

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Stanstead Abbotts Neighbourhood Plan

Scoping Report

December 2021

Quality information

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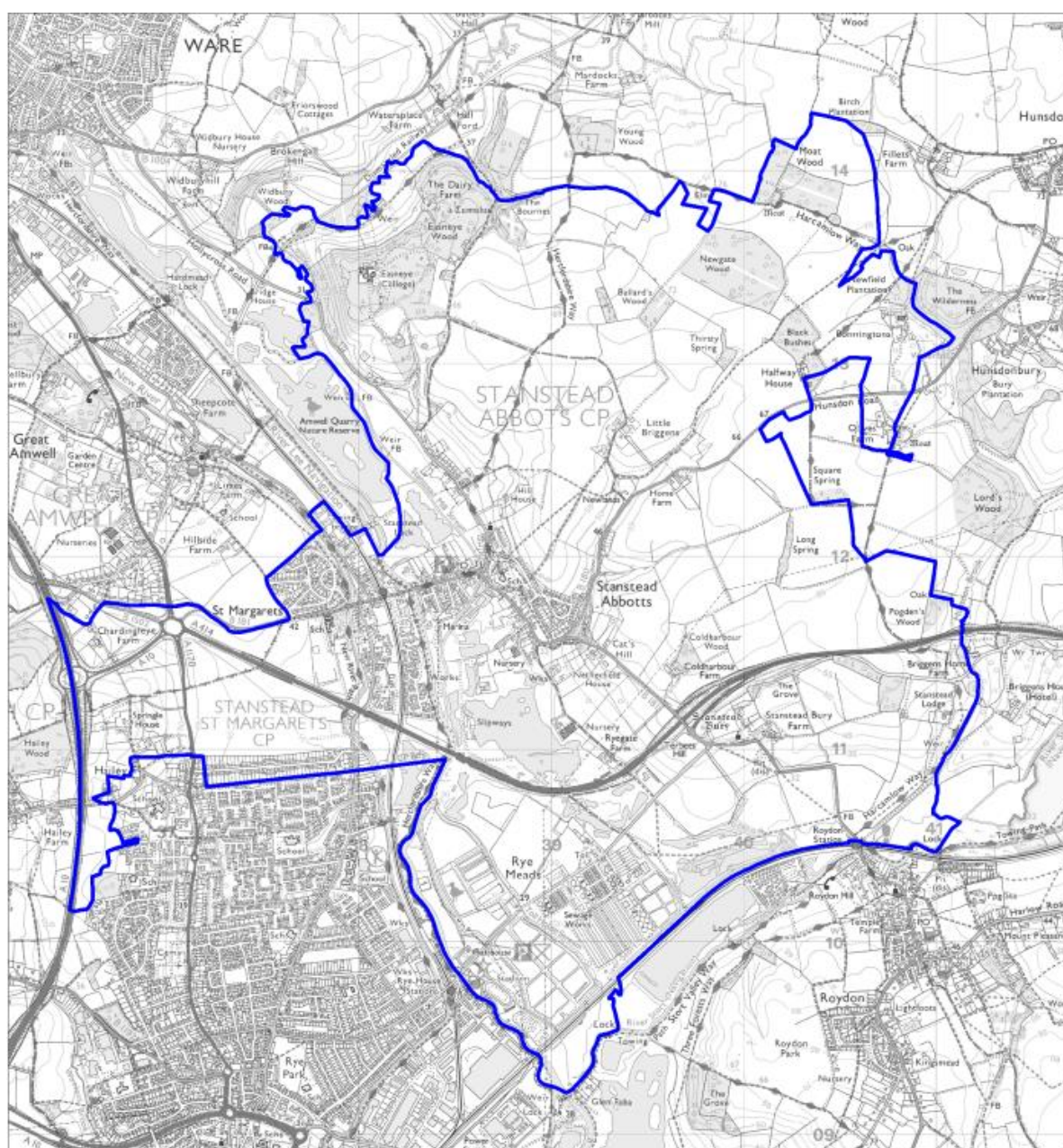
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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan (SANP).
- 1.2 The SANP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and in the context of the East Hertfordshire District Plan (adopted 2018). The Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated in 2018 and is depicted in **Figure 1.1**.

Figure 1.1: Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan area



Planning policy context

- 1.3 The Plan area lies within East Hertfordshire and is being developed in the context of the East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP). The SANP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the EHDP in line with footnote 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).¹
- 1.4 The EHDP recognises Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets as a village inset from the Green Belt and encourages the accommodation of development in this area through the SANP, “*especially where it contributes to wider sustainability objectives and the delivery of community benefits*”. Policy GBR1 (Green Belt) identifies that where proposals would involve changes to Green Belt boundaries, the District Council will consider making these amendments either through the next Review of the District Plan or through a separate Site Allocations Development Plan Document if necessary.
- 1.5 Policy VILL1 identifies Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets as a ‘Group 1 village’ and sets a range of parameters for growth in these areas, including: an appropriate scale, development that is in keeping with the character of the village, avoiding the loss of significant open space or important gaps, avoiding an extension of ribbon development, and protecting important views. Furthermore, Policy VILL4 protects three Employment Areas within the Plan area, at Leaside Works, Riverside Works (Amwell End) and The Maltings.

SEA explained

- 1.6 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of the SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the SANP seeks to maximise the emerging plan’s contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.7 SEA is undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.8 No formal screening has been undertaken for the SANP, but the Parish and District Council agree a highly likely requirement for SEA at this stage, reflecting the proposals to allocate land for additional homes with the potential to lead to a range of environmental effects. On this basis, views from consultees are being sought on the need for SEA, alongside the scope of the SEA.
- 1.9 This Scoping Report seeks to establish a suggested scope for the SEA. A key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations is to present this scope for the SEA, so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.

¹ MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

SEA scoping explained

1.10 Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:

- Exploring the policy context for the SANP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising.
- Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e., the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the SANP) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects.
- Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SEA; and
- Considering this information, developing an SEA framework comprising SEA objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.

1.11 The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate change (including flood risk)
- Health and wellbeing
- Historic environment
- Land, soil, and water resources
- Landscape
- Population and communities
- Transportation and movement

1.12 The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive.² These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in **Chapters 2 to 10**, and the proposed SEA framework is brought together as a whole in **Chapter 11**. Each proposal within the emerging SANP will be assessed consistently using this framework.

² The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'

2. Air quality

2.1 This theme focuses on air pollution, in particular: sources of air pollution, air quality hotspots, and areas known to exceed objectives for air quality.

Policy context

2.2 **Table 2.1** (below) presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 2.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality

| Document Title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>The Clean Air Strategy</u> | 2019 |
| <u>UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations</u> | 2017 |
| <u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u> | 2018 |
| <u>East Hertfordshire Air Quality Annual Status Report</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP)</u> | 2018 |

2.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which predominantly seeks early planning to reduce/ mitigate air quality impacts in development and to take advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures to improve air quality include traffic and travel management and green infrastructure provision. Strategic development is expected to be focused in locations that have or will be provided with high levels of accessibility; supporting both a reduced need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality.
- The SANP will also be required to be in general conformity with the EHDP which contains policies relating to air quality.
- Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared in areas which exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/ or nitrogen oxides. The 2021 Air Quality Status Report for East Herts brief analysis of measurements for all locations show that mean levels (i.e. concentrations) of NO₂ were much lower than those recorded in 2019, with an overall reduction of approximately 39.0% across the district.
- To improve air quality across the UK, national strategies have in the last few decades focused on regulatory frameworks, investment by industry in

cleaner processes and a shift in the fuel mix towards cleaner forms of energy (largely at point sources). Whilst there are dedicated strategies to reducing roadside emissions (as a significant source of nitrogen dioxide emissions), recent objectives outlined in the Clean Air Strategy seek to recognise wider sources (including smaller contributors and diffuse sources) that contribute to poor air quality. This includes power generation, heating our homes, producing food, manufacturing consumer goods and powering transport.

Baseline Summary

- 2.4 In line with the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), East Hertfordshire district council is required to assess Air Quality standards within the region on an annual basis.
- 2.5 There are no AQMAs within Stanstead Abbots Parish. The only existing declared AQMAs in East Hertfordshire district council are located 4km outside the SANP area, including:
- Hertford AQMA, comprising an area along Gascoyne Way, declared in 17/05/2010; and
 - Hertford AQMA, consisting of several properties in central Hertford, declared in 21/08/2012.
- 2.6 The above listed AQMAs were both designated due to Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) exceedances, which is the main pollutant of concern across the district. Emissions from vehicles are the main source of nitrogen dioxide emissions, and air quality hotspots can arise in areas prone to traffic congestion.
- 2.7 Although both AQMAs are lie 4km outside the SANP area, Hertford and Stanstead Abbots are connected via the A414 and A10 thus, development in one area may have associated impacts through the movement of vehicles and transference of emissions.

Future baseline

- 2.8 Developments such as new housing and employment provision within the Parish area has the potential to induce adverse air quality effects by increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants, including particulate matter, NO₂, and ozone. The subsequent congestion and emissions arising from such developments has the potential to cross council boundaries and impact air quality in sensitive zones, including the two designated AQMAs identified in Hertford.
- 2.9 Nevertheless, the SANP proposes low levels of additional growth (10% growth between 2017-2033)³³ that are unlikely to significantly affect AQMAs in nearby Hertford. Moreover, the SANP policy framework itself presents an opportunity to enhance the public realm and the movement of both cyclists and pedestrians, therefore encouraging more sustainable connections and local journeys. In addition, action number EV12 in the East Herts Air Quality Action Plan⁴⁴, aims to 'encourage the use of electric vehicles within existing local authority taxi contracts', and action number SP6 states the need to 'take air quality matters

³ [Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan](#)

⁴ [Air Quality | East Herts District Council](#)

into consideration on all planning applications, particularly when these are within or closely adjoining an AQMA'.

Key issues

- 2.10 The main pollutant of concern in the district is nitrogen dioxide and this largely relates to the effects of emissions from vehicles, particularly within areas prone to congestion. There are two AQMAs in Hertford, 4km outside the SANP area and connected by the A414 and A10. However low growth proposed through the SANP and higher level policy provisions will reduce effects in this respect. The wider effects of the SANP in relation to traffic and congestion will be explored under the 'transportation' SEA theme.
- 2.11 The SANP presents opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys/ connections. These opportunities will be explored under the 'transportation' and 'population and communities' SEA themes.
- 2.12 Therefore, in the absence of any specific air quality issues (i.e. AQMAs or areas known to exceed national objectives for air quality), the **air quality theme has been scoped out** for the purposes of the SEA process

3. Biodiversity and geodiversity

3.1 This theme focuses on nature conservation designations, habitats, and species within and surrounding the Plan area.

Policy context

3.2 **Table 3.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 3.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity

| Document Title | Year of publication |
|---|---------------------|
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2019 |
| A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment | 2018 |
| Biodiversity 2020 Strategy | 2011 |
| Environmental Bill 2020 Policy Statement | 2020 |
| UK Biodiversity Action Plan | 2007 |
| The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act | 2006 |
| East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP) | 2018 |

3.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which highlights that opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. This includes utilising a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure at the wider catchment or landscape scale.
- Support is provided through the NPPF in establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Trees notably make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards).
- Over the past decade policy (e.g. The Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020) has demonstrated a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach to enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment; identifying the need to “replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop

cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats.” Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife.

- The emerging Environment Bill will provide further provisions in relation to biodiversity when granted royal assent. The Bill will set parameters for biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission, as well as biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Bill identifies a general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Local nature recovery strategies will identify biodiversity priorities for the strategy area as well as a local habitat map. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are or could become of importance for biodiversity.
- The SANP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies in the EHDP relating to biodiversity and geodiversity.

Baseline Summary

- 3.4 There are several national and international designated sites within and within close proximity to the SANP area, as shown on **Figure 3.1**. This includes Amwell Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) , Rye Meads SSSI, and Lee Valley Ramsar/ Special Protection Area (SPA), which are located 400m, 1000m and 1150m from Stanstead Abbots Parish, respectively.
- 3.5 Additionally, Hunsdon mead SSSI just North of Roydon, lies 500m to the West of the SANP area and Hertford Heath SSSI, is located to the East in nearby Hertford.
- 3.6 Local planning authorities (LPAs) have a duty to consult Natural England before granting planning permission on any development that is in or likely to affect an SSSI.
- 3.7 In terms of international designated sites, **Lee Valley SPA / RAMSAR** (451 ha) comprises a series of embanked water supply reservoirs, sewage treatment lagoons and former gravel pits that display a range of man-made and semi-natural wetland and valley bottom habitats. The SPA boundary is coincident with the above SSSI boundaries.
- 3.8 Natural England also include International Site Conservation Objective for the Lee Valley SPA (UK9012111) which states:
- ‘Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring, the extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; The population of each of the qualifying features; and the distribution of the qualifying features within the site.’*
- 3.9 The designated features present in the Lee Valley SPA include the following: Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), Gadwall, (*Anas strepera*), and Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*).

- 3.10 Nationally designated **Amwell Quarry SSSI** (36.96 ha) is a former gravel pit site in the Lee Valley near Ware, which supports nationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl, along with outstanding assemblages of breeding birds and of dragonflies and damselflies. The site includes two waterbodies, Great Hardmead Lake and Hollycross Lake, which were excavated between 1973 and 1990, and a variety of associated wetland, grassland and woodland habitats. Amwell Quarry is also of national importance for wintering gadwall (*Anas strepera*) for wintering shoveler (*Anas clypeata*).
- 3.11 The condition of Amwell Quarry SSSI is 100% favourable which means that the designated feature(s) within the unit are being adequately conserved and the results from monitoring demonstrate that the feature(s) in the unit are meeting all the mandatory site-specific monitoring targets set out in the FCT. The FCT sets the minimum standards for the favourable condition of designated features; in this case, there may be scope for the further (voluntary) enhancement of the features present.
- 3.12 **Rye Meads SSSI** (58.5 ha) is one of series of wetlands and reservoirs situated along the River Lea. The SSSI is divided into three areas: North of Rye Road is the Rye Meads nature reserve, which is open to the public; the western half of this nature reserve, next to the River Lea in the Lee Valley Regional Park which is managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB); and the eastern half, which is managed by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT).
- 3.13 The condition of the Rye Meads SSSI is 39.95% favourable and 60.05% unfavourable (recovering) which means that some features are not yet fully conserved and are not meeting their FCT targets, however all the necessary management mechanisms remain in place. This SSSI habitat is described as a mosaic of swamp & reedbed, in favourable condition for extent and quality features including regularly visiting bittern. Furthermore, the open water habitats support favourable populations of the listed overwintering wetland ducks (gadwall, shoveler) & breeding tufted duck. However, the non-breeding population of tufted duck and breeding pairs of common terns are currently unfavourable thus, there is a need for ongoing investigations with actions to adequately address this issue.
- 3.14 The parish falls within Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the SSSI where residential development of 50 dwellings or more will require further consultation with Natural England. However, it is noted that the low level of additional growth proposed through the draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan does not reach this threshold⁵.
- 3.15 Rye Meads SSSI is also part of the **Lea Valley Ramsar site** (a group of internationally important wetland sites) and a **Special Protection Area (SPA)**.
- 3.16 There is also evidence of **Ancient Woodland**, which is spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance, within the SANP. This includes Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland being found towards Newgate Wood, and Traditional Orchards towards (Great Amwell). There is also evidence of Wood pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat approximately 200m south Stanstead Abbots village⁶. The exact location of

Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitat within the SANP area is shown on **Figure 3.2**.

- 3.17 Records determined through class licence surveys have also detected the presence of for great crested newts near Lord's woods and bats towards Ware, however these are both just outside the boundary of the SANP area⁵.

Future baseline

- 3.18 Species and habitats will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the SANP area, with the potential for adverse impacts on the wider ecological network. This includes but is not limited to, a loss of habitat and negative effects on biodiversity networks. This may be further exacerbated by the compounding effects of climate change (refer to section 5), which may result in changes to the abundance and distribution of species, in addition to changes to habitat composition.
- 3.19 New residential development within the SANP also has the potential to impact upon the Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site as a result of recreational disturbance, in combination with other plans and projects. Therefore, future developments will be required, to create mitigation measures to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the European site(s).
- 3.20 In addition to mitigating against the negative effects of new developments, the SANP also presents a unique opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity, by paying consideration to key species, designated sites and habitats at an early stage of planning to influence later growth. To preserve and enhance the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be vital to not only safeguard priority habitats but also to improve the connections between them; utilising opportunities for net-gain where applicable. Equally, it will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment, and infrastructure within Stanstead Abbots Parish to ensure that opportunities to enhance green infrastructure and ecological corridors (including ancient woodland near Lord's wood) are maximised, within the Plan area.

⁵ Defra (2021) Magic Map [online] available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Figure 3.1 International and national designated biodiversity sites

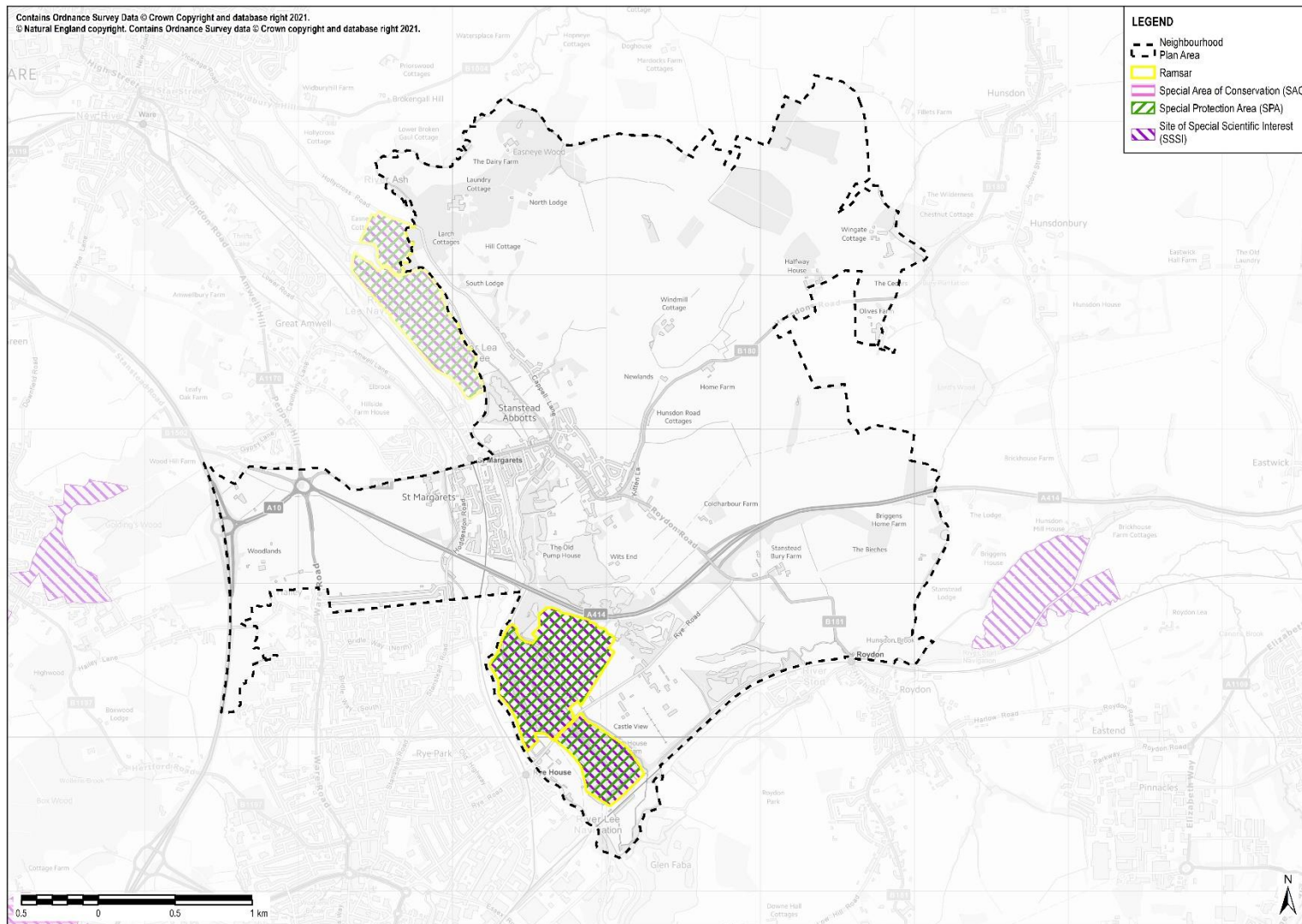
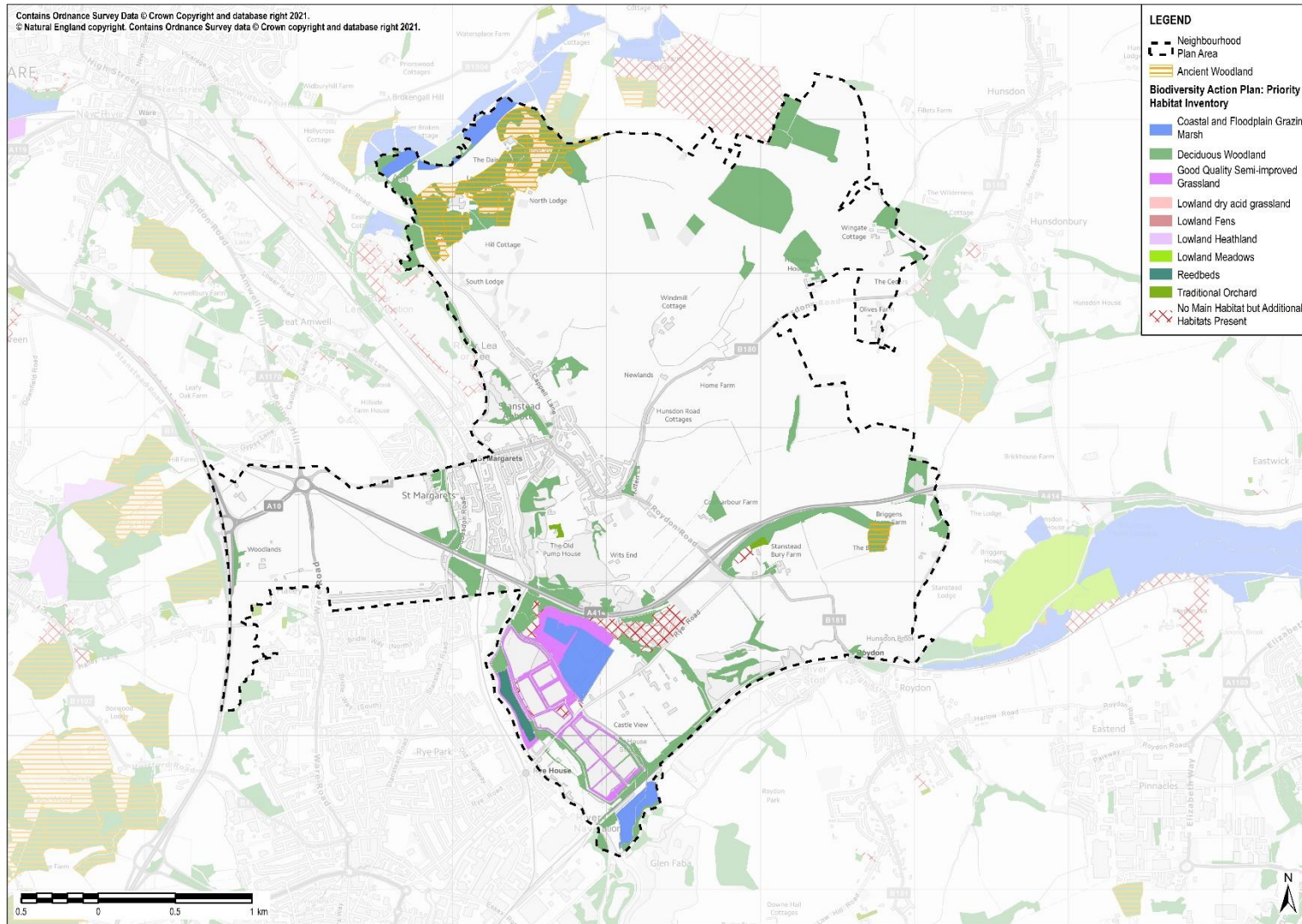


Figure 3.2 Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitat



Document Path: Y:\na.aecomnet.com\fs\EME\Basingstoke-UKBAS1\Legacy\UKBAS1PFILW00114400 - Management Services\5004 - Information Systems\60571087 Neighbourhood Plan CRB 2018 2022\02 Maps\Stanstead Abbots NP\Figure 3.2 Biodiversity Designations.mxd

Key issues

- 3.21 The NP area is constrained by internationally and nationally designated biodiversity sites, including areas of Ancient Woodland. Development in the Plan area should consider the likely additional recreational needs arising, and plan for good access to open and green spaces which reduce recreational pressures on aforementioned designated biodiversity sites.
- 3.22 Whilst some of the designated sites are sensitive to changes in water levels, water companies will continue to manage abstraction to meet local needs, and the proposals of the SANP are unlikely to lead to significant effects in this respect.
- 3.23 Growth in the SANP area should seek to avoid the loss or fragmentation of Priority Habitat. Instead, the SANP provides an opportunity to set out both site-specific mitigation (e.g. mitigation to reduce the effects of light pollution) and targeted habitat enhancement/ creation and biodiversity net-gain in development.

SEA Objectives

- 3.24 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

Table 3.12: Proposed SEA objective for biodiversity

| SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|--|--|
| To maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity and geodiversity sites and networks within and surrounding the Plan area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance Internationally and nationally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and the links between them? • Support the delivery of biodiversity net gains? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks and the network of open spaces which reduce recreational pressures on designated sites? |

4. Climate change and flood risk

- 4.1 This theme focuses on activities in the Plan area that contribute to climate change and climate change mitigation, as well as the effects of climate change, including flood risk, and climate change adaptation.

Policy context

- 4.2 **Table 4.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 4.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>UK Climate Change Act</u> | 2008 |
| <u>UK (second) National Adaptation Programme 2018 to 2023</u> | 2018 |
| <u>The Clean Air Strategy</u> | 2019 |
| <u>Clean Growth Strategy</u> | 2019 |
| <u>UK Sixth Carbon Budget</u> | 2020 |
| <u>25-Year Environment Plan</u> | 2019 |
| <u>National Infrastructure Assessment</u> | 2018 |
| <u>UK Climate Change Risk Assessment</u> | 2017 |
| <u>Flood and Water Management Act</u> | 2010 |
| <u>National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy</u> | 2020 |
| <u>How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk</u> | 2012 |
| <u>The National Design Guide</u> | 2021 |
| <u>National Model Design Code</u> | 2021 |
| <u>Heat Networks: Building a Market Framework</u> | 2020 |
| <u>Summary of Climate Change Risks for England Report</u> | 2017 |
| <u>East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP)</u> | 2018 |

- 4.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which requires proactive planning to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid

inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and deliver long-term resilience, including through reuse, regeneration, and conversion.

- Notably, access to a network of high-quality open spaces can deliver wider benefits for nature, supporting efforts to address climate change, while improvements in green and other infrastructure can reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.
- Planning Practice Guidance presents the following list of ‘examples’ of ways local planning can support adaptation:
 - *“Considering future climate risks when allocating development sites to ensure risks are understood over the development’s lifetime.*
 - *Considering the impact of and promoting design responses to flood risk for the lifetime of the development.*
 - *Considering availability of water and water infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and protect water quality.*
 - *Promoting adaptation approaches in design policies for developments and the public realm relevant.”*
- The UK Climate Change Act requires Government to present to Parliament an assessment of the climate change risks for the UK every five years. Following the publication of each Change Risk Assessment, the Government must lay out its objectives, policies, and proposals to address the climate change risks and opportunities. The second National Adaptation Programme (NAP2, 2018-2023), setting out these objectives, policies, and proposals, was published in 2018. The ASC is required by the Act to assess the NAP and present progress reports. The most recent report was published in 2019, concluding that climate change adaptation needs to be addressed at a national scale and the Government’s response to date has not been successful.⁶ The Sixth Carbon Budget, required under the Climate Change Act, provides ministers with advice on the volume of greenhouse gases that the UK can emit during the period 2033 to 2037.
- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the 25-year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government’s commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government’s commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to

⁶ CCC (n.d.): ‘UK adaptation policy’ [online] available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/preparing-for-climate-change/uk-adaptation-policy/>

achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme.

- The National Infrastructure Assessment identified the key national challenges, and the government is developing a National Infrastructure Strategy. The NIC also published two key reports in 2019:
 - Strategic Investment and Public Confidence – this report is clear that *“the regulatory system has not adequately addressed societal interests: it needs to work more effectively to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, transition to full-fibre digital networks, and manage the increasing risks of floods and drought.”* It calls for a much more coordinated approach, explaining that:⁷ *“The current system leaves strategy primarily to infrastructure owners and providers. But they may not be best placed to assess the coming challenges, and they do not have the right incentives to build the right infrastructure to address them... There are some good examples of the system delivering strategic, long-term investment, however in general the system is not designed to deliver this... [R]egulators should demonstrate how they have taken consideration of the strategic vision of... local government...”*
 - Resilience Study Scoping Report - includes a section on ‘Resilience in the planning system’, although the focus is on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) more so than local infrastructure.⁸
- The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities. The evidence report contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action between 2017 and 2022, see below:
 - Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses, and infrastructure.
 - Risks to health, well-being, and productivity from high temperatures.
 - Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry.
 - Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems, soils, and biodiversity.
 - Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and

⁷ NIC (n.d.): ‘Strategic Investment and public confidence’ [online] nic.org.uk/publications/strategic-investment-and-public-confidence/

⁸ NIC (n.d.): ‘Strategic Investment and public confidence’ [online] nic.org.uk/publications/resilience-study-scoping-report/

- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants, and animals.
- The Flood and Water Management Act was introduced in 2010 as a response to the need to develop better resilience to climate change. The Act requires better management of flood risk, creating safeguards against rises in surface water drainage charges, and protecting water supplies for consumers. Good flood and coastal risk management is further outlined through the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2020).
- The Committee of Climate Change’s 2012 report entitled ‘How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk’ emphasises the crucial role councils have in helping the UK meet its carbon targets and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It outlines specific opportunities for reducing emissions and highlights good practice examples from Local Authorities.
- The National Design Guide (NDG) and the National Design Code address how the Government recognises “well-designed places” including opportunities for climate change measures. Notably the NDG defines what constitutes a well-designed place using ten characteristics under three themes of climate, character, and community. Under the climate theme, homes and buildings should be functional, healthy, and sustainable, resources should be efficient and resilient, and buildings should be made to last.
- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy released a framework for heat networks which includes proposals to increase access to renewable heat sources and achieve a net zero target by 2050.
- The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (2017) sets several priorities for the next five years in line with the Climate Change Act, in order to mitigate and adapt to rising temperatures from greenhouse gas emissions.
- The SANP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of the EHDP, which contains policies directly relating to the climate change theme, including flood management and sustainable design.

Baseline Summary

- 4.4 In 2019, the East Hertfordshire council announced a climate emergency⁸. Their July 2019 declaration on climate change emphasised the importance of tackling climate change in terms of both decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and planning for the local impacts of climate change. This is reflected in their Environmental Sustainability Action Plan, 2021 – a working document which is continually developed, with assistance and input from a range of sources including third sector organisations, as well as from the local community.
- 4.5 **Figure 4.1** presents data over the period 2005 - 2018⁹ relating to CO₂ emissions. In this regard, CO₂ emissions in East Hertfordshire district are consistently lower than comparative figures for the East of England and

England as a whole. In addition, apart from the period between 2005 to 2006, CO₂ levels have decreased at a similar rate as the regional and national averages.

Figure 4.1 Carbon dioxide emissions (t) 2005 – 2018

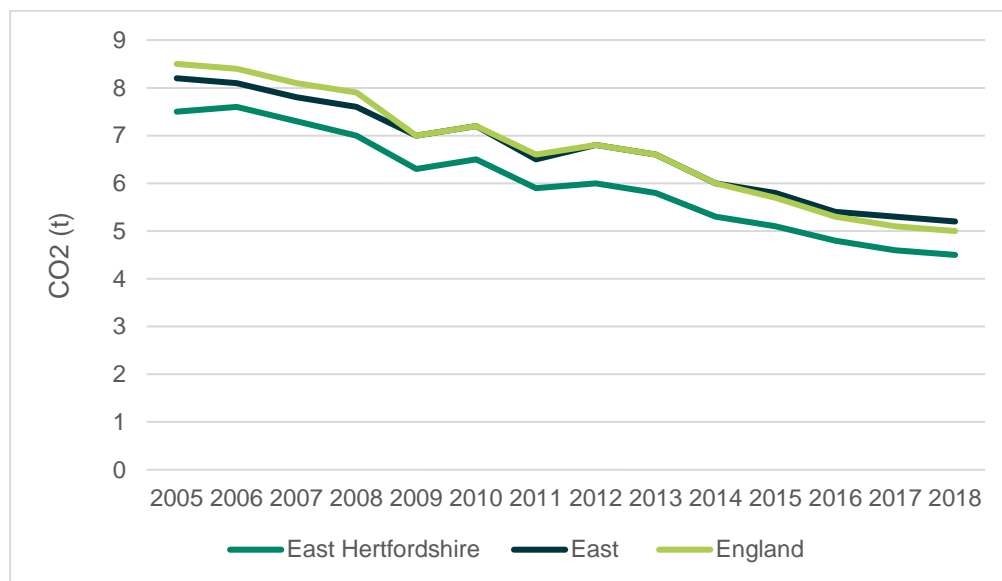
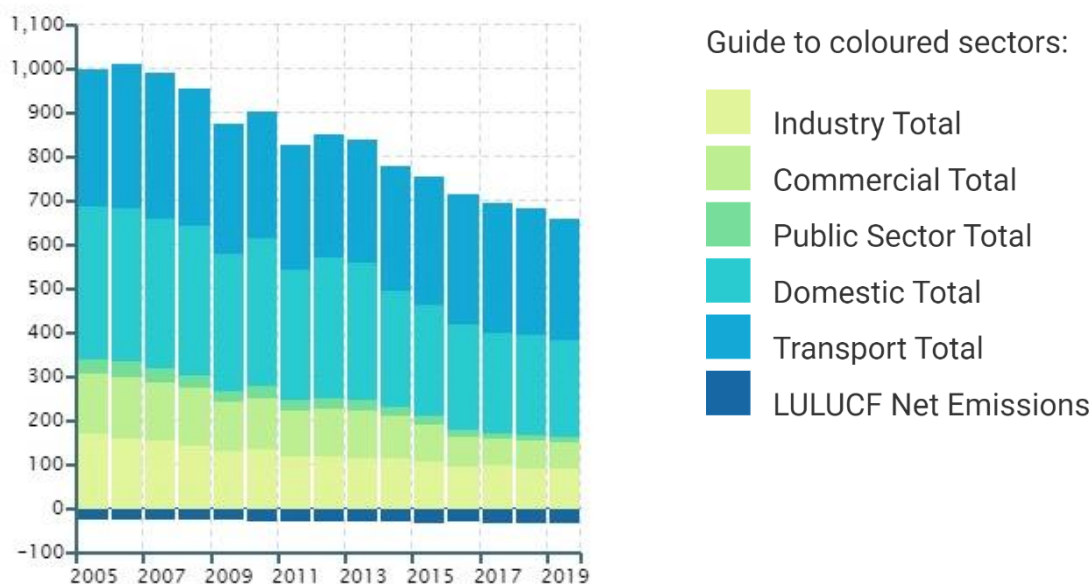


Figure 4.2 East Hertfordshire Emission Trend



4.6 The data demonstrates that the transport and domestic sectors continues to be the largest contributors for CO₂ emissions¹⁰. Within the transport sector, the main sources are emissions from A-roads, followed by minor roads. Since 2005, these forms of emission have not significantly changed, and only a minor decrease have been observed.

⁸East Hertfordshire Council (2019) District Plan Available at: [The East Herts District Plan 2018 | East Herts District Council](#)
⁹Office for National statistics (2021) Available at: [2011 Census - Census of Population - Data Sources - home - Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](#)
¹⁰DBEIS (2020) Regional Renewable Statistics – Renewable electricity by local authority 2014 to 2019 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>

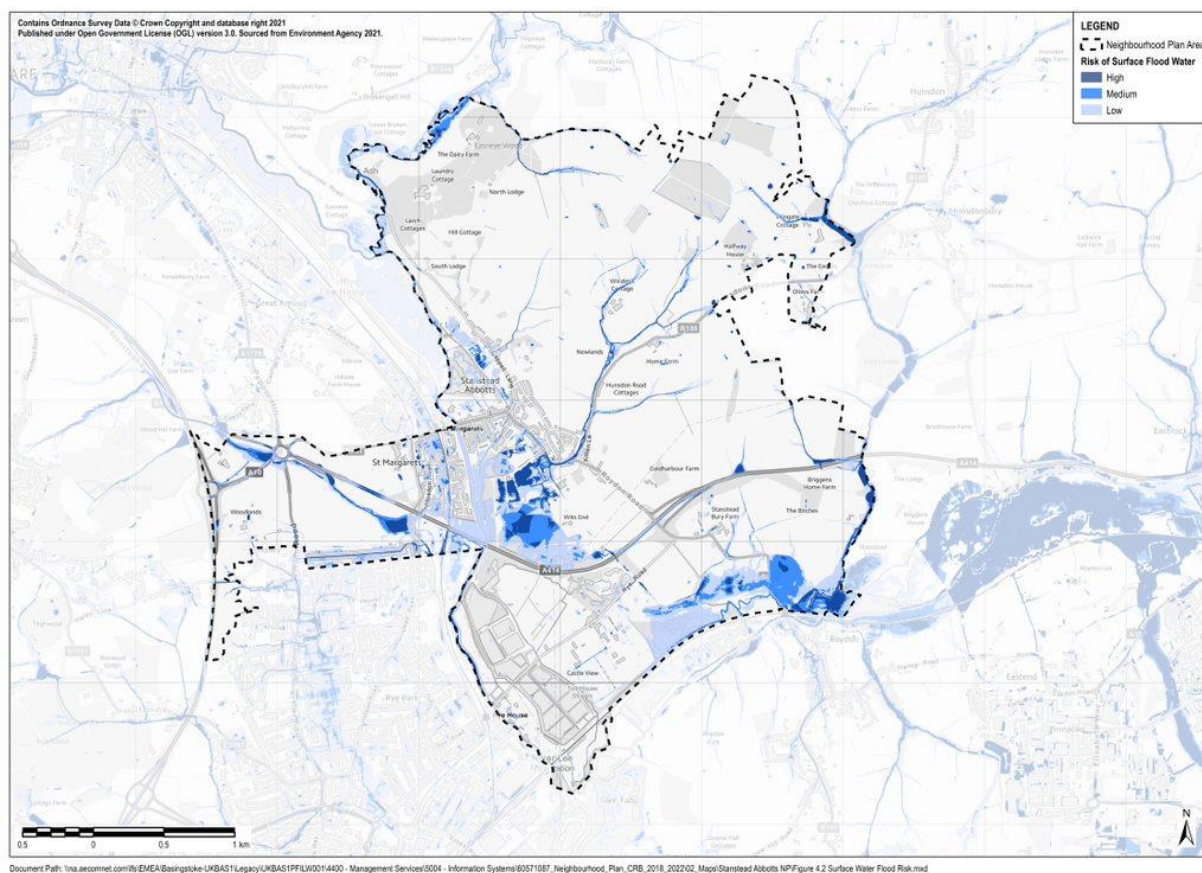
- 4.7 In the **domestic sector**, the largest contributor of CO₂ typically fluctuates between electricity and gas use. Whilst electricity has historically been the highest contributor of CO₂ in the East Hertfordshire, exhibiting the highest emission counts from 2006 to 2009, in recent years gas has seen a resurgence and was the largest contributor in 2010 and from 2013-2017⁹.
- 4.8 The increasing trends towards the use of **Ultra Low Emission Vehicles** (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of transport related emissions. In accordance with the predictions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' Report (2018), it is expected that ULEV commitment will rise considerably in the next decade. It is proposed that, excluding Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), all vehicles should be powered by either hydrogen or electricity (ultra-low emissions) by the year 2030. This will drastically decrease the emissions released by the transport sector across East Hertfordshire and England as a whole.
- 4.9 Alternatively, **Electric Vehicles** (EVs) do not require fuel and produce almost no noise pollution. EVs are battery powered and therefore possess the ability to be 'zero-emission vehicles' (ZEVs), provided they are powered by renewably sourced electricity. Although there are no electricity charging stations within the SANP area, there are multiple in Hoddesdon and Ware, and a Tesla Destination Charger only 500m from the SANP area in Great Amwell¹⁰.
- 4.10 In terms of **renewable energy**, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority. The most recent data (2020) highlights that East Hertfordshire has a total of 1,515 renewable energy (electricity) installations. The majority of these installations (1,504) are photovoltaics¹¹.

⁹ Department for Transport (2020) Electric vehicle charging device statistics: April 2020 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/electric-vehicle-charging-device-statistics-april-2020>

¹⁰ ZAP Map (2021) [online] available at: <https://www.zap-map.com/live/>

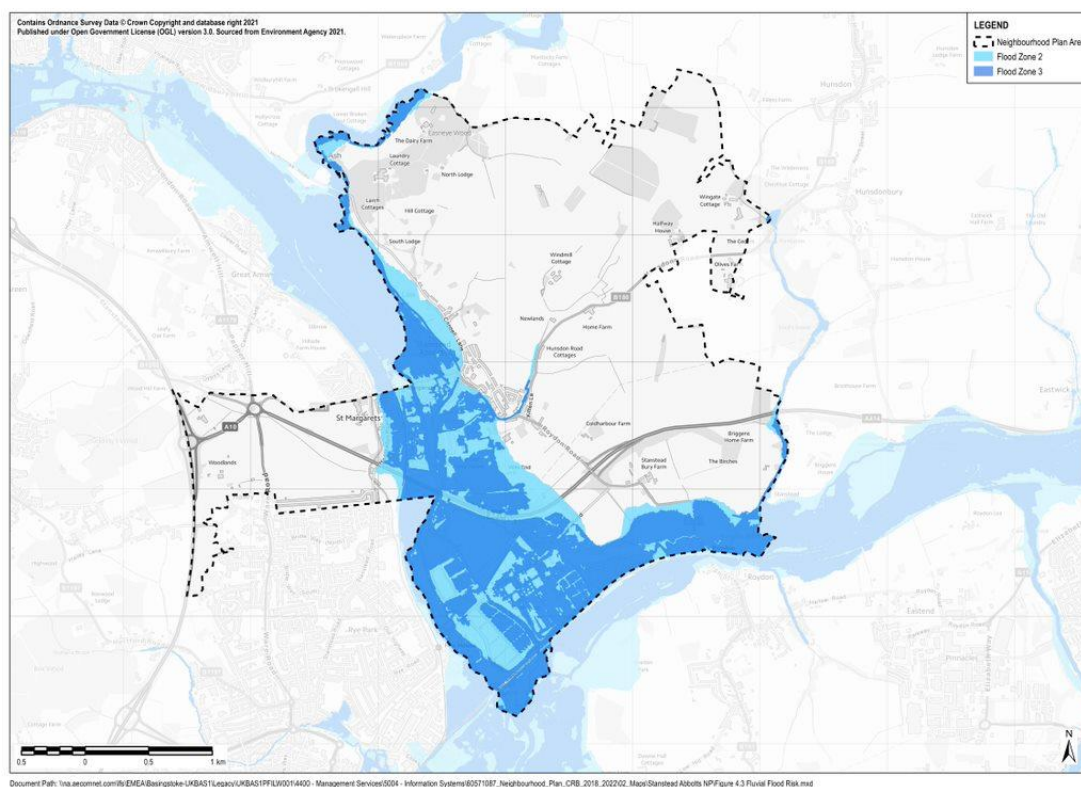
¹¹ debis (2020) Regional Renewable Statistics – Renewable electricity by local authority 2014 to 2019 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>

Figure 4.3 Surface Water Flood Risk



4.11 Surface water flood risk extends far into south end of the village and has the potential to impact more properties and infrastructure, particularly in areas classified as High Risk (**Figure 4.3**). Fluvial flood risk in the SANP area largely follows the River Lea to the north and south-west of the settlement area; see **Figure 4.4**. The main causes of flooding around the River Lea are usually linked to the sudden melting of a considerable depth of snow from the north however, after an extended period of heavy rainfall flooding has also been observed at the Lea's confluence with the River Stort near Rye Meads.

Figure 4.4 Fluvial Flood Risk



4.12 Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

4.13 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the East of England by 2050 in a 'medium emissions' scenario are likely to be as follows:

- An increase in winter mean temperature of 2.2 °C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.8 °C.
- A change in winter mean precipitation greater than +10% and summer mean precipitation greater than -10%.

4.14 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks exist for the SANP area, including:

- Effects on water resources, such as a reduction in availability of groundwater for extraction and a need to increase capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers.
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain.
- Increased risk of flooding and a need to upgrade flood defences.
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding.

- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution and spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution.
- Increased demand for air-conditioning; and
- Heat stress related issues with infrastructure due to increased temperature.

Future baseline

- 4.15 In accordance with growing UK trends and national commitments, emissions are likely to continue to drop as energy efficiency, renewable energy progression and innovative technologies, including EVs and solar PV, become more widely implemented. Specifically, the Government has proposed changes to England's Building Regulations establishing a 'Future Homes Standard' with the Department for Transport publishing 'Decarbonising Transport; setting the challenge' which acts as a first step towards publishing a full transport decarbonisation strategy.
- 4.16 Going forward, new developments within the SANP area may potentially increase flood risks due to several factors. These include, changing ground and surface water flows; increasing pressure on existing inputs to wastewater and drainage systems; or simply by exposing increased numbers of residents to areas of existing flood risk. Moreover, it is vital to consider that climate change has the potential to increase the frequency and intensity of weather events, including storms and heavy rainfall which can have further adverse effects on residents. Extreme weather events can potentially damage property and new developments in 'high risk' flood zones. In spite of this, sequential testing proposed by the NPPF (2021) will likely ensure that development within high-risk flood zones is, to a large extent, prevented with the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new developments offering further relief.

Key issues

- In terms of CO₂ emissions, the transport and domestic sectors continues to be the largest contributors for CO₂ emissions for East Hertfordshire. Within the transport sector, the main sources are emissions from A-roads, followed by minor roads. The SANP provides opportunities to guide development towards the most accessible locations in the Plan area and require local infrastructure (including walking and cycling infrastructure) improvements where appropriate.
- East Hertfordshire has a total of 1,515 renewable energy (electricity) installations. The majority of these installations (1,504) are photovoltaics. The SANP should seek to maximise opportunities for local renewable energy and electric vehicle infrastructure development, as well as new green infrastructure and improved ecological links, to complement the existing district, county and regional climate change plans.
- Fluvial flood risk in the SANP area largely follows the River Lea to the north and south-west of the settlement area; while surface water flood risk extends far into south end of the village. The SANP provides the opportunity to direct growth away from areas of current, or potentially future flood risk. In areas of surface water flood risk, development which provides improved drainage could also reduce flood risk in the long-term.

SEA objectives

4.17 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives and assessment questions:

Table 4.12: Proposed SEA objectives for climate change

| SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|---|---|
| Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the Plan area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made by polluting vehicles? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Improve or extend local footpaths, cycle paths or strategic GI routes? • Increase the number of new development meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Support the transition to electric vehicles? |
| Support the resilience of the Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the Plan area? • Sustainably manage water run-off? • Increase the resilience of the local built and natural environment? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are duly considered in the design of new development in the Plan area? |

5. Health and wellbeing

- 5.1 This theme focuses on health indicators and deprivation, healthcare provision in the Plan area and influences on resident health and wellbeing, including access to open space and the countryside.

Policy context

- 5.2 **Table 5.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 5.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to health and wellbeing

| Document Title | Year of publication |
|---|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>National Planning Practice Guidance – Healthy and Safe Communities</u> | 2019 |
| <u>The 25 Year Environment Plan</u> | 2018 |
| <u>Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On</u> | 2020 |
| <u>Planning for Sport Guidance</u> | 2019 |
| <u>East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP)</u> | 2018 |

- 5.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:
- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities, including; green infrastructure, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling. The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity which contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure is further reiterated through the 25-year Environment Plan.
 - The 2020 Health Equity in England report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled, or even declined for the poorest 10% of women.
 - The SANP will also be required to be in general conformity with the EHDP which contains policies directly relating to access to healthcare, green infrastructure and open spaces, and design that supports active travel opportunities.

Baseline Summary

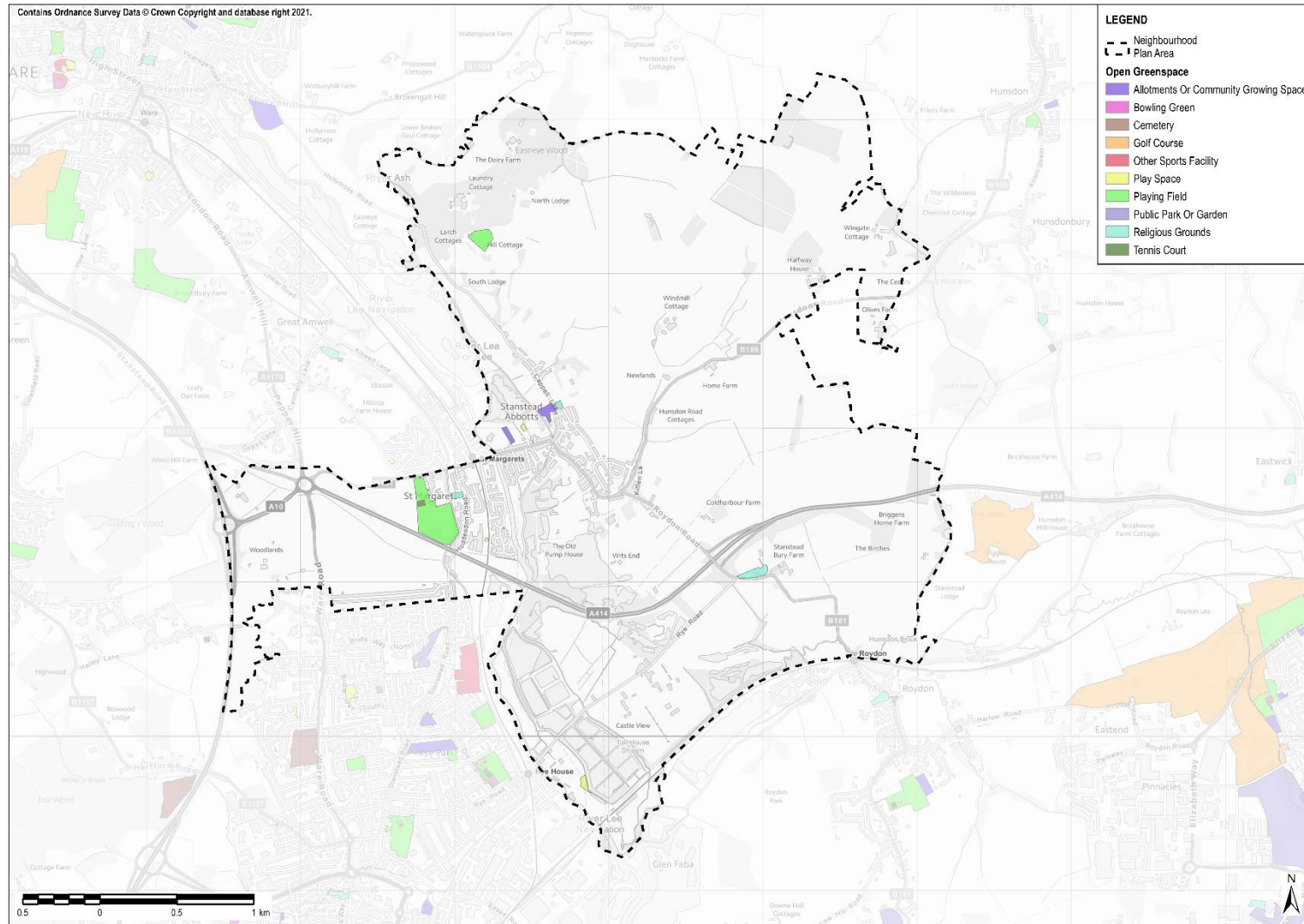
- 5.4 The health of people in East Hertfordshire is generally better than the national average with life expectancy for both men and women being proportionately higher. East Hertfordshire is one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England, however approximately 8.2% (2,070) children live in low-income families¹⁴.
- 5.5 **Child health:** 14.0% (215) of children are classified as obese, which is lower than the average for England. The rate for alcohol-specific hospital admissions among those under 18 is 15, this represents five admissions per year: better than the average for England. Levels of teenage pregnancy, GCSE attainment (average attainment 8 score), breastfeeding and smoking in pregnancy are also better than the England average.
- 5.6 **Adult health:** The rate for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions is 525, which is less than the average for England. This represents 759 admissions per year. The rate for self-harm hospital admissions is 74, also lower than the average for England and represents 110 admissions annually. Moreover, projected levels of smoking prevalence in adults (aged 18+), excess weight in adults (aged 18+) are lower than the national average with physically active adults (aged 19+) being considerably higher. The rates of hip fractures in older people (aged 65 and above), sexually transmitted infections, seriously injured or killed on road cases and cases of tuberculosis are also lower than the national average. Similarly, rates of violent crime (hospital admission), age 75 and under mortality rates from cardiovascular diseases and 75 and under mortality rates from cancer are lower than the national average¹²
- 5.7 The East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan (2019-23)¹³ outlines several objectives to improve the quality of life of adults and children, including:
1. Help all children to start off well.
 2. Empower children, young people and adults to achieve their potential
 3. Promote healthy working environments.
 4. Create healthy places and sustainable communities.
- 5.8 Further to this, concrete deliverables were set out including actions and measures to help achieve their objectives, which include:
- Run activities to promote better understanding of the reasons for unhealthy eating behaviours.
 - Reduce health inequalities between town and rural areas,
 - Carry out proportionate enforcement when housing and health regulations are not met
 - Maintain and improve parks and open spaces

¹² Public Health England (2019) Local Authority Health profile. Available at: [E07000242 \(phe.org.uk\)](https://www.phe.org.uk)

¹³ East Hertfordshire Council (2019) Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-23 Available at: [MergedFile \(eastherts.gov.uk\)](https://www.eastherts.gov.uk)

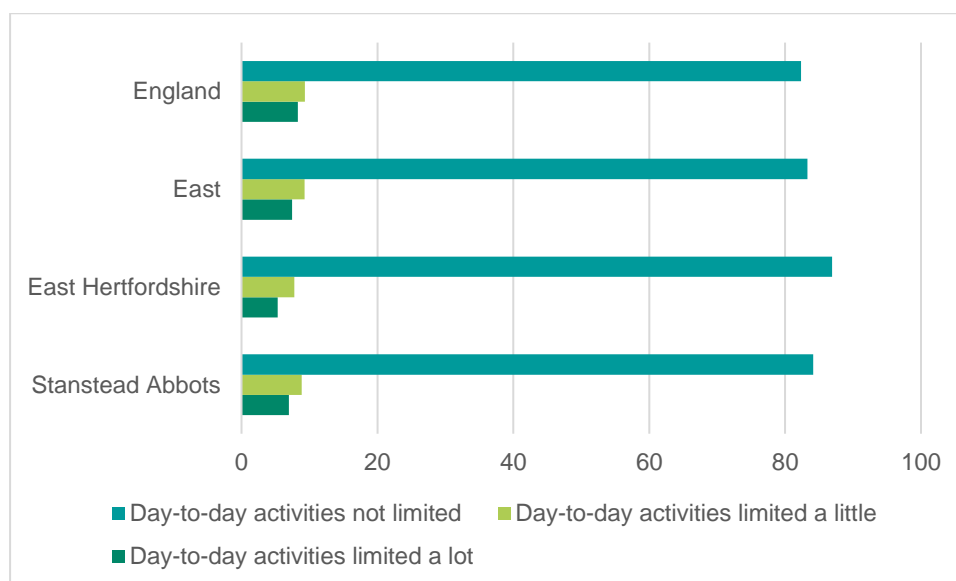
- 5.9 In their latest Annual Report for 2019, East Herts boasted 642 participants in Forever Active schemes, over 200 participants in Social Prescribing schemes and 277 households prevented from becoming homeless. Moreover, they also announced the 'Healthy Hub' scheme which provides a range of support for health, social and wellbeing needs of residents in East Herts and surrounding areas.
- 5.10 The **Healthy Hub East Herts** has a base at the Hertford, which is roughly 2km from the SANP area. This base provides Stanstead Abbots residents support with a range of health, social and wellbeing requirements, with many services being offered such as:
- Healthy lifestyle advice relating to smoking, nutrition advice and opportunities to be more physically active.
 - Group support and presentations focused on health and wellbeing themes.
 - Comprehensive ranges of health and wellbeing partners.
 - Referral to training and skills opportunities with local providers.
 - Referral to specific health, wellbeing, and social support.
 - Mental health and wellbeing referral to local services.
- 5.11 There are several **open spaces** within the SANP area including two playing fields, two allotments or community growing spaces and a religious ground located towards Roydon, all of which provide access for activities and offer residents the opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing. **Figure 5.1** overleaf depicts the open spaces around Stanstead Abbots including 'Chapelfields Play Area' which has features such as a slide climber unit and two springer units.

Figure 5.1 Open spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan area



- 5.12 Despite access to facilities outlined in the above section, there are also many **health inequalities** experienced across East Hertfordshire. **Life expectancy** is 6.0 years lower for men and 3.6 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of East Hertfordshire than in the least deprived areas.
- 5.13 As displayed in **Figure 5.2** below, 2011 Census data specifies that around 84.1% of residents with **disabilities** in Stanstead Abbots do not consider themselves to be limited in their day-to-day activities. Conversely, around 8.8% of residents with disabilities consider their day-to-day activities limited a little, and 6.9% of residents consider themselves limited a lot. Each of these values are relatively higher than averages found at the district scale, but lower than the regional and national average¹⁴.

Figure 5.2 Disability 2011



Future baseline

- 5.14 With continued advances in technology, healthcare systems and information regarding lifestyles choices, people are beginning to live longer than previously. Stanstead Abbots has an aging population higher than the national, regional and district average (refer to **Chapter 9**) which may result in increased demand for health care services. Given this ageing population, coupled with the pandemic and the financial challenges placed on the NHS and social care, it is likely that more housing aimed at older people will be required in the future.
- 5.15 The lack of direct healthcare services within the Plan area could lead to decreased access to core services for residents, which may produce additional pressure on the ageing population of Stanstead Abbots. Moreover the 8.8% and 6.9% of residents with disabilities who consider their day-to-day activities to either be limited a little or limited a lot, is considerably higher than district average. The SANP therefore presents an opportunity to encourage the retention and enhancement of key services within the Plan area. This will

¹⁴ Office for National statistics (2021) Available at: [2011 Census - Census of Population - Data Sources - home - Nomis – Official Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011)

likely support those with disabilities, including health facilities and open spaces in order to support healthy lifestyles into the future.

- 5.16 The role of local accessibility within Stanstead Abbots has been emphasised throughout the course of the recent pandemic. However, planning should also be utilised to maximise opportunities to connect with nearby strategic development sites (including the Healthy Hub at nearby Hertford) to improve accessibility and recreational opportunities.

Key issues

- 5.17 The health of people in East Hertfordshire is generally better than the national average, although East Hertfordshire is one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England.
- 5.18 The SANP area is rich in open space, supporting active healthy lifestyles. Planning can further support the interconnectivity of open and recreational spaces, maximising their access by sustainable modes (e.g. walking and cycling).
- 5.19 The SANP could also seek improvements to the public realm which maximise social inclusion and address any existing infrastructure/ mobility issues for more vulnerable residents.

SEA Objectives

- 5.20 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

Table 6.2: Proposed SEA objective for health and wellbeing

| SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|---|---|
| Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the SANP area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoid negative impacts to the quality and/ or extent of existing recreational assets, including formal and informal footpaths? • Contribute to reducing social isolation? |

6. Historic environment

6.1 This theme focuses on designated and non-designated heritage assets and features (including archaeology) and their setting.

Policy context

6.2 **Table 6.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 6.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2021 |
| The 25 Year Environment Plan | 2018 |
| The National Design Guide | 2019 |
| National Model Design Code | 2021 |
| Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management | 2019 |
| Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets | 2017 |
| Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) | 2016 |
| East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP) | 2018 |
| Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan | 2014 |

6.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key high-level principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
 - The historic environment is a shared resource
 - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
 - Understanding the significance of places is vital
 - Significant places should be managed to sustain their values
 - Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent
 - Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.¹⁵

¹⁵ Historic England: Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

- The significance of places is the key element which underpins the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building, an archaeological site, or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape
- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which ultimately seeks to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.
- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design Codes can set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations, for example, with heritage considerations, and they can set out specific ways to maintain local character.
- Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation.
- The role of the historic environment, as part of healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes, and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide.
- Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the SANP is the emphasis on the importance of:
 - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and/ or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets.
 - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
 - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.
- The SANP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of the EHDP which relate to the historic environment.
- In addition to conserving the historic environment, the SANP should seek to identify opportunities to enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment. It should also seek to rejuvenate features and areas which are at risk of neglect and decay.

Baseline Summary

- 6.4 Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. **Designated heritage assets** are depicted in **Figure 6.1** and **6.2**. **Figure 6.1** shows = that within the SANP area, there is 1 Grade I listed building, 7 Grade II* listed buildings, and over 50 Grade II listed buildings²⁰.
- 6.5 There are also three Scheduled monuments within the SANP area, including:
- Bowl barrow in Easneye Wood, 110m south-east of Dairy Farm
 - Hunsdon Brook Fishponds
 - Rye House moated enclosure and gatehouse
- 6.6 Rye house gatehouse is classified as a Grade I listed building. Previously standing as the gatehouse to Rye House (demolished), the lower part is used as a museum. Of note, it stood as the 1683 scene of the Rye House Plot to murder Charles II. It has since been rebuilt except for the gatehouse at end of the 17th century and is said to have been used as the parish Workhouse before 1834.
- 6.7 The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER, formerly the County Sites and Monuments Record) is a record of the known archaeology of the county. The St Albans Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) is a more intensive coverage of the historic city. The HHER lists a total of 69 assets ~~in~~ within the SANP area including features dating back to the Roman Empire.
- 6.8 The is also a Grade II Registered Park and Gardens just outside the SANP area referred to locally as Stanstead Bury¹⁶, a 15th century manor house and garden with late 16th century park. The garden and park have since been in continuous use and subject to a series of changes, however future development in the SANP should consider the associated impacts on this area.
- 6.9 As shown in **Figure 6.2**, Stanstead Abbot Conservation Area covers a significant proportion of the neighbourhood plan area, including numerous listed buildings discussed above. A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been produced by East Herts Council (2014) which provides a detailed character analysis for the Conservation Area.¹⁷ **Table 6.2** overleaf sets out key information for each character area.

¹⁶ Historic England (2021) Stanstead Bury. Available at [STANSTEAD BURY, Stanstead Abbots - 1000316 | Historic England](#)

¹⁷ East Herts District Council (2014) Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan [online] available at: https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/Stanstead_Abbotts_UPDATED_CAA_and_Management_Plan.pdf

Table 6.2 Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area detailed character analysis¹⁸

| Character Area | General overview | Important views | Opportunities to secure improvements |
|--|--|--|--|
| Area A - The High Street and Station Road. | <p>The High Street and Station Road is a mixture of commercial shopping and residential development, the principal areas of the former being defined on the East Herts Local Plan, the policy for which encourages an appropriate range of commercial uses and seeks to limit changes of use from shop to non-shop. There is a concentration of Listed Buildings at its eastern end including the important Grade II* buildings of Stanstead Hall and the Red Lion PH. There are also a number of non-listed 19th century buildings in residential use worthy of note. The surface of the High Street has been re-engineered with paviors in contrasting colours with protective bollards which, within the constraints imposed by the cost of the chosen surfacing material, is sympathetic. Throughout there are several A boards advertising the products of individual premises. The economic reasons for these are understood but some of them do detract, particularly if associated with Listed Buildings. However as a broad generalization advertisements including painted shop signs are not too disruptive. Mid-20th century terraces in the centre of the High Street are set back from the original 19th century frontage (now demolished) whose modern appearance and associated fencing, make this</p> | <p>There are two particularly important views, firstly looking in either direction along the river and secondly looking east towards Stanstead Hall and the Red Lion PH.</p> | <p>Seek improvements to car parking area adjacent to the Village Club. Seek improvements to Telephone exchange building and site. Discuss issue of A boards with Hertfordshire County Council to firstly ascertain their considerations. In conjunction with the Parish Council and others, consider landscape improvements in centre of High Street centred on area in which the telephone kiosk is located</p> |

¹⁸ East Herts District Council (2014) Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan [online] available at: https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/Stanstead_Abbotts_UPDATED_CAA_and_Management_Plan.pdf

location a potential candidate for a modest enhancement scheme.

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Area B – Cappell Lane. | Cappell Lane's principle urban characteristics and built form are concentrated at its approach with the High Street. In this location The Clock House and St. Andrew's church, together with a number of 19th century unlisted properties of quality, dominate the local scene. Further north is a more scattered built form that also contains several Listed Buildings and other unlisted properties worthy of protection. These two built areas are separated by an important gap of open space consisting of the allotment gardens and pasture land whose open character is also defined by trees and hedgerows that add to the quality of the environment in this location. | Views towards St Andrews Church and War Memorial on its elevated position and views across the grazing land towards Stanstead Mill Stream are particularly important. | Seek improvements to outbuilding of no. 110 Cappell Lane, within the curtilage of a Listed Building; repair pier fronting St. Andrew's Church (subsequently repaired) and encourage the planting or gapping up of a front boundary hedge to the Allotment Gardens. Seek long term improvements to Environment Agency boundary fencing near Red Lion roundabout. |
| Area C- Roydon Road, Cats Hill and Hunsdon Road | This linear approach to the main village from the south is characterized by the steep open and well treed area of Cats Hill which is in contrast to Roydon Road where Listed Buildings, other 19th century buildings worthy of protection and several boundary walls represent good quality features interspersed with pockets of modern development of mixed quality | Views into the centre of the village and looking towards the Almshouses junction of Roydon/Hunsdon Roads are important as are views along the Mill Stream. | Discuss potential of improvements to dividing fence and repairs to wall at the Village Hall. |

Area D- Hoddesdon Road.

The designated Conservation Area is a linear strip of development between New River and the railway line. There are two principle groupings of historic buildings. The first is centred around St Margaret's Church and includes a grouping of 19th century unlisted properties worthy of note. The second area is centred around The Clock House. The design of modern development at 'The Granary' and Sanville Gardens is successful whose general massing, detailed design, use of materials and landscaping has been pleasantly executed. Its pleasing appearance warrants retention within the Conservation Area. However, overgrown open space between it and the railway line detracts. Other mid-20th century development, typical of its period, north of the church extending to Station Road and backing on to New River, is of limited architectural and historic interest

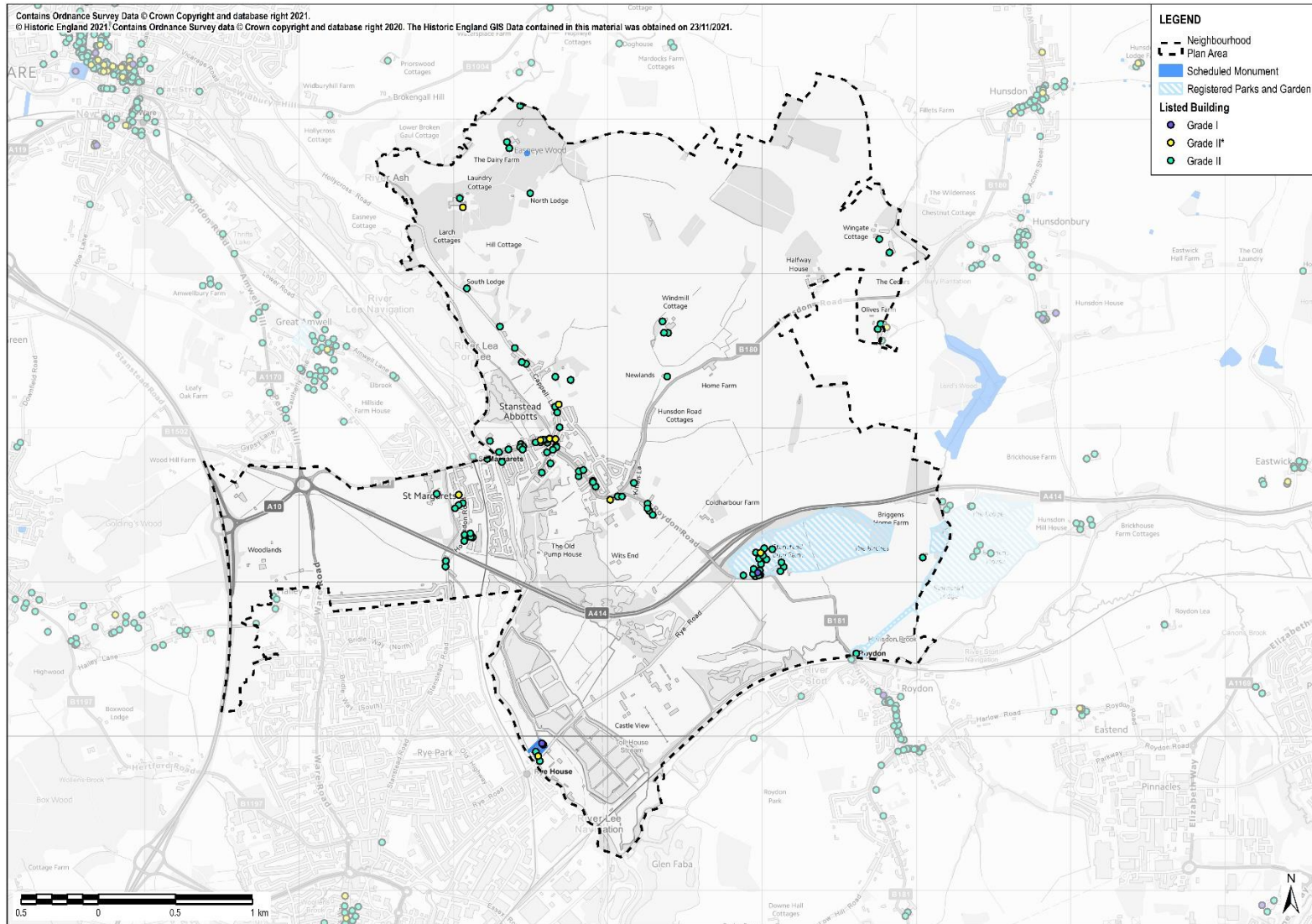
The view of St Margaret's Church, which is a prominent building in the street scene, is most important.

Explore reasons for unsatisfactory condition of open space at Sanville Gardens and at The Granary and seek to resolve. Discuss potential of repairing spalled brickwork to boundary walls south of the church and at The Clock House; Discuss potential of replacing missing 19th century gates with respective owners.

- 6.10 In summary, the Character Appraisal and Management Plan states that *“the Conservation Area is generally well defined and although it may be adversely affected locally by modern midlate 20th century developments in some locations, both within and adjacent to its boundaries, it has adequate architectural quality and historic interest to retain its important designation as being a Conservation Area. More recent 21st century housing development between the railway line and Hoddesdon Road is pleasing and an example of successful modern design and development well executed in a Conservation Area. There are a number of unlisted terraces dating from the 19th century, the appearance of some having been detrimentally affected by modern unsympathetic windows. Throughout the Conservation Area chimneys play an important architectural and historic role and are worthy of protection.”*
- 6.11 Historic England has produced an annual Heritage at Risk Register since 2008. The Heritage at Risk Register identifies any Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas (**Figure 6.2**) considered to be ‘at risk’. As of November 2019, there are no at sites within the SANP area that are recognised as being at risk¹⁹.

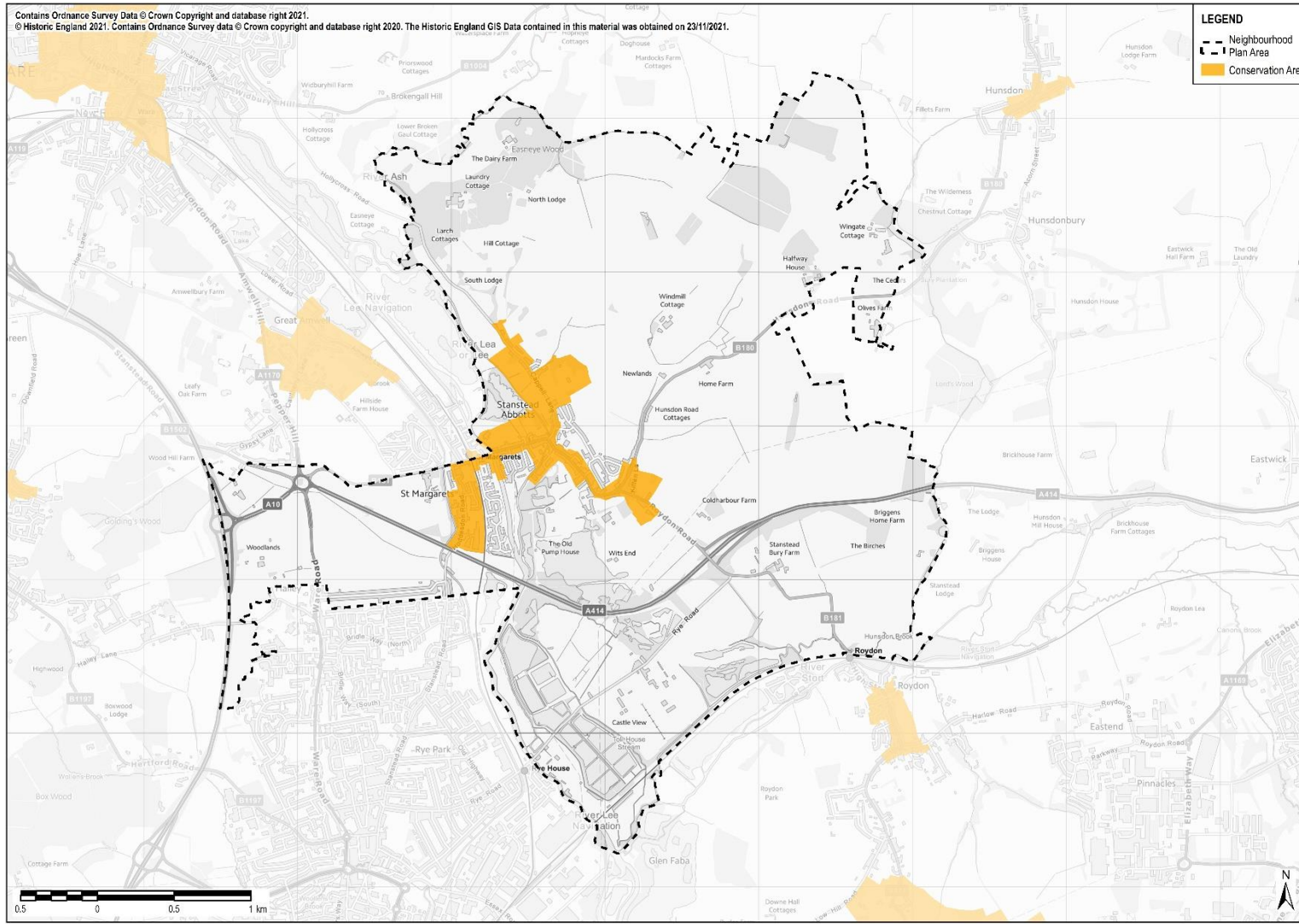
¹⁹ Natural England (2021) Risk Register. Available at: [Heritage at Risk 2021 \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

Figure 6.1 Designated heritage assets - Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments & Registered Parks and Gardens



Document Path: \\na.aecomnet.com\ls\EMEA\Basingstoke\UKBAS\Legacy\UKBAS\PFILW001\4400 - Management Services\5004 - Information Systems\60571087_Neighbourhood_Plan_CRB_2018_2022\02_Maps\Stanstead Abbots NP\Figure 6.1 Designated Historic Assets.mxd

Figure 6.2 Designated heritage assets – Stanstead Abbots Conservation area



Future baseline

- 6.12 Whilst designated assets, and non-designated assets will continue to be afforded protection under the provisions of the NPPF and Local Plan, it is recognised that future development has the potential to negatively affect historic character and settings, -detract from historic settlement qualities and disrupt valued viewpoints. Notably viewpoints in Stanstead Abbots are potentially vulnerable to insensitive layout and design from the development of new housing, employment and infrastructure.
- 6.13 From the valley slopes there are views across the Stort valley to the northern edge of Harlow, including tall chimneys and industrial buildings in some contrast to the wetlands within the shallow valley which may be negatively impacted through insensitive design. Similarly, designated and undesignated heritage assets within the SANP area have the potential to receive adverse effects from development due to insensitive design, layout, or massing. It is therefore important that new development is sympathetic to the historic character of the SANP area and protect features of historic significance.
- 6.14 Planning for future growth through the SANP should support the minimisation of impacts. It can also seek opportunities for public realm improvements, and accessibility improvements which can indirectly benefit access to and enjoyment of the historic environment, and benefit heritage settings.

Key Issues

- 6.15 The SANP area contains a wealth of designated and non-designated assets, including Listed Buildings, a Conservation Area, and a Registered Park and Garden. It will be important to ensure that future development avoids/ minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure; to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.
- 6.16 Assets acknowledged for their local heritage value could benefit from additional policy protections and provisions within the SANP. This is particularly relevant to the parish Conservation Area, building on the management objectives set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal from 2014.

SEA Objectives

6.17 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

Table 6.13: Proposed SEA objective for the historic environment

| SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|---|---|
| To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the SANP area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings? • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Hertfordshire HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the SANP area? |

7. Land, soil, and water resources

7.1 This theme focuses on the quality of soil resources, the extent of mineral resources, water supply resources and water quality in the Plan area.

Policy context

7.2 **Table 8.17.1?** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table-7.1?8.4 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to land, soil and water resources

| Document title | Year of publication |
|---|---------------------|
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | 2021 |
| The 25 Year Environment Plan | 2018 |
| Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England | 2009 |
| Future Water: The government's water strategy for England | 2011 |
| Water for Life | 2011 |
| The National Waste Management Plan | 2013 |
| Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) | 2020 |
| Minerals and Waste Local Plan | 2007 |
| East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP) | 2018 |

7.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources, and improve the water environment; recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- The 25-year Environment Plan presents a focus for environmental improvement in the next couple decades, with aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water, and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well

as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero waste economy.

- Affinity Water's WRMP presents the 60 year (2020-2080) strategy for balancing water supply with demand, including a commitment to increase the resilience to droughts in the area. This will be delivered by supporting customers to reduce demand, reduce leakage and investing in supply side capacity improvements. The Plan outlines how Affinity Water aim to confront and manage key issues to ensure the timely provision of clean water to all residents in the period up to 2080.
- The SANP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The plan identifies and safeguards sites and resources important to the continued sustainable management of mineral extractions and waste arisings.
- Furthermore, the SANP will also be required to be in general conformity with the EHDP which contains policies specifically relating to efficient land use (including prioritising brownfield land for development), the sustainable use of resources and agricultural land use.

Baseline Summary

- 7.4 **Geology, minerals and waste:** Stanstead Abbots village bedrock geology consists of Lewes nodular chalk formation and seafoord chalk formation (undifferentiated) - chalk. Sedimentary bedrock is also present formed approximately 84 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous period. Superficial deposits fall into the Kesgrave Catchment subgroup of sand and gravel with superficial deposits formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.
- 7.5 Extending into the North of the village itself, the rest of the SANP area falls into the Lambeth Group of clay, silt, sand and gravel, with the sedimentary bedrock being formed in the Palaeogene Period. This local environment was previously dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas.
- 7.6 Running alongside the village, the River Lea consists primarily of warm chalk seas. These sedimentary rocks are shallow marine in origin. They are biogenic and detrital, generally comprising carbonate material (coccoliths), forming distinctive beds of chalk.
- 7.7 **Soil Resources:** The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' land (BMV) and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality²⁰.
- 7.8 In this regard, the majority of the Stanstead Abbots settlement is underlain by good to moderate quality grade 3 land. The remaining part of the SANP area (surrounding Rye Meads) is underlain by non-agricultural land with the exception some small areas of Grade 3b land towards Roydon.

²⁰ British Geological Survey (2021) Geology of Britain viewer [online] available at: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/>

- 7.9 Additionally, based on the results of the ‘Predictive BMV Land Assessment’, the majority of the Stanstead Abbots settlement has a greater than 60% likelihood of containing BMV land, whilst the Rye Meads surrounding areas consists of non-agricultural use land.²¹
- 7.10 **Minerals:** The Hertfordshire Authority’s Monitoring Report (2021)²² identified Rye Meads (Stanstead Abbots) in it’s a list of Safeguarded Waste Sites. This includes the Rye Meads, Thames Water PLC, Sewage Treatment Works and Anaerobic Digester. The Monitoring Report also notes several Safeguarded Waste Sites in nearby Hoddesdon, including a Waste transfer station and chemical treatment facility on Essex Road, and Advanced Thermal Treatment Plant at Ratty’s Lane. The east Hertfordshire Minerals Plan also identifies Briggens Estate, which is expected to be proposed as a Preferred Area (not as a Specific Area), it should be noted that these areas, while lying in close proximity to the SANP area, would not directly impact on any land included as part of the SANP, but should be considered in relation to future development.
- 7.11 In terms of **water quality**, East Hertfordshire lies within one of the most water-stressed areas of the East of England, which is itself one of the most water-stressed regions of the country. The SANP area lies predominantly within the Lee Upper Management Catchment, which itself lies within the **Thames River Basin District**.
- 7.12 Affinity Water’s Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)²³ identifies that the supply-demand balance is under significant pressure from population growth, climate change, sustainability reductions and the need to increase resilience to severe drought. Stanstead Abbots falls within the Central Region, which faces ‘a shortfall in supply under drought conditions of 43 Ml/d by 2025, rising to 256 Ml/d in 2080.’ In response to the challenge, in the Central region an ‘adaptive planning’ approach has been adopted. This will include reliance on large scale strategic resources, which involve significant infrastructure and the associated import of water into our Central Region, in the longer term.²⁴
- 7.13 The immediate area surrounding the Stanstead Abbots settlement lies within a **Drinking Water (Surface Water) Safeguard Zone**²⁵. These represent zones at risk of failing national drinking water protection objectives. Whilst being a non-statutory designation, action is still taken within these zones to address water contamination; with the objective of avoiding extra treatment by water companies.
- 7.14 Similarly, the SANP area in addition to most of the East Hertfordshire District falls within a **Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ)**²⁴. This denotes areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. NVZs identify rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures, as well as a requirement to prevent water pollution from farm areas. Additional agricultural use/ development is not being proposed

²¹ Natural England (2017) Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land [online] available at:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5208993007403008>

²² Council (2021) Minerals Report [hertfordshire/authorities-minority-report/minerals-and-waste-development-framework-authoritys-monitoring-report-2021.pdf](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/authorities-minority-report/minerals-and-waste-development-framework-authoritys-monitoring-report-2021.pdf)

²³ Affinity Water (2020) Water Resources Management Plan 2020 [online] available at:

https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/docs/Affinity_Water_Final_WRMP19_April_2020.pdf

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Defra (2021) Magic Map [online] available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

through the SANP, and effects in relation to NVZs are therefore not considered likely.

Future baseline

- 7.15 In terms of water resources, between 2007 and 2012 the average resident of East Herts consumed 160 litres/day. This compares with the national average of 150 litres/day over the same period. Projections for population growth in East Herts and the wider south-east will mean that over the plan period, new strategic water resources will be required.
- 7.16 New developments within the SANP area have significant potential to impact soil resources, through the direct loss of high-quality agricultural land. The SANP offers the opportunity to steer future growth away from areas of highest quality agricultural land, thereby reducing the likely adverse effects on soil resources.
- 7.17 New development also has the potential to impact water quality through water run-off, diffuse pollution, increased consumption, and waste-water discharge. It is considered that Thames Water will continue to address any water supply and wastewater management issues over the plan period, in line with the WRMP 2020. Moreover, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, as transposed into national legislation, are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the parish and wider area. However, it will be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality, and support demand management measures by contributing to reduced consumption and improved efficiency.

Key issues

- 7.18 The precise ALC is unknown for much of the SANP area and so the extent and significance of potential effects in development may be more difficult to ascertain in the absence of site level investigations. If found to be BMV, it will be important that the SANP provides opportunities to avoid/ minimise the loss of high quality agricultural land.
- 7.19 The SANP will need to consider the potential development requirements for safeguarded waste sites and minerals 'preferred areas' present. Ultimately the spatial strategy should not undermine the integrity of key minerals and waste infrastructure situated within and surrounding the Plan area.
- 7.20 It will be important for future development to ensure that it avoids any detrimental impacts on water quality both on and off-site. Furthermore, the SANP should seek to capitalise on any potential opportunities to improve water quality, particularly chemical quality (such as improved transport drainage).
- 7.21 The SANP could also seek to support extended measures to improve the resilience of water supplies, including through local water recycling schemes and opportunities to increase efficiency in water use.

SEA Objectives

7.22 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives and assessment questions:

Table 7.12: Proposed SEA objectives for land, soil and water resources

| SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|--|--|
| To ensure the efficient and effective use of land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hindering of access to mineral resources in the Plan area? • Affect the integrity of waste infrastructure within and surrounding the Plan area? • Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/ underutilised land? |
| To protect and enhance water quality, and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid impacts on water quality? • Support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling? • Improve the resilience of water supplies? |

8. Landscape

8.1 This theme focuses on designated and protected landscapes within or near to the Plan area, as well as landscape character, landscape quality and visual amenity.

Policy context

8.2 **Table 8.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 8.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to landscape

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>The 25 Year Environment Plan</u> | 2018 |
| <u>The National Design Guide</u> | 2019 |
| <u>National Model Design Code</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP)</u> | 2018 |

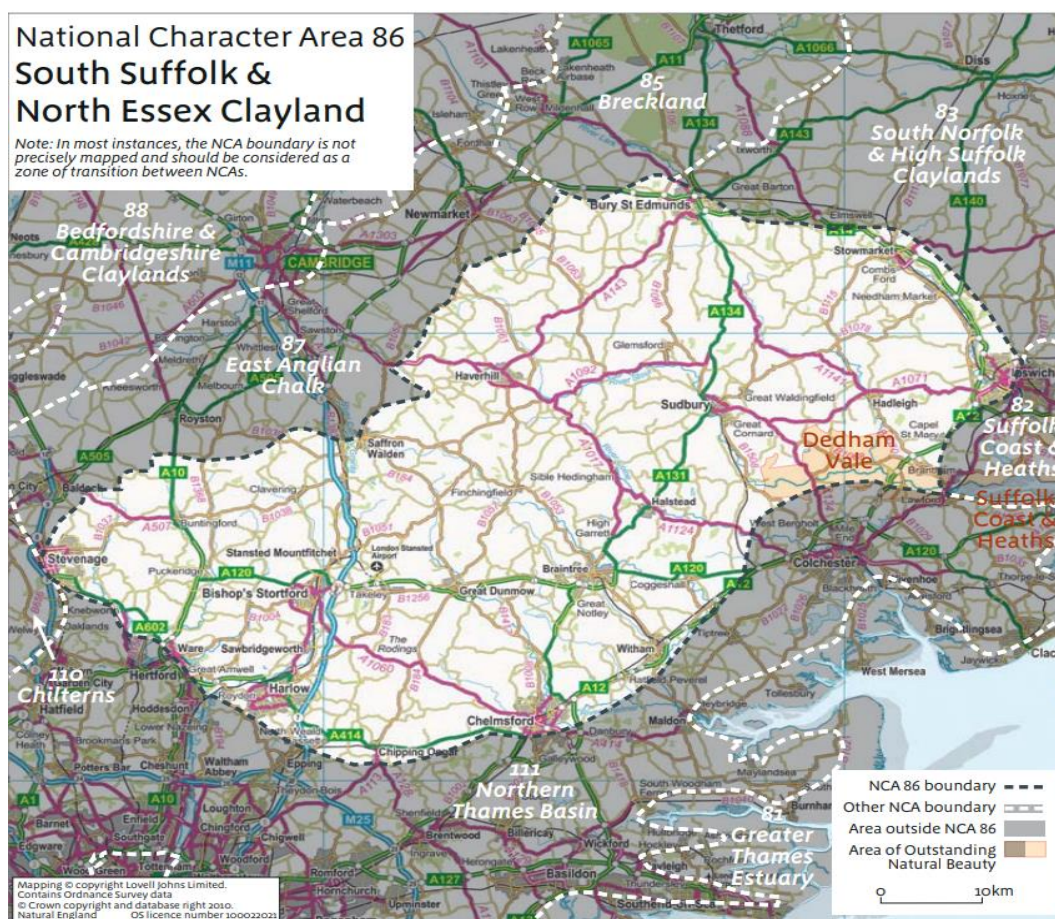
8.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land, and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised.
- The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring, and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces.
- The SANP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of the adopted EHDP, which contains policies relating to landscape and countryside and development in rural areas.

Baseline Summary

- 8.4 Stanstead Abbots is a rural village and civil parish in the district of East Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire, England. Its undulating chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by the river Lee valley, giving a topography of gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts. Fragments of chalk give many of the soils a calcareous character, which also influences the character of the semi-natural vegetation cover.
- 8.5 **National Character Area (NCA) Profile:** The South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA covers the four counties of Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire Hertfordshire and encompasses the SANP area.²⁶ It stretches from Bury St Edmunds in the north-west to Ipswich in the north-east, roughly following the line of the A14 trunk road through the Gipping Valley. It then embraces the Colchester hinterland before encompassing the urban areas of Braintree and Chelmsford in the south and stretching to Bishop's Stortford and Stevenage in the west.

Figure 8.1 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA area



- 8.6 The South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA consists of ancient landscape of wooded arable countryside with a distinct sense of enclosure. The general character is of a gently undulating, chalky boulder clay plateau, the undulations being produced by the numerous small-scale river valleys that dissect the plateau. There is an intricate network of ancient woods and

²⁶ Natural England (2021) South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland Available at: [NCA Profile: 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland - NE515 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/nca-profiles/nca-profile-86-south-suffolk-and-north-essex-clayland)

parklands, aged species-rich hedgerows, meadows including streams and rivers that flow eastwards. Traditional irregular field patterns are still discernible over much of the wider area, despite field enlargements from the second half of the 20th century.

- 8.7 The extensive moderately fertile, chalky-clay soils bestow the vegetation with a calcareous character. Moreover, gravel and sand deposits under the clay present key geological features, usually exposed during mineral extraction, which contributes to our wider understanding of ice-age environmental change.
- 8.8 The River Lea which flows through and separates much of Stanstead Abbots village, is listed as a key water body and catchment in the NCA Profile for South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland. The River Stort is a tributary of the River Lea which it joins at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire. It is a gentle rural river with a winding course that has remained unaltered. The Stort Navigation runs for 22 km from Bishops Stortford through a drop of 27 m with 15 narrow locks. It currently has an 'over abstracted' Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies status and thus, it is central that any new developments in the SANP should be sympathetic to the River Lea and its wider impacts on the status of the River Stort.
- 8.9 The **Landscape Character Assessment** for Stanstead to Pishoibury Parklands describes the broad band on the north bank of the river Stort between Stanstead Abbots in the west and the south-western edge of Sawbridgeworth, divided into four sub-areas of parklands.
- 8.10 The character assessment for this area lists a range of distinctive features including but not limited to:
- Country houses.
 - Relic cultural pattern reflects topographic change and different landcover, e.g., Hunsdon Mead, Hunsdon Mill, and Hunsdonbury.
 - Dovecote water tower at Briggens.
 - Historic moats at Eastwick.
 - Transitions to adjoining areas, with small parklands on the boundary.
- 8.11 Approximately two per cent of the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The closest AONB to Stanstead Abbots is the Dedham Vale AONB (refer to **Figure 8.1**) which sits on the borders of Essex and Suffolk. However, this site lies over 60 km away from the SANP boundary and therefore upcoming developments in this area are extremely unlikely to produce impacts on AONB within the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA.

Future baseline

- 8.12 The South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO1) highlights the need to enhance the:

'character of this gently undulating, rural landscape by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging sustainable land management practices that protect and enhance the landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity assets and

networks to benefit geodiversity, biodiversity, carbon storage and water quality, as well as the over-riding sense of place.’

- 8.13 The NCA’s Statements of Environmental Opportunity also aims to ensure that land management practices maintain and, where necessary, improve the condition of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Of relevance to the SANP, this will include management practices to maintain the Amwell Quarry SSSI and Rye meads SSSI, which may be impacted by new developments within the SANP area.
- 8.14 New developments, such as infrastructure developments, have the potential to generate incremental changes in landscape quality in and around the SANP area. In the absence of the SANP more speculative developments may be proposed within the open countryside, which would place increased pressure on the local settings. This could adversely impact upon the landscape features which contribute to the distinctive character of the Stanstead Abbots countryside, in particular the special qualities and setting of the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA and Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands landscape character.
- 8.15 The Landscape Character Assessment for Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands should also be considered in relation to future developments within the SANP area. Locally distinctive landscape features, characteristics and special qualities should be maintained, managed, and improved through the SANP.
- 8.16 New development which are appropriately designed, and landscape-led, have the potential to support the area’s inherent landscape character and quality. This may, for example, include the regeneration of brownfield sites to enhance the village setting, and improving the framing of key views. Namely, views of Harlow across the river valley with taller buildings nestling in trees are noted as a key characteristic of the Landscape Character Assessment for the Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands. Development in this vicinity would need to be managed to prevent obstructions to this view and will need to be considered within the SANP.

Key issues

- 8.17 Whilst there are no protected landscapes in the SANP area, the area is well recognised as part of the river corridor and its special landscape setting, with strategic green infrastructure links and rich habitats. As set out above, it is important that any new developments in the SANP should be sympathetic to the River Lea and its wider impacts on the status of the River Stort. The SANP presents opportunities to avoid/ mitigate any significant landscape impacts, including by protecting the overall settlement pattern and directing growth so as to minimise the loss of landscape features.
- 8.18 The SANP further provides opportunities for enhanced landscape protections, e.g. through policy provisions which identify and protect valued local views and vistas, as well as direct landscape improvements, e.g. through new GI requirements and/ or the proposed regeneration of derelict or despoiled areas.

SEA Objectives

8.19 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

Table 8.2: Proposed SEA objective for landscape

| SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|---|---|
| To protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including the river corridor and strategic GI links. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and/ or enhance local landscape character and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity and settlement character? • Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place? • Protect and extend/ enhance strategic and local GI corridors? • Protect visual amenity and where appropriate, building vernacular? • Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the river setting, or rural setting, including trees and hedgerows? |

9. Population and communities

9.1 This theme focuses on the demographics and households of the community and housing types, needs and affordability in the Plan area.

Policy context

9.2 **Table 9.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 9.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to population and communities

| Document title | Year of publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP)</u> | 2018 |
| <u>A Sustainable Communities Strategy for East Hertfordshire</u> | 2009 |
| <u>Homelessness & Rough Sleeping - Review and Strategy</u> | 2019 |

9.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which on the whole seeks to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
- The framework seeks to protect settlement and community identities, ensuring that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities, in safe environments where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life of residents.
- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. The Design Guide and Model code illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. In addition, the SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the EHDP which include policies relating to the provision and type of housing, specialist housing and employment land provision.

- The East Herts Sustainable Communities Strategy sets out the vision and ambitions for the future well-being of the area, and is the over-arching framework for all key services in the district. The strategy has been developed in close collaboration with the emerging Local Development Framework (Core Strategy) which will guide future land use and spatial planning in the area and other key strategies such as housing, community safety, health, economic and cultural strategies.
- Furthermore, the East Herts Homelessness Strategy sets out the approach for tackling homelessness in the district. The Strategy aims to prevent homelessness and ensure that accommodation and support is available for people who become homeless within the district.

Baseline Summary

9.4 The latest **population estimates** for Stanstead Abbots (based on best-fitting output areas) are identified in **Table 9.2** below.²⁷ This indicates a 5.9% total population growth between 2001 and 2019, which is somewhat in line with the figures from the East of England and England itself, which both illustrate comparatively high population growth over this period.

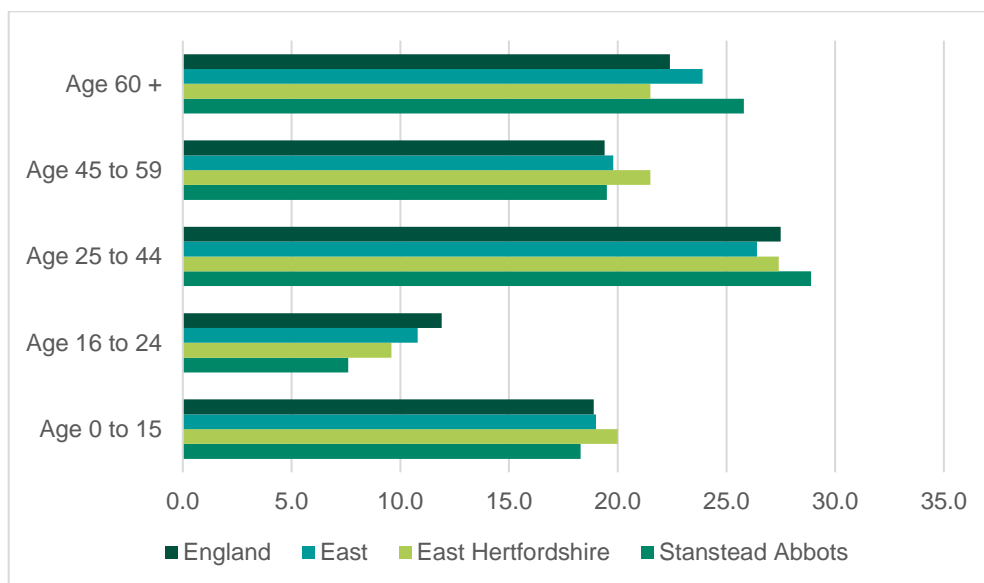
Table 9.2 Usual Resident Population

| Name | Status | Population Census 2001 | Population Census 2011 | Population Estimate 2019 | Population Change (%) 2019 |
|-------------------------|---------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Stanstead Abbots | Parish | 1,983 | 1,950 | 2,100 | 5.90 |
| East of England | Region | 5,388,140 | 5,846,965 | 6,269,161 | 16.35 |
| England | Country | 49,138,831 | 53,012,456 | 56,286,961 | 14.55 |

9.5 The **age structure** of residents in 2011 is depicted in **Figure 9.2 overleaf**. The figure displays the disproportionately high level of residents aged 60 years and over in the Plan area, only surpassed by the 25-44 age category. The proportion of the 60 years and over age group as part of the population profile drastically exceeds that experienced at district and national levels.

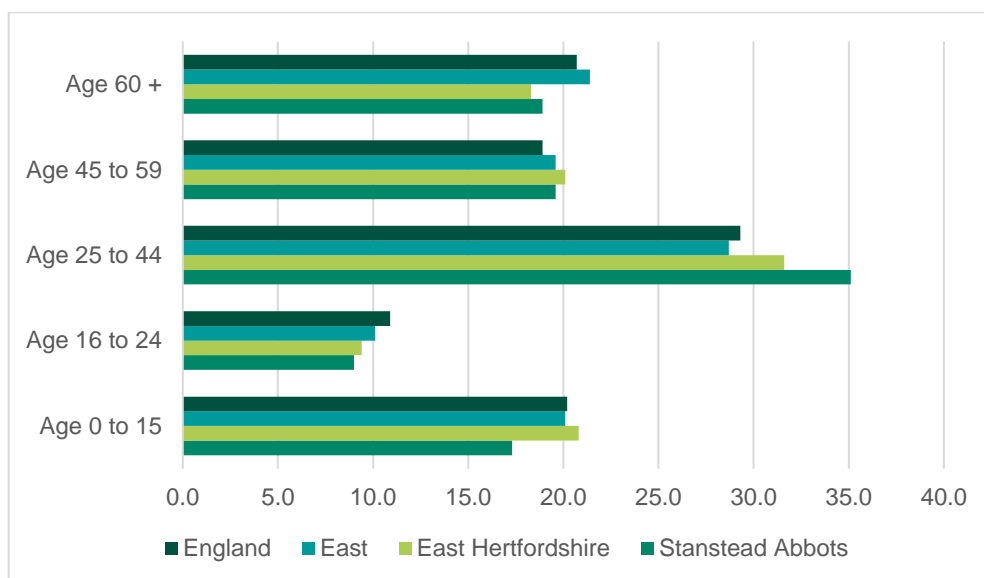
²⁷ Office for National statistics (2021) Available at: [2011 Census - Census of Population - Data Sources - home - Nomis – Official Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011)

Figure 9.1 Comparison Age Structure 2011



- 9.6 In conjunction with this is the notably lower levels of children, and residents from the ages of between 0 to 15 and 16 to 24, when compared to other age demographics. The proportion of these lower age groups as part of the population profile is considerably lower than the levels displayed at district, regional and national level, further suggesting that Stanstead Abbots is an aging population.
- 9.7 Coupled with figures from the age structure of residents in 2001 (**Figure 9.2**) shows that the 60 years and over age category was significantly lower when compared to 2011, with the 25 to 44 shrinking across this timeline. This demonstrates a trajectory of growth across the 60 and over age demographic from 2001 to 2011 in Stanstead Abbots and across the other measured areas.

Figure 9.2 Comparison Age Structure 2001



9.8 **Housing tenure** in Stanstead Abbots, as captured in the 2011 census, is depicted in **Figure 9.3**. This illustrates that home ownership is the predominant tenure. Higher levels of home ownership are demonstrated within Stanstead Abbots when compared to the national average but are lower than the district and regional levels. Alongside this, are the disproportionately higher levels of living rent free housing displayed in the Plan area, with private and social rented housing sitting above the district and regional averages.

Figure 9.3 Housing tenure



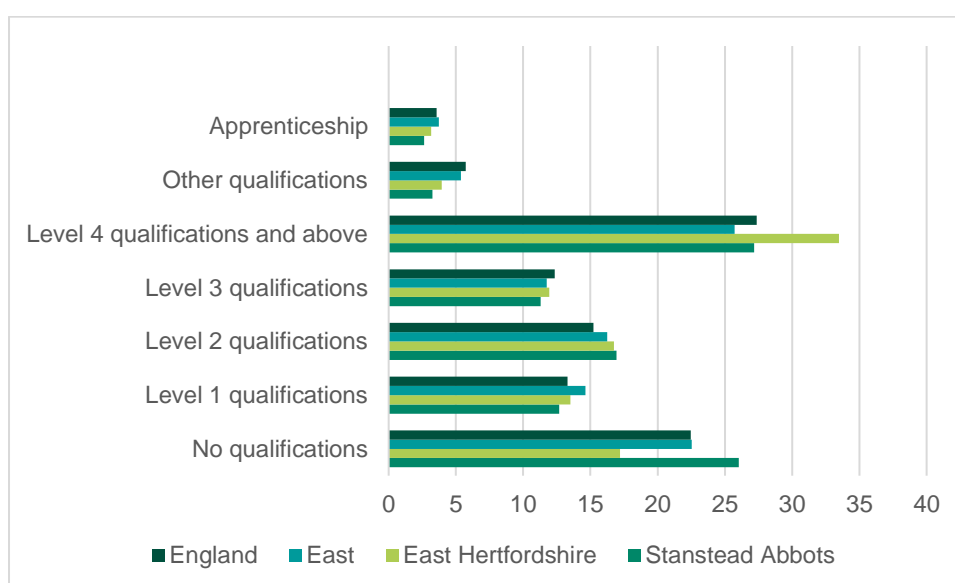
9.9 The **Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD)²⁸** is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights as illustrated below. The seven deprivation domains include:

- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
 - a. 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
 - b. 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
 - a. 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
 - b. 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, which includes those individuals who desire to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.

9.9 **Figure 9.4** depicts the highest level of qualifications for residents in the Plan area. In this respect, a large proportion of residents in Stanstead Abbots (26%) have no qualifications, a number which is proportionately higher than the other measured areas at the district, regional and national level. Moreover, the plan area also ranks lowest in ‘apprenticeships’ and ‘other qualification’ at 2.6% and 3.2%, respectively. Despite this, 27.1% of residents in Stanstead Abbots have Level 4 qualifications and above – a value comparable to the national average.

Figure 9.4 Level of Qualification, 2011²²⁸



Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included in the 2019 IMD:

1. **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
2. **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

9.10 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalized into deciles, with

²⁷ONS (2011) Census data, AECOM calculations

²⁸DCLG (2019): Indices of Deprivation Explorer', [online] available at: https://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/ioid_index.html

a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.

- 9.11 In this regard, Stanstead Abbots sits within the East Hertfordshire 018F LSOA. In 2019, this LSOA was ranked 31,309 out of 32,844 in England, where 1 is the most deprived. This indicates that Stanstead Abbots is amongst the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

Future baseline

- 9.12 As stated above (section 9.5), the proportion of residents within the older age category of 60 years and over is more pronounced than comparative figures for the district, the region and England as a whole. This trend can potentially lead towards adverse effects on the resident population, but if understood correctly, it can be used to help shape the direction of future developments within the SANP area.
- 9.13 Stanstead Abbots population growth, as well as its ageing population, are trends which are likely to continue. With a higher proportion of elderly, it will be imperative for future development to address the changing requirements of its aging residents. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of delivering the correct combination of housing types, tenures and sizes in suitably connected places. Continued development of housing types and tenures of market preference may also exacerbate the existing housing imbalance and increase deprivation in relation to the barriers to housing and service domains.
- 9.14 With consideration to the recent pandemic, homeworking is likely to become a more prevalent trend, and this is likely to change the commuting patterns and access trends of residents into the future. Whilst uncertainty remains, the SANP offers an opportunity to direct development which can facilitate changing working patterns and lifestyles, placing greater emphasis on strategic connectivity such as access to local services, facilities and employment options. New strategic development sites nearby may also improve accessibility for residents to some degree in the future.
- 9.15 With regards to the issues raised around the high proportion of unqualified residents: new developments should be shaped to improve access to schools and local services and facilities; in this respect, recognising the importance of connectivity to support sustainable growth and education. New developments could also increase access to local employment and provide easier connectivity to larger towns such as Harlow and Hertford, which would provide additional employment opportunities.

Key issues

- 9.16 The SANP provides the opportunity for enhanced policy provisions which seek to deliver the right mix of housing types, tenures and sizes according to local needs, in suitably connected places.
- 9.17 While Stanstead Abbots is amongst the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country, it is recognised that the SANP also provides the opportunity to address deprivation in development, ensuring levels within the parish remain low, supporting a high quality living environment.

SEA Objectives

9.18 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

Table 9.23: Proposed SEA objective for population and communities

| SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|---|---|
| Ensure growth in the Plan area is aligned with the needs of all residents and in suitably connected places, supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure to enable cohesive and inclusive communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs? • Improve the availability and/ or accessibility of local services and facilities? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Contribute to maintaining low levels of deprivation in the Plan area? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents? |

10. Transportation and movement

10.1 This theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, and accessibility levels in the Plan area.

Policy context

10.2 **Table 10.1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table 10.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation and movement

| Document Title | Year of publication |
|---|---------------------|
| <u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u> | 2021 |
| <u>The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead</u> | 2017 |
| <u>The Department for Transport’s Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy</u> | 2016 |
| <u>Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge</u> | 2020 |
| <u>Local Transport Plan</u> | 2018 |
| <u>East Hertfordshire District Plan (EHDP)</u> | 2018 |

10.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

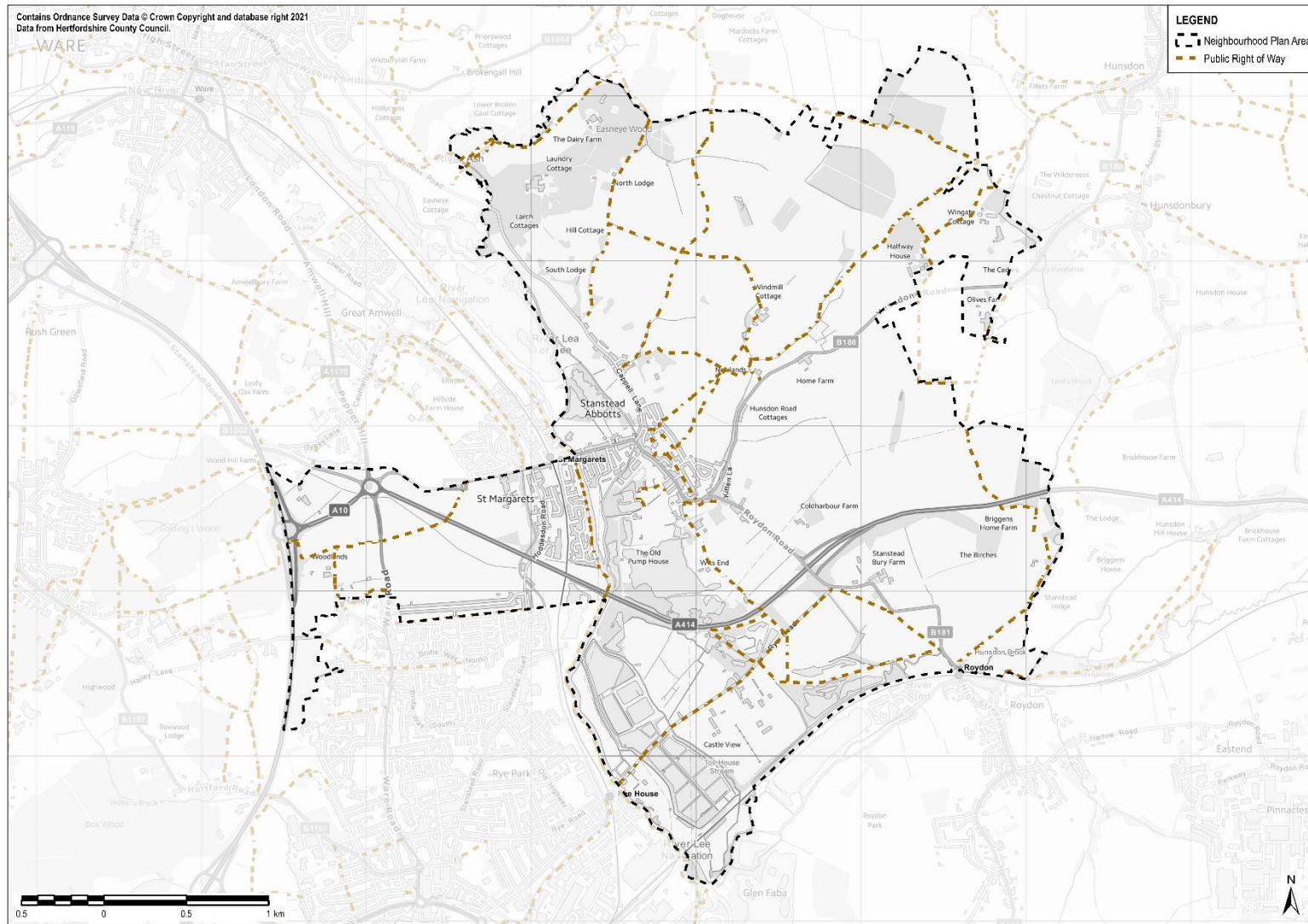
- The SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks the consideration of transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals to address any known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.
- National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journeys. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions and increasing safety.
- The Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan LTP4 2018-2031, published by Hertfordshire County Council sets out proposed transport solutions for the County up to 2031, with a focus on enabling sustainable economic growth.

- Alongside the EHDP, the SANP will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policy aims of the Local Transport Plan.

Baseline Summary

- 10.4 The **local transport infrastructure** within the SANP area is relatively un-complex. The main road running through Stanstead Abbots is the Hunsdon Road at the south end of the village and Cappell Lane at the North, which joins the Hunsdon as the road progresses towards St Margarets.
- 10.5 Other roads in and out of the village comprise of the B1502, which runs from the Amwell Roundabout into the village High Street (approximately 0.5 miles away) and the B181, which is accessible via the A414 from Harlow and runs through the village. The remainder of the SANP area is only accessible via narrow country lanes, some of which are poorly signposted.
- 10.6 Although no **train stations** exist within the village itself, Stanstead Abbots is in near proximity to accessible transport links. There is a half-hourly train service from St Margarets Station which is on the Hertford East to Liverpool Street line. This service is currently run by Abellio Greater Anglia.
- 10.7 There are also several **bus routes** that serve Stanstead Abbots including:
- 10, which travels from Hertford through to Church Langley Harlow (operated by Arriva Herts and Essex).
 - 351, travelling from Hertford to Bishops Stortford (operated by Galleon Travel).
 - 410, from Waltham Cross to Harlow via Cheshunt Brookfield Broxbourne and Hoddesdon (operated by Galleon Travel).
 - And 310, which runs from Waltham Cross to Hertford via Cheshunt Broxbourne and Hoddesdon and Ware (operated by Arriva).
- 10.8 Stanstead Abbots is situated in the between several larger towns and villages, including Hoddesdon, Hertford, Ware and Harlow. In terms of **strategic road networks**, Stanstead Abbots is located extremely close to the A10 which links to the M25, and the A414 which connects to the M11 at nearby Harlow.
- 10.9 From Ware, access is available from Hollycross Road leading onto Cappell Lane and connecting with the B181. Also, from Ware is Lower Road leading onto Amwell Lane, where access onto the High Street is possible. From Hoddesdon, is Hoddesdon Road, which allows access onto the High Street into the village and connects with the local bus route.
- 10.10 **Cycling and walking** is relatively common in and around the SANP area. The towpath running through Stanstead Abbots is very popular with both tourists and residents, either walking and cycling and provides a less congested traffic free route from London to Hertford. **Figure 10.1** displays the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network in and around the SANP area.

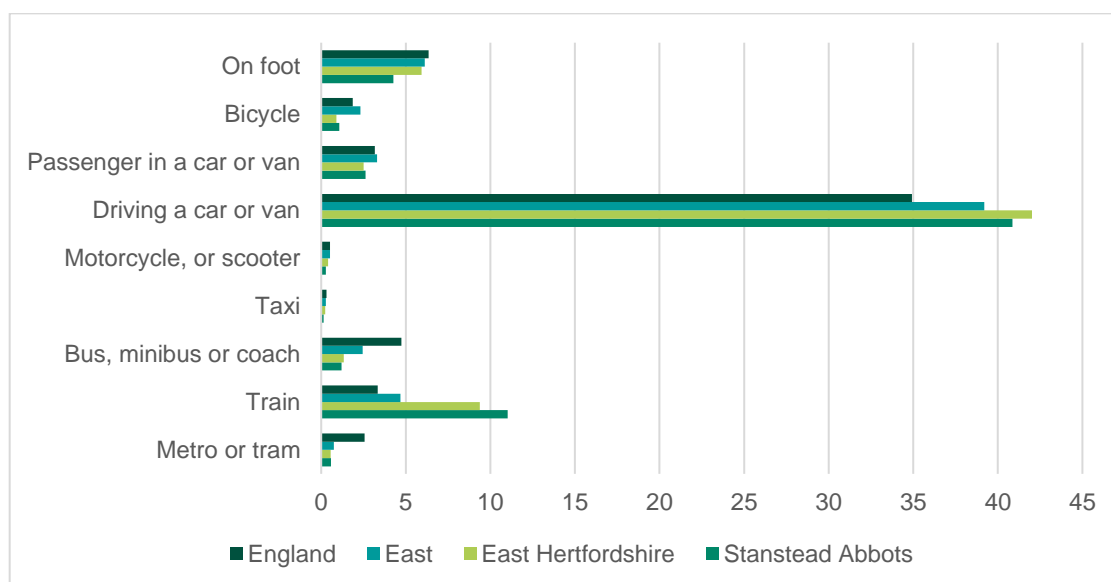
Figure 10.1 PRoW network



Document Path: \\na.aecomnet.com\ifs\EMEA\Basingstoke\UKBAS1\Legacy\UKBAS1PFILW001\4400 - Management Services\5004 - Information Systems\60571087_Neighbourhood_Plan_CRB_2018_2022\02_Maps\Stanstead Abbots NP\Figure 10.1 Public Rights of Way.mxd

10.11 2011 Census data (**Figure 10.2**) indicates that most residents in the SANP area **travel to work** by car or van 40.8% which is considerably higher than the national average and slightly higher than the regional average.²⁹ Conversely, the percentage of residents that travel by foot or by bicycle are considerably lower than those values seen at a regional and national scale.

Figure 10.2 Method of Travel to Work



Future baseline

10.12 Census data highlights that the percentage of residents that travel to work by foot or by bicycle are considerably lower than those values seen at a regional and national scale. This could be a result of Stanstead Abbots' rural setting, with many residents commuting for work in larger towns, or alternatively it could speak to the need to improve footpaths and cycling routes within the SANP area. Planning should therefore support small-scale infrastructure improvements and active travel opportunities that seeks to maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist movements.

10.13 In the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in Stanstead Abbots is likely to continue towards trends which favour the private vehicle sector including cars and vans, as the primary mode of transport. New development therefore has the potential to increase traffic and generate additional localised congestion issues which in turn may reduce road safety.

10.14 In contrast, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may increase trends towards working from home in Stanstead Abbots, therefore it is equally important for planning to consider sufficient infrastructure to enable suitable internet connectivity.

10.15 **Figure 10.2**²⁸ also demonstrates that 11% of residents travel to work by train, a value above that of the district average and significantly above (approximately two times higher) than the regional and national average.

²⁹ Office for National statistics (2021) Available at: [2011 Census - Census of Population - Data Sources - home - Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/)

Hence, it is central that any future developments within the SANP area, support this need for public transport and access to public transport facilities.

Key issues

- 10.16 There is a significant need for early planning in relation to transport and movement in development in the SANP area, particularly planning should seek to maximise opportunities to reduce the need to travel and access a choice of sustainable transport modes. This is notably important given the high volume of narrow country lanes in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. Appropriate consideration will also need to be given early on to potential development requirements in terms of mitigating impacts on road capacity and access.
- 10.17 Opportunities to improve and/ or extend active travel connections, alongside public realm improvements and urban greening within the plan ~~are~~ should also be sought.

SEA Objectives

- 10.18 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

Table 10.2: Proposed SEA objective for transportation and movement

| SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|--|---|
| Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more use of sustainable transport modes? • Encourage the uptake of active travel opportunities? • Extend or improve active travel networks? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure improvements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce impacts on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities? |

11. Next steps

Subsequent stages for the SEA process

11.1 The next stage for the SEA will involve exploring reasonable alternatives for the SANP. The findings of this work will be fed back to the SANP Steering Group so that they might be taken into consideration when finalising the Plan. The draft Plan will then be subject to appraisal, and the Environmental Report will be prepared for consultation alongside the SANP.

Consultation on the Scoping Report

11.2 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies. These bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.

11.3 This Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees. Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report, particularly the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues and the proposed SEA framework.

11.4 The consultation period runs from X to X. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Cheryl Beattie, AECOM

Email address: cheryl.beattie@aecom.com

11.5 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

Appendix A Proposed SEA framework

The SEA framework has been established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise. This draws upon the baseline position and policy context that has been prepared for a range of SEA themes (as set out in **Chapters 2-10**).

The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and supporting assessment questions, which will be used to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Plan (and reasonable alternatives).

Table A.1 below outlines the proposed SEA framework, bringing together the objectives and assessment questions that have been set out at the end of each SEA theme.

Table A.1: Proposed SEA framework

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|--|--|---|
| Biodiversity | To maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity and geodiversity sites and networks within and surrounding the Plan area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance Internationally and nationally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and the links between them? • Support the delivery of biodiversity net gains? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks and the network of open spaces which reduce recreational pressures on designated sites? |
| Climate change (including flood risk) | Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the Plan area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made by polluting vehicles? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Improve or extend local footpaths, cycle paths or strategic GI routes? • Increase the number of new development meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Support the transition to electric vehicles? |
| | Support the resilience of the Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the Plan area? • Sustainably manage water run-off? • Increase the resilience of the local built and natural environment? |

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are duly considered in the design of new development in the Plan area? |
| Health and wellbeing | Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the SANP area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? Avoid negative impacts to the quality and/ or extent of existing recreational assets, including formal and informal footpaths? Contribute to reducing social isolation? |
| Historic environment | To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the SANP area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings? Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Hertfordshire HER? Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the SANP area? |
| Land, soil and water resources | To ensure the efficient and effective use of land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hindering of access to mineral resources in the Plan area? Affect the integrity of waste infrastructure within and surrounding the Plan area? Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/ underutilised land? |
| | To protect and enhance water quality, and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid impacts on water quality? Support improvements to water quality? Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? Protect waterbodies from pollution? Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling? Improve the resilience of water supplies? |
| Landscape | To protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and/ or enhance local landscape character and quality of place? Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity and settlement character? |

| SEA theme | SEA objective | Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...) |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| | landscape, including the river corridor and strategic GI links. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place? • Protect and extend/ enhance strategic and local GI corridors? • Protect visual amenity and where appropriate, building vernacular? • Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the river setting, or rural setting, including trees and hedgerows? |
| Population and communities | Ensure growth in the Plan area is aligned with the needs of all residents and in suitably connected places, supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure to enable cohesive and inclusive communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs? • Improve the availability and/ or accessibility of local services and facilities? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Contribute to improving levels or aspects of deprivation in the Plan area? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents? |
| Transportation and movement | Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more use of sustainable transport modes? • Encourage the uptake of active travel opportunities? • Extend or improve active travel networks? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure improvements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce impacts on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities? |

