag for it as soon as possible.
- Develop a programme of enhancements for the spaces with the lowest audit scores
- Work to deliver the Watling Chase Community Forest aims and objectives
- Create new greenspaces as part of any major new developments on the edge of the City
- Ensure that the deficit and future maintenance of amenity space is addressed when planning future development

The Colney Heath Planning Area

Allotments

- Encourage the Highfield Park Trust to lay out the extension to its existing allotments site in a way that will accord with the allotments section of Appendix C

Amenity Greenspace

- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Seek opportunities to provide new amenity greenspace in conjunction with the Smallford Campus redevelopment

Natural Greenspace

- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspace wherever possible
- Enhance the natural greenspaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C

Parks and Gardens

- Work with the Highfield Park Trust to achieve and then retain a Green Flag for the Park

- Ensure implementation of the extension to Highfield Park
- Consider the potential to create a park as part of the Oaklands College Smallford Campus

Green Corridors

- With the Parishes and County Council, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority
- Seek opportunities to enhance existing greenways and create new routes

Provision for Children

- Enhance or replace existing low quality and value play areas so that they accord with the children's play section of Appendix C
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance suitable greenspaces to make them interesting and attractive to children for natural play or create new play facilities in those areas outwith the distance threshold of existing facilities

Provision for Teenagers

- Identify a site for a possible teenage facility in Colney Heath and work with local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facility

Multi-functional Greenspace

- Encourage the Highfield Park Trust to create a Local Nature Reserve within the Park or its proposed extension
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance Colney Heath Common
- Work with Oaklands College to develop a local park on the Smallford Campus site
- Work to deliver the Watling Chase Community Forest aims and objectives

The London Colney Planning Area

Allotments

- Enhance the remaining part of the Richardson Close site so that it accords with the allotments section of Appendix C
- Sub-divide plots as they become available
- Allocate up to 1.5 ha for additional allotments provision at a suitable location, such as Napsbury Park

Amenity Greenspace

- Enhance the spaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Ensure that the proposed redevelopment of the Harperbury Hospital site incorporates high quality greenspaces

Natural Greenspace

- Enhance the biodiversity of existing greenspace wherever possible
- Enhance the natural greenspaces with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the natural greenspaces section of Appendix C
- Promote green corridor links to the Broad Colney Lakes LNR in order to enhance access to it

Green Corridors

- With the Parishes and County Council, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority
- Seek opportunities to enhance existing greenways and create new routes

Provision for Children

- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the children's play section of Appendix C
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance suitable greenspaces to make them interesting and attractive to children for natural play or create new play facilities in those areas outwith the distance threshold of existing facilities
- Consider the provision of a strategic play area

Provision for Teenagers

- Identify two sites for possible teenage facilities in London Colney and work with local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facility

Multi-functional Greenspace

- With the Parish Council, consider converting Napsbury Park or Morris Recreation Ground into a local park
- With the Parish Council and local residents, develop a programme of enhancements for amenity greenspaces in the area.
- Work to deliver the Watling Chase Community Forest

aims and objectives

The Park Street and St Stephen Planning Area

Allotments

- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the allotments section of Appendix C
- Seek to identify the potential demand for allotments in How Wood and Bricket Wood and if necessary allocate land

Amenity Greenspace

- Enhance the sites with the lowest summary audit scores so that they accord with the amenity greenspace section of Appendix C

Natural Greenspace

- Enhance Old Watford Road and the Broad Acre woodland site

Parks and Gardens

- Enhance Greenwood Park, possibly through the disposal of a small part of it to fund the enhancement of the remainder, so that it accords with the parks and gardens section of Appendix C

Green Corridors

- Investigate the potential to create a green corridor linking Chiswell Green with Gorhambury and Napsbury Hospital
- With the Parish and County Councils, identify the rights of way that should be maintained as a priority

Provision for Children

- Enhance the sites with the lowest audit scores so that they accord with the children's play section of Appendix C
- Work with the Parish Council to enhance suitable greenspaces outwith the distance threshold of existing play areas to make them interesting and attractive to children for natural play or identify opportunities for additional equipped play sites in the southern half of How Wood and the south western part of Bricket Wood
- Consider the provision of a strategic play area in the Bricket Wood area

Provision for Teenagers

- Identify potential sites for teenage facilities in Chiswell Green/How Wood and Bricket Wood and work with the Parish Council and local teenagers to identify and develop their preferred choice of facility. Greenwood Park is likely to be a good possible location.

Multi-functional Greenspace

- Work with the Parish Council and local communities to develop a programme of local greenspace enhancements
- Develop a programme of additional tree planting along the A414 road corridor in order to improve air quality and absorb traffic noise as part of the Trees against Pollution campaign
- Work to deliver the Watling Chase Community Forest aims and objectives

Strategic Goal 3

Promote Pride in the City and District

- Develop a long term (eg 50 years) strategy for the development and management of accessible major green infrastructure in the City and District such as the Heartwood and Watling Chase Forests
- Review the masterplan for the development of Verulamium Park and the related management plan by the end of financial year 2011-12 and draw up and implement a revised improvement and management plan over the following five years
- Retain the current Green Flag Awards indefinitely and achieve further awards for Bricket Wood Common and Verulamium Park by the end of 2012 and 2014 respectively
- Promote greater public understanding and awareness of the importance of high quality greenspaces and issues such as managing for nature conservation
- Encourage the Town and Parish Councils and other land owners in the District to work in partnership with and as much as possible to the same maintenance specifications as the City and District Council
- Promote greater community involvement in local greenspace management and the development and organisation of local social and cultural events in parks and other appropriate greenspaces
- Promote greater community involvement in the planning and delivery of play and teenage provision
- Develop a strategy for public art, especially along major green corridors such as the Ver Valley Walk and Alban Way

- Develop a flexible but consistent house style for signage and street furniture across the City and District
- Develop and publicise a portfolio of potential filming venues in the City and District
- Ensure that the City and District's greenspaces help to develop and promote short break tourism

Strategic Goal 4

Support physical activity and mental well-being

- To ensure that the greenspace strategy is seen as an integral part of the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan
- Increase the total length of the network of green corridors within settlements by at least 10% by 2015
- Develop comprehensive networks of safe and well used paths and cycleways, particularly along the river corridors, that link the main settlements with their surrounding countryside, the rights of way network, the Sustrans national cycle network and each other
- As an integral part of the Council's work on community safety, to make the City and District's greenspaces as safe as possible and ensure that local residents know they are safe
- Ensure that all residents in the main settlements of the City and District live within walking distance of at least a local park by 2015
- Plan and develop a limited number of high profile, "destination" play and informal recreation opportunities that will attract children and young people from a wide area
- Develop a range of locally accessible, high quality informal opportunities for play and informal recreation that will meet the local needs and aspirations of the District's children and young people

Strategic Goal 5

Promote nature conservation and biodiversity throughout the City and District

- Implement the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan as it affects the City and District
- Work with the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust to promote better public understanding of the importance of nature conservation and how it can best be promoted in the City and District's greenspaces
- Enhance the biodiversity value of greenspaces and create additional wildlife habitats throughout the City

and District

- Work with the Hertfordshire Wildlife Trust and Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre to improve the management of existing and new Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites

Strategic Goal 6

Harness natural systems and processes in order to promote sustainability

- Increase the number of street trees in the City and District in order to provide shade, reduce the heat island effect within the main settlements and mitigate the impact of pollution
- Encourage local communities to promote nature conservation better in both public and private greenspaces
- Work to ensure that all new greenspaces created as part of developments are well located and designed, attractive, sustainable, fit for purpose and have appropriate long term management and maintenance arrangements in place by working closely with the Council's planning service and developers

Strategic Goal 7

Promote and support economic development

- Ensure that new developments enhance the environment in which they are set and have a distinct sense of place
- Promote the importance and benefits of high quality greenspaces in economic development
- Ensure that delivery of the greenspace strategy will support and help deliver the Goals and objectives of other Council plans and strategies
- Work with appropriate local landowners and commercial attractions (eg Butterfly World) to promote the City and District as a destination for both day visits and longer term tourism

Updating of the Strategy

Greenspace is not static but constantly evolving, as are local needs and local views. In addition, the wider context within which greenspace planning is set is also constantly changing. Accordingly there is a need to update this strategy at regular intervals, not least to ensure that the evidence on which it is based, on which the Council will necessarily rely when negotiating with developers, remains current. The best ways to do this will be:

- To include questions on local attitudes to and the use

of greenspaces in Community Panel surveys undertaken by the Council

- To monitor the views of the City and District's Town and Parish Council
- To repeat around 20% of the audit of local provision each year in order to repeat the whole of it over a five year period.

Probably the best approach to keeping the Council's information on local views and local needs up to date will be to undertake Community Panel and Town and Parish Council surveys in alternate years.