

CABINET HOUSING AND PLANNING PANEL – 25TH JUNE 2015
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT JUNE 2015

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's Affordable Housing Programme (AHP). Updates will be provided to this committee each quarter.

2 Financial Implication(s)

- 2.1 The financial monitoring report is attached at Appendix B and the budget for the programme is also monitored through the normal budgetary control reports and by a detailed review each quarter, prior to the quarterly returns made to the government.

3 Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the report

4 Background

- 4.1 At their meeting of 4th December 2012, Cabinet agreed a range of methods to deliver the Council's Affordable housing Programme (AHP) and that a quarterly monitoring report should be presented to this committee, setting out the budget and progress in delivering new affordable homes.
- 4.2 The AHP is managed via an officer project group which meets monthly and overseen by a steering group which meets bi-monthly. The Executive Member for Housing and Community sits on the steering group, which provides strategic direction, considers the budget and recommends any reallocation of funds between different delivery methods as required.

4.3 Progress on the Programme

- 4.4 Progress on the delivery methods agreed are set out at Appendix A

5 Policy Implication(s)

- 5.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Councils Corporate Priority "Our Places" and is linked to the statutory requirement relating to homelessness and the provision of decent homes under housing legislation. There are no new policy implications arising from this report.

6 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 A risk assessment is not required for this report however a risk assessment has been carried out in relation to the AHP.

7 Equality and Diversity

7.1 I confirm that it has not been necessary to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) in connection with this report.

Name of author	Jeremy Morton Extension 2723
Title	Principal Housing Development Manager
Date	18 TH May 2015

Background papers:

Cabinet report 4 December 2012

Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel report August 2014

Appendix A

Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) Progress on Methods of Delivery

Method	Progress	Units to be delivered
Disposal of suitable sites to Registered Providers (RPs).	<p>Welwyn Garden City Housing Association (WGCHA) has now obtained planning approval on all of the 6 garage sites.</p> <p>Land Transfers have been completed on the 4 Hatfield sites and start on sites /demolition achieved. Work has commenced on 1 of the WGC sites. It is anticipated that 3 of the Hatfield sites will complete by July 2015.</p> <p>The Architects (Rock Townsend) have completed drawings and pre planning advice on the proposals for six garage sites in the 2nd phase has been received. Revisions have been made to the schemes. Three schemes have been submitted for planning approval and visits are being made to Council tenants on the other 3 sites where small strips of land / gardens are required to improve the design and access arrangements. The sites will be tendered once planning has been achieved</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Estimated to be 22</p> <p>Total 40</p>
Registered Providers secure land and sites independently	<p>Paradigm Housing Group has completed the 4 properties at Cherry way and grant funding is anticipated for May 2015.</p> <p>Three properties at Elizabeth close have now been funded. It has been agreed that the remaining 2 properties will be advertised for Shared ownership by the Registered provider and no funding for these units is required.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>-</p> <p>Total 4</p>
The purchase of suitable properties on the open market.	<p>A total of 26 properties (ex council owned) have been purchased and these are now with Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust (the Trust)</p> <p>Offers have been accepted on 5 other properties in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield</p> <p>A further 3 properties have been identified for purchase. At present ten of these properties are ex HMOS and it is planned to bring the total of council purchases to 60 by the end of this financial year.</p> <p>Agreement has been made with the Registered Providers B3Living and Welwyn Garden City Housing Association for them to purchase 1 and 2 bed fats on the open market. Funding will be provided by the Council at the allowed 30% costs with the RPs providing the additional 70%. WGCHA are seeking agreement that</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5</p> <p>29</p>

Method	Progress	Units to be delivered
	<p>WHCT will manage and maintain the properties purchased for a fee to be agreed. The Council will secure nomination right to the new homes</p> <p>The registered providers are now actively seeking suitable properties to purchase .</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Total 70</p>
Direct construction	<p>The architects have submitted planning applications for the two sites proposed for construction.</p> <p>The Garden Avenue application was approved on the 5th March 2015. The Furzen Crescent site is to be amended to provide additional amenity space and further parking. Agreement has been made with one of the private garage owner to purchase their garages, which enable the improvements to be made</p> <p>A client group of officers from the Council and the Trust continue to meet with our Employers Agent to agree the specification and requirements for the tender documents.</p> <p>The sites have been submitted to the Homes and Community Development Partner Panel tender process seeking initial expressions of interest, 5 initial expressions have been received.</p> <p>Confirmation has been received from the Council Corporate Property team that a 3rd vacant garage site – Hollyfield –will be included in the tender.</p> <p>The tender is being prepared for the next stage of the procurement process. Bidders will be invited after the Council has received planning permission</p> <p>An up dated briefing note is being prepared for the Member Procurement Panel.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Total 28</p>
Purchase of additional homes on S106 developments.	<p>Following viability claims on the Sir Fredric Osborn site it has been confirmed the scheme can only provide 20% affordable homes. Agreement has been made between Council, developer and Register Provider (Hightown Praetorian & Churches HA) that additional affordable homes can be purchased with the allowed amount of RTB receipts. The Capital subsidy is anticipated to be paid on completion of the homes in May / June 2015.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Total 5</p>
Total		<p>Total (estimate) 147</p>

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Right to Buy Retained Receipts - Monitoring Report

Reporting Period to Qtr 2 2014/15 - ending 30/09/2014

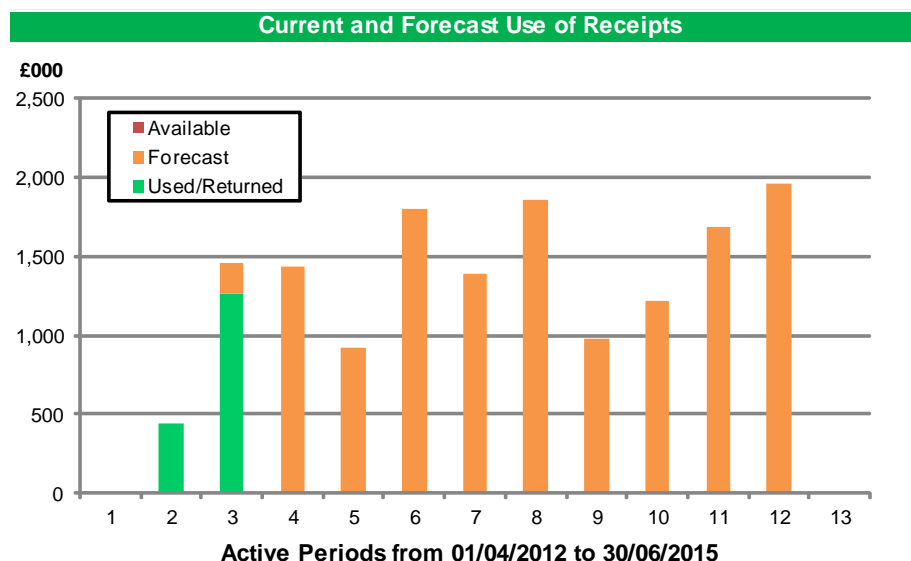
Sales Receipts	Total
Right to Buy Sales	255
Retained Receipts	15,143,030
Used Receipts to Date	1,703,959
Repaid Receipts to Date	0
Total Unused Receipts	13,439,071
Additional Investment Required	31,357,833

Interest	
Accrued Interest Penalty on Unused Receipts	598,594
Projected Interest Penalty to Repayment Date *	1,931,900

* Projected interest is calculated at the current interest rate and payable from capital resources.

Forecast Expenditure	
Planned use of Current Receipts	13,439,071
% of unallocated Receipts	0%
Remaining Interest Penalty	0

Funding of Future Planned Schemes	£	%
RTB Receipts	18,831,735	30%
Loan Funding	0	
Capital Receipts/ Reserves	31,967,642	
Council Additional Funding	31,967,642	51%
External Funding	11,973,073	19%
Total Scheme Costs	62,772,450	



Budget Variance	(Forecast Budgets)			
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Capital Budget	7,339,900	15,560,750	10,606,800	13,253,700
Actual Spend	4,628,305	0	0	0
Forecast Spend	0	17,307,934	13,925,280	11,193,163
Total	4,628,305	17,307,934	13,925,280	11,193,163
Variance	2,711,595	-1,747,184	-3,318,480	2,060,537
Funding				
Buy Back Allowance	406,374			
Receipts	1,378,324			
HRA Balances	2,843,608			
Total	4,628,305			

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING AND PLANNING PANEL – 25 JUNE 2015
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (GOVERNANCE)

THE WELWYN GARDEN CITY TOWN CENTRE STREETSCAPE DESIGN MANUAL

1 Executive summary

- 1.1 To promote best practice in the management and maintenance of the public realm in Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership has produced the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Streetscape Design Manual, April 2015. This manual was been prepared in conjunction with the advice of officers from the borough council and the county council and seeks to improve the quality of the public realm in Welwyn Garden City town centre. To aid its implementation and promote its recommendations, a quick reference guide for Hertfordshire County Council contractors has also been produced. Both documents are attached as an Appendix to this report.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Members note the report and recommend.
- The report is taken to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - Subject to the comments of Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that Cabinet endorses this advisory document and promotes its use in the consideration of public realm issues relating to Welwyn Garden City Town Centre.

Implications

3 Financial Implication(s)

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this document. The aspiration for this document to provide guidance on an agreed and consistent palette of materials in the town centre should mean that a more efficient use can be made of resources.

4 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 I confirm that the subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority 'Our Places', and specifically to the focus of protecting our environment and heritage which includes working with businesses and other organisations to protect our living environment and heritage whilst still supporting local growth.

5 Legal Implication(s)

- 5.1 Local planning authorities (LPAs) have a duty to preserve and enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas.

6 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 6.1 No climate change implications have been identified resulting from this report.

7 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 There are no risks in relation to this report.

8 Policy Implications

- 8.1 The council and the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership have developed a shared vision and strategy for the town centre. The Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Streetscape Design Manual highlights the need to better manage and maintain the public realm in the town centre and will need to be referred to when considering future planning guidance related to the town centre.

9 Background

- 9.1 In undertaking audits of the town centre, the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership public realm working group became concerned at the general state and appearance of some elements of the town centre's environment, particularly given its conservation area status. Being aware that several parties have a role in managing and maintaining the town centre, the group started to review best practice guidance and the approach taken by other Hertfordshire authorities in seeking to establish a standard to which we can aim.
- 9.2 Initial discussions were held with Hertfordshire County Council highways officers, the borough council's client services and landscape teams as well as seeking guidance from English Heritage (now Historic England) to understand the issues that affect the management and maintenance of the highway, landscaping and street furniture in the town centre. Following these actions, the public realm group decided to focus on issues such as paving, kerbing, bollards, railings, lighting, signage and street signs and review the sorts of recommendations that the design manual should include. This work culminated in the production of a draft document which presented an overall design guide that could inform the work of officers, contractors and others responsible for the management and maintenance of the town centre's public realm. The Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership published the draft document for consultation in June/July 2014. The draft document was reported to CHPP in July 2014 and comments were fed back to the Partnership.
- 9.3 The document has been reviewed by the Town Centre Partnership public realm group and a final version has now been produced along with a quick reference guide that can be used by Hertfordshire County Council contractors.

10 Explanation

- 10.1 The focus and role of the manual is unchanged to that of the draft version. It's fundamental aim is to raise the standard of streetworks consistently throughout the town centre and it is intended to act as a guide for contractors, developers, public utilities and other private agencies that may have a role in relation to the quality of the public realm. It has therefore been written for these target audiences and is designed to accord with 5 key objectives:

- 1) To raise awareness of the significance of the public realm in the town centre as a key element of the character of the Welwyn Garden City conservation area.
 - 2) To provide a framework for the delivery and maintenance of a high quality, coordinated, connected and coherent public realm.
 - 3) To develop priorities for investment in the town centre public realm.
 - 4) To achieve excellence by following and sharing good practice.
 - 5) To support and facilitate the overall strategy and vision for Welwyn Garden City town centre.
- 10.2 In addition to these objectives, however, the introduction to the manual does now highlight the benefit of improving the quality of the public realm and the links this has to the users' experience which was a recommendation of this panel. Other amendments to the document are generally minor and reflect the feedback of other consultees to improve wording and clarity. As this is a Partnership document the map at Figure 1 has also been amended to tally with the map that is shown in the Partnership's own Business Plan.
- 10.3 It was a recommendation of this panel that the Partnership consider the preparation of a summary guide on highway related matters to assist with its promotion and implementation as the whole document is over 40 pages in length. As highway authority, Hertfordshire County Council has responsibility for much of the public realm and therefore the Partnership has produced a quick reference guide that can be used by the county's contractors when working on projects in the town centre.
- 10.4 Finally, this Panel did also query the practical steps to be taken by the Partnership to implement the manual. Whilst the WGC Town Centre Partnership does not have a statutory role it is a vehicle by which local businesses can work together with other key stakeholders towards a shared vision for the town centre, the aim of which is to maintain and enhance the commercial, social and environmental success of the town centre whilst building on its heritage and strengths. The Partnership is therefore seeking recognition of this document and the recommendations that it makes. Hertfordshire County Council has advised that it will sign up to the document as local guidance but that this will be subject to affordability. The Partnership has sought to cover this issue during the development of the document by selecting comparable cost materials and so this is not anticipated to be an issue. If the borough council are also willing to endorse the document this will be a strong message of support for the guidelines that are being promoted.
- 10.5 The document is to be branded and a front cover will be produced prior to its formal publication and associated promotion by the Partnership later this month. Following its publication the use and success of the document will be monitored. The manual highlights that this should be a living document and so can be updated, revised or amended as necessary to further improve its aspirations or its usability.

11 Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 Whilst this is a Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership document, it will potentially be used and referred to by the council. On this basis an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been carried out. No negative impacts associated with the implementation of the manual have been identified and so it is not considered that the manual should proceed to full EIA.

Name of author	Anita Ward
Title	Senior Projects Officer
Date	11 June 2015

Appendices:

Welwyn Garden City Streetscape Design Guide, April 2015

HCC Quick Reference Guide for Contractors, April 2015

Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Streetscape Design Manual

Foreword

This manual has been prepared by the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership in conjunction with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council as part of a continuing commitment to improve the quality of the public realm in Welwyn Garden City town centre.

Welwyn Garden City town centre is special in both architectural and planning terms and should use these merits as an opportunity to enhance its image and differentiate itself from other competing town centres. The key aim of this streetscape design manual is to improve the environmental quality of the town centre by having an agreed and consistent palette of materials, street furniture and design approach to act as a guide to all stakeholders who are responsible for the development and management of the town centre public realm i.e. Hertfordshire County Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, private property owners, landlords and tenants.

In developing this manual several objectives have been factored into the guidance on the design, delivery and management of the different elements of the town centre streetscape.

Objective 1: To raise awareness of the significance of the public realm in the town centre as a key element of the character of the Welwyn Garden City conservation area.

Objective 2: To provide a framework for the delivery and maintenance of a high quality, coordinated, connected and coherent public realm.

Objective 3: To develop priorities for investment in the town centre public realm.

Objective 4: To achieve excellence by following and sharing good practice.

Objective 5: To support and facilitate the overall strategy and vision for Welwyn Garden City town centre.

These objectives highlight the fact that we have to balance the protection and enhancement of the conservation area with the economic needs of the town centre. There is however connectivity between all of these objectives, in that by improving the quality of the public realm we are also seeking to enhance the user experience for those visiting our town centre.

This design manual can be taken at two levels:

- Firstly at a basic level, this manual can address some of the issues raised in the recent street audits undertaken by the Town Centre Partnership Public Realm working party and the findings of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal¹, namely better co-ordination of public realm elements from the ‘seemingly arbitrary variation in street furniture and fittings’ to the ‘uncoordinated signage’.
- Secondly, but requiring a longer term aspiration for the town centre the approach to the public realm should be taken as a whole, rather than piecemeal, with the aim of realizing a town centre wide public realm strategy and long term vision for a successful town centre. Welwyn Garden City celebrates its centenary in 2020 and it would be good to aspire to the delivery of key enhancements for this date. For this, both professional advice as well as the involvement of all stakeholders is required and it also likely to require significant funding.

Signed:

Chris Hooper
Chair, Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership
30 April 2015

¹ Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal, September 2007

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. The Character of Welwyn Garden City Town Centre
3. Street Lighting
4. Ground Surfaces
5. Street Furniture
6. Pavement Cafes, Street Trading, Events & Activities
7. Building Frontages
8. Maintenance
9. Equality Act 2010 and Equality Duty 2011
10. Next steps

1.0 Introduction

Streetscape is about the visual aspects of the street and covers all elements, from the building frontages to the street paving and road surfaces, street furniture (benches, bins and bollards), lighting, signage, planting whilst allowing provision for vehicles and pedestrians.

This manual aims to establish an overall design guide for Welwyn Garden City town centre, capable of being implemented over the coming years as resources permit. Its purpose is to make the town centre more attractive in a way that reflects the town's 'Garden City' heritage, character and qualities, whilst being safe, accessible and enjoyable for all. The challenge is to gain the support and acceptance by all those involved in the management and maintenance of the streetscape so that we can work together to create a successful town centre for the 21st century.

This strategy is based on the English Heritage document 'Streets for All' (East of England) which sets out principles of good practice and on a street and historical audit of the town centre with reference to both the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal and the British Retail Consortium's guidance document '21st Century High Streets: A New Vision for our Town Centres' (July 2009).

1.1 *The purpose of this manual*

The Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal highlighted several issues around the quality of the public realm in the town centre. In addition the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership has set up a working group to consider those issues specifically related to the quality of the town centre's environment. In reviewing these issues it became clear that several parties have a responsibility to the management and maintenance of the town centre public realm whilst recognising its conservation area status and given the tight budgets and frameworks within which these parties have to work, partnership working is required more than ever.

Fundamentally, the purpose of this manual is to raise the standard of streetworks consistently throughout Welwyn Garden City town centre (figure 1 below identifies the town centre boundaries considered in this document). The manual not only sets a standard for the county council and borough council's own street works but is also intended as a guide for contractors, developers, public utilities and other private agencies that may be working on the streets in the town centre.



Figure 1 - Map of Welwyn Garden City town centre as considered by this document.
Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA100019547

1.2 Who is this manual for?

As noted above, this manual is primarily intended to guide the work of the county and borough council authorities who are generally responsible for the design, maintenance and management of much of the town centre's streets and public spaces. It will also be of interest to councillors who are making executive decisions about investment priorities and should act as a guide to property landlords and tenants. As such, it needs to be developed in consultation with all these groups as well as local amenity groups such as the Welwyn Garden City Society, the Welwyn Garden Heritage Trust and the Welwyn Hatfield Access Group.

The target audiences for this manual are:

- a) County council and borough council officers working in, for example:
 - Highway and traffic engineering
 - Highways management and maintenance
 - Planning, conservation and urban design
 - Parking management
 - Corporate property and estates managementAll of whom will be encouraged to adopt the principles set out in this manual.
- b) The guide will also be of interest to people working in private sector companies whose work has an impact on the streetscape, including:
 - Utility companies
 - Architects
 - Developers
 - Contractors (including council contractors)
- c) It will also be of relevance to local groups whose interest in the streetscape gives them a particular experience and expertise, for example:
 - Conservation groups
 - Historical societies
 - Transport campaign groups
 - Disability groups

1.3 *The status of this document*

The guidance in this manual is non statutory but does link to the borough council's adopted planning policies regarding the town centre, conservation and the protection of the environment (and the document also links with the borough council's emerging Local Plan with regard to these matters). This guide will also assist developers in understanding the requirements of both the borough and county council in terms of streetscape improvements.

Other local documents that the manual has had regard to and which should be read alongside the guidance promoted in this manual include:

- Hertfordshire County Council, Roads in Hertfordshire - 3rd Edition, 2011
- Hertfordshire County Council, Street Lighting Strategy, 2011
- Hertfordshire County Council, Highway Tree Strategy and Guidance document, Jan 2013
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Welwyn Garden City - Guide to Shopfront and Advertisement Design, 2012
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Trees and Woodlands Strategy, 2013

Finally, the borough council and the county council will also explore linking the key principles of the manual into any future guidance relating to the public realm in Welwyn Garden City town centre.

1.4 *How to read the manual.*

The manual is separated into themed topic areas, each of which makes a significant contribution to the streetscape experience, including:

- Street Lighting
- Ground Surfaces
- Street Furniture
- Pavement Cafes, Street Trading, Events & Activities
- Building Frontages

Within these topics the manual has sought to identify some of the current problems and issues we are seeking to address as well and identifying those elements of the streetscape we may be seeking to protect. The manual then identifies some of the immediate recommendations proposed as well as identifying opportunities for enhancement projects in the longer term or as and when funding allows.

2.0 Character of Welwyn Garden City Town Centre - Key Elements

This chapter discusses the importance of local character and briefly describes those elements of the streetscape that are considered to have a key role in maintaining and enhancing this.

2.1 *Local character and distinctiveness*

- The town centre is part of the wider Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area (see figure 2 for map) and has its own particular character that derives from its planned history, through to the dominance of the landscaping, the neo-georgian architecture and the variety of roles the town centre plays in terms of retail, civic, cultural, and community uses.
- There is a duty placed to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area and in order to do this those key stakeholders who have a role in the management and maintenance of the town centre need to understand and recognise the principal constituent elements of public realm and how they relate to each other. This includes not only the layout of the town centre, the relationship of the buildings to the public spaces but also the landscaping, materials, street furniture and levels of quality sought. Whilst all elements of the public realm are important the following features are of particular note.

2.2 *Trees and landscaping*

- This is one of the key elements of the garden city and in the town centre there is a generous blend of both formal and informal planting. One of the most defining features are the formal landscaped boulevards (Howardsgate and Parkway) which are designed with a mixture of paved and planted open spaces. In addition informal mature trees exist in The Campus, which along with street trees and ornamental trees elsewhere in the town centre provide a harmonious landscaped setting to the retail environment.
- Where new trees and landscaping are proposed species selection should be agreed with the borough council's Landscaping and Arboricultural team as the historical and physical setting needs to be fully considered alongside factors such as:
 - The available pavement width to allow for any tree pit and for future tree growth in terms of girth.
 - The nearby building line to allow for future canopy growth and height.
 - Any nearby or proposed lighting columns to ensure effective lighting.
 - Any underground services.

Furthermore, any new landscaping within the highway should also be agreed with the borough council's Client Services team to consider its future maintenance regime.

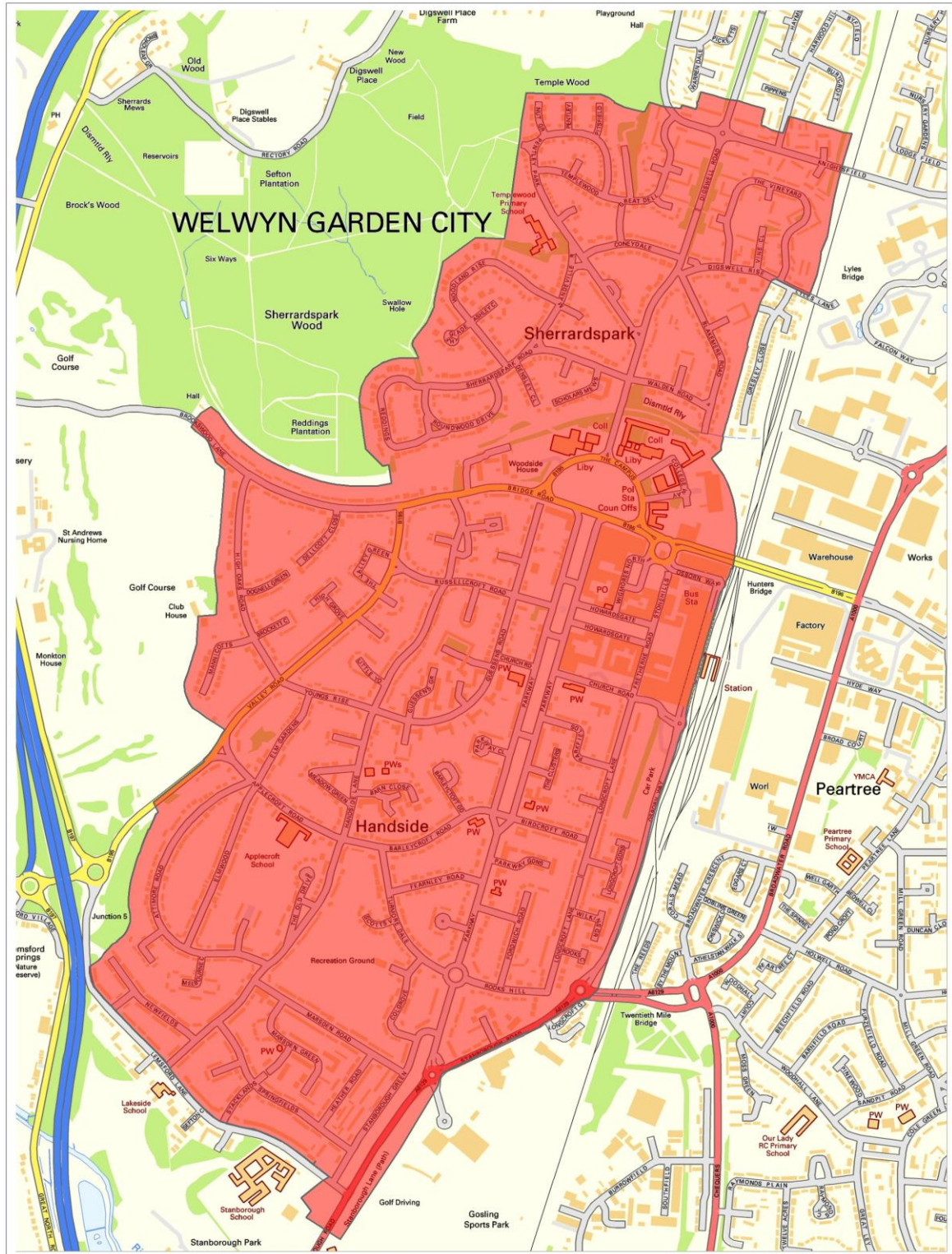


Fig 2 - Map to show the WGC Conservation Area designation.
 Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA100019547

- There is a distinction between trees on the adopted highway and trees on private land. Where there are trees on the highway, the Hertfordshire County Council Highway Tree Strategy and Guidance document (Jan 2013) should also be referred to.
- Trees, grass and borders should be well-maintained. Tree pits in the town centre should have a consistent approach (see section on ground surfaces).
- Where there is ongoing verge damage in the town centre a review should be undertaken of the reasons why such damage is occurring and mitigation measures considered (the preference being to resist removal of the verges).
- In the longer term where enhancement or development projects are planned for in the town centre elements such as grass verges and open spaces should be retained. They are an essential aspect of the garden city.
- Whilst railings are referred to later in this document, it should be noted that in some parts of the town centre post and rail as well as hedging is used as an appropriate means of protecting verges.



Fig 3 - An example of the high quality landscaping that is prevalent in the town centre.

2.3 Historic street lighting design

- Within the town centre (and extending out to other parts of the wider conservation area) there is a definitive lighting design bespoke to Welwyn Garden City which was designed for the garden city by the original town architect and planner, Louis De Soisson (see fig 4 below). It has a crucial role in reinforcing local character and should be maintained throughout the town centre. This lighting is referred to by the county council as Special Design Apparatus (SDA) and is discussed further in Chapter 3.



Fig 4 - An example of the original Coolie design street lamps.

2.4 Bespoke street furniture

- Within the town centre there are several examples of bespoke street furniture. Whilst these may not be listed by English Heritage, they still have an aesthetic value that contributes to the character of the conservation area. Where bespoke railings, metalwork, anniversary pieces, statues or landscape features are identified they should be retained and maintained wherever possible. For railings and other metalwork this also often means repainting in the ‘Welwyn Garden City green’ - a willow green colour that is prevalent in the town centre and referred to in this manual.



Fig 5 - An example of some of the bespoke elements in WGC Town Centre.

2.5 Poster Booths

- There are two poster booths (dating from the 1950s) in the town centre and whilst these are a unique feature they are desperately in need of renovation (although at present these booths are under private ownership). The aspiration is for these to be acquired, renovated and then used to build a sense of community and inform/educate readers about Welwyn Garden City. This is an on-going project that is being championed by the Welwyn Garden City Society.



Fig 6 - One of the poster booths in Howardsgate.

2.5 Guiding Principles

To meet the objectives of this manual and to ensure the continued preservation and enhancement of Welwyn Garden City's town centre it is suggested that the guiding principles of streetscape design are that all public realm works should be:

- Of a high quality - in terms of design approach, materials and workmanship.
- Appropriate to the period and style of the town centre's original development but enhancing the neo-Georgian style of many of its buildings and maintaining the sense of scale and order of Louis de Soissons' classic design, embracing his technique of securing variety with few variables.
- Based on the use of natural materials and colours, to promote the garden-feel of the town and help blend townscapes and gardens together.
- Focused on highlighting the generous open areas - especially the green areas (grass, gardens and borders) - and the feeling of space, light and safety making 'it a nicer place to hang about in'; an expression used to promote the British Retail Consortium's paper entitled *21st Century High Streets*.

3.0 Street Lighting

As noted in Chapter 2 much of the street lighting in the town centre is of a bespoke design (referred to as Special Design Apparatus) that contributes to the character of the town centre (and the wider conservation area) - particularly when it is seen as part of the wider streetscape along vistas such as Parkway. This chapter considers some of the issues related to street lighting in the town centre and recommendations for its future maintenance and replacement.



Fig 7 - The original Coolie design street lamps on Parkway.

3.1 Key Objectives:

- To ensure a safe highway network and to contribute to the security of the town centre and its users.
- To protect, maintain and refurbish the Special Design Apparatus to ensure it remains functional.
- To ensure that where Special Design Apparatus is replaced, it is on a 'like for like' basis.
- To support longer term aspirations to replace standard street lighting with Special Design Apparatus to enhance the character of the conservation area where the opportunity arises.

3.2 Special Design Apparatus (SDA)

Current Issues

- Generally within the town centre the majority of the street lighting on the highway is of the bespoke design, however, both the columns and lanterns are getting old and will eventually require replacement.
- Due to the age of the existing lighting in the town centre regular structural testing is necessary and there is limited capacity for the lighting to hold features such as Christmas lights or additional signage.
- The lighting in the town centre has been surveyed and mapped so there is a database of what currently exists.

Recommendations

- Lighting is managed and maintained by the county council and the general approach taken is that where there is existing SDA (as we have in the town centre) in the event of a knock down or replacement the lanterns and columns will be replaced on a like for like basis.
- Where such replacement is proposed in the town centre it is recommended that two types of lantern are considered (dependent on the design of the original SDA). Both are produced by the lighting company DW Windsor² and include the Hatfield lantern and the Salisbury lantern (see fig 8 below).



Fig 8 - The Hatfield Lantern and the Salisbury Lantern

- Whilst much of the original SDA is on a staggered column it is recognised that due to modern standards these types of column are generally no longer produced. As such a plain stepped column (or alternatively a tapered column) of a height to match that existing is recommended. Dependent on the location of any new columns issues such as the need to hold decorations and/or additional signage should also be considered.
- Of particular importance is that both the column and the lantern of any new lighting should be finished in BS12B21, the 'Welwyn Garden City green' colour that predominates much of the original SDA in the town centre.

² See www.dwwindsor.com



Fig 9 - An example of new SDA lighting introduced as part of the redevelopment of Sainsbury's in Wigmores South

- The general requirement is for sufficient not excessive lighting and currently this appears to be the case. Generally replacement follows a 'point for point' strategy whereby replacement columns will be sited in the same position as the existing unit or very close to it. Whilst new street lighting will need to be considered in relation to the current standards set by the county council the visual appearance of the lighting in the streetscene should also be taken into account e.g. spacing, position on the footway, column height etc.
- At present the county council's strategy is not to extend the population of SDA within town centres and conservation areas but to manage and maintain that which currently exists. The opportunity to undertake a comprehensive replacement of the older SDA on key routes/vistas such as Parkway or Howardsgate would be supported by the partnership; however, this would require significant commencement funding and further discussion between the county council and the borough council as well as being of interest to other key stakeholders.
- Where development proposals are introducing new lighting arrangements that would not form part of the highway but would be privately managed and maintained, the use of the designs noted above should be the preferred option.

4.0 Ground Surfaces

Ground surfaces can create an appearance of unity in the street when a limited palette of materials is consistently applied throughout. This also eases maintenance, thereby ensuring that the appearance of the street does not degenerate over time because replacement is standard for the area. This chapter gives details on the main paving and kerb options in the town centre.

4.1 Key Objectives:

- To relate ground surfaces to their surrounding streetscape context and respect local designs and detail
- To respect the relationship between the footway, buildings and carriageway.
- To agree a palette of materials and a consistent approach to repairs in the town centre.
- To retain grass verges.

4.2 Footway/Paving Details

Current issues

- At present there is an uncoordinated approach to paving in the town centre. This along with the use of inconsistent materials, continual damage due to vehicle overrun and poor examples of repair means there is an overall lack of a homogenous 'garden city' design.



Fig 10 - Damaged, poor quality and inconsistent paving materials are currently used

- The most obvious issue is the range of paving slab sizes that can be found in different parts of the town centre - even though these are all 'standard' sizes e.g. 400x400mm, 600x600mm and 600x900mm. There are also different finishes and colours used across the town centre - see fig 11.

Below: 600mm x 900mm on Bridge Road



Below: 600mm x 600mm on Howardsgate



Below: 400mm x 400mm on Parkway

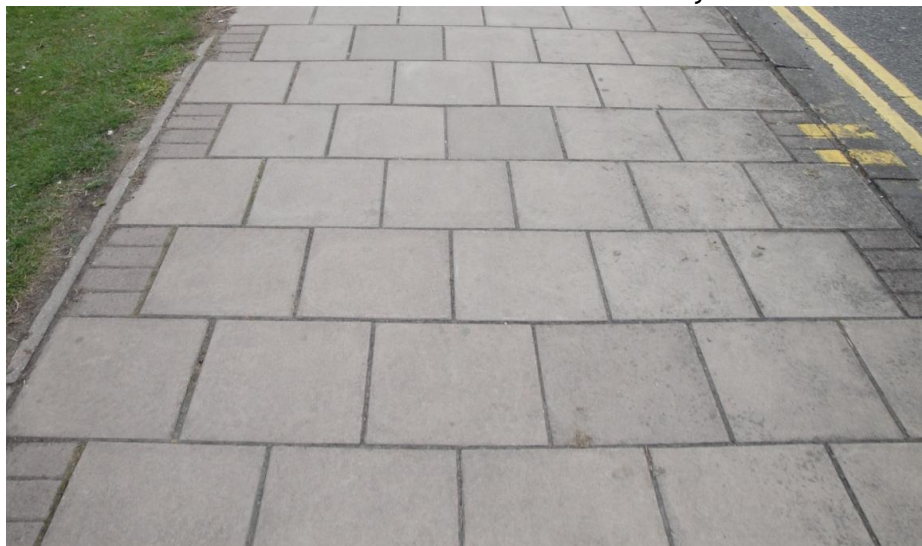


Fig 11 - Photos to illustrate the different types and sizes of concrete slab paving currently used. Where repairs are needed a like for like approach should be taken

- Generally, in Welwyn Garden City the colour has traditionally been lighter and more of a 'grey' tone, 'lifted' by pattern work. In developing an agreed palette of materials professional advice should be sought as to the colour and type of paving used as the choice is enormous. The suggestion is that the traditional concrete paving in large rectangular sizing should be retained as it is perhaps more in keeping with the 'clean, open space' vision of the Garden City. Where there are larger open areas of paving in the town centre the replication of designs such as those pictured below could also be considered where appropriate to enhance public spaces.



Fig 12 - The original WGC paving design adjacent Anniversary Gardens during 1950s

- Another factor is the different types of tree pit in the town centre and the need to agree an approach to these.



Fig 13 - Tree pits in the town centre.

Recommendations

- It is considered that slab options for day to day management and maintenance should be agreed. We currently have varying areas of paving design and in the interim repairs or replacements need to tie in with these designs. Where larger scale replacements are proposed there is also the opportunity to review the paving proposed for a more standard element.
- In most areas it is recommended that this should comprise of a standard concrete paving slab (600x900mm) in a grey tone.



Fig 14 - A good example of an area of new paving that has been design to blend with existing areas and uses the recommended standard bollard type.

- It should be noted that larger slabs are often susceptible to cracking under vehicle loading, although new technology along with thicker slab sizes does means they are now more durable which avoids the need to protect the pavement with bollards. Whatever choice is made, every effort must be made to ensure that the slabs are capable of taking the trading and abuse without damage. Ideally it is better to prevent vehicle overrun but where this may occur the first metre of paving should be strengthened to increase resistance to overrun.
- Quality of installation is also important. Where repairs or wider replacement is proposed careful attention must be paid to cutting slabs around street furniture to leave a neat finish. In this regard good reinstatement by utility companies is also essential to maintaining the quality of the finish and to ensure level and unbroken paving.
- Bitumous (black top) should not be used for footway areas in the town centre. Where it has had to be used as a temporary fix, it should be removed and replaced with an appropriately sized paving slab within a 3 to 6 month period.

- Granite setts could be used in certain locations to delineate areas e.g. private access to rear loading bays/parking areas for retail blocks.
- The use of red tactile paving at controlled crossing points and buff tactile paving at uncontrolled crossing points (see fig 15) with a 6 dome standard blister pattern and using a slab size of 400x400 is recommended where pedestrian crossings are being repaired, revamped or introduced to be compliant.



Fig 15 - Example of the two types of tactile 'blister' paving used at crossing points (Parkway)

- In some locations it is appropriate to continue the paving into adjacent privately owned areas without a change in either materials or the bonding pattern. Where this occurs the boundary between the public and private areas could be marked with a series of brass studs.
- Ideally any paving refurbishment close to the town centre's boundaries should also blend with the wider surrounding conservation area.
- In the longer term it is considered that a public realm enhancement project should be undertaken and that a type, colour, size and standard of paving should be agreed for use throughout the town centre. Once agreement on the paving type has been reached, large-scale application will have significant funding implications and it is recognised that a specific budget or grant will be necessary. However, changing the paving will have, perhaps, the biggest effect on the appearance of the streetscape and when assessing costs, sustainable accounting methods and 'life cycle' costing should be used (which should include provision for maintenance costs).



Fig 16 - Larger scale renewal schemes offer the opportunity for enhancements - new paving on Wigmores South.

4.3 Kerbs

Current issues

- The design and quality of the kerb has a significant effect on the finish of the streetscape and compliments the paved and grassed areas of the town centre. Again there are different types of kerb in the town centre with a mix of traditional granite and precast concrete being used (and also of different widths).
- The standard type of kerb in the town centre is the non exposed aggregate.



Fig 17 - Photos showing older granite kerbs and more modern smooth concrete kerbs.

Recommendations

- The vision for the future town centre needs to be agreed and then safety/pedestrian-traffic separation needs to be built into the design. The English Heritage 'Streets for All' document states that maintaining kerb lines preserves the historical form of streets. Between road and pavement, it is important to keep a reasonable kerb height and to use different materials to define/highlight the separation. If the current layout of the town centre is maintained, it would seem advisable to maintain the existence of kerbs to separate pedestrians and traffic.
- Careful consideration must be given to areas designed to improve access/safety for those with mobility/disability issues and these areas, already well-established in the WGC town centre, should be accommodated as part of the overall design and not added as an afterthought. Disability groups should be consulted. The Disability Discrimination Act 2004 must be adhered to.

4.4 Road markings

Current issues

- Lining the carriageway is the main mechanism for regulating driver behaviour but can also have a significant negative impact on the public realm if not implemented sensitively. Unfortunately there have been incidences where road lining has been undertaken without due care and consideration.

Recommendations

- Within the town centre (and the wider conservation area) the minimum requirement for road markings should be as follows: when resurfacing roads regulatory yellow lines should be reinstated (only where necessary and appropriate) at a narrow width of 50mm and in primrose yellow in accordance with best practice (Primrose Yellow - BS381C No.310).
- Coloured Carriageway Surfaces: generally, the use of coloured carriageways is not recommended in the town centre, they are unattractive and a maintenance liability, especially when they become oil stained and utilities fail to reinstate them properly.

5.0 Street Furniture

This chapter provides information on major items of street furniture and states preferred designs, colours and positions within the footway and carriageway. In line with the key principle/aim of reducing street clutter the careful amalgamation, coordination and positioning of street furniture plays a major role in achieving this objective as well as defining a reduced palette of materials.

5.1 Key Objectives:

- To achieve an uncluttered, well-maintained and consistent ‘Garden City’ style of street furniture throughout the town centre respecting local designs and details.
- To identify and remove superfluous/redundant items but preserve and maintain historic street furniture.
- To co-ordinate the different elements of the streetscape and ensure they are appropriately sited within the footway.
- To agree a limited range of street furniture to achieve consistency and enhance the identity of the town centre.
- To consider future maintenance.

5.2 Signage

Current issues

- There are several types of road signage within the town centre environment - vehicular traffic signs, controlled parking signs, cycle signage, pedestrian signage and street nameplates.
- Some of the town centre signs are in poor state of repair.

Recommendations

- The proposal is that road signs should be located on buildings or on existing posts whenever suitable. This will avoid the need to add new posts which can increase problems with street clutter. An audit by the relevant authorities could help rationalise the number of signs in accordance with current legislation. Suggestions related to the different types of signage in the town centre are as follows.



Fig 18 - Badly-maintained signs detract from the appearance of the town centre.

Vehicular traffic signs

- The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 and its associated chapters regulate the vehicular traffic signs and markings to be used on the public highway. It is important to ensure that the signs and markings are in accordance with these regulations as drivers can successfully appeal against a penalty charge notice if they can show that the signs or marking were inadequate. However, the aim should be for minimum signage advisable.
- The regulations do however allow some variation in the size of traffic sign allowed.
- Existing posts and columns should be used for signage and combining signs onto a single board can further reduce clutter.
- The use of illuminated signs should also be minimised.

Parking Restrictions

- Within the town centre there are Permit Parking Areas which are marked and signed.
- Parking signs have to be clearly visible to enable consistent, unchallengeable parking control. However, to reduce their impact on the conservation area the signs should be as small as possible.
- Parking restriction plates should be fixed to walls by agreement (and a wayleave agreement may be required to do this) or lamp columns wherever possible. It is recognised, however, that in some instances (e.g. new residents permit parking areas) the signage has to be a required size for purposes of enforcement.

Pedestrian signage

- A new town centre wide pedestrian signage scheme was recently installed in the town centre for the guidance of residents, tourists, businesses and visitors. This signage is of a bespoke style (also by DW Windsor) and uses a Linotype Octavian Roman font lettering on a mineral green fingerpost design.
- It is intended that this should be the main pedestrian signage for the town centre and should be monitored, maintained and managed to ensure that it is up to date i.e. finger posts should be added or removed where necessary or should destinations change.



Fig 19 -New pedestrian signage installed in 2011

Street nameplates

- A minimum of one street nameplate located at each end of a road is required by law, with the installation of further signs being discretionary. This is managed by the borough council.
- Original street nameplates are made of cast iron or enamel and should be retained and repaired wherever possible.
- Where replacement or new signage is required this should be to the standard specification used within the borough incorporating the appropriate font for the Welwyn Garden City area. Where appropriate, it is recommended that street nameplates should include 'No Through Road' emblems to reduce the need for additional signs and posts.
- Nameplates in the town centre should preferably be attached to a building.



Fig 20 - Examples of the original nameplates and font in the town centre.

5.2 Railings

Current issues

- Within the town centre there are different types of railings which are managed and maintained by different parties depending on their role or function.



Fig 21 - The original pedestrian guard rail seen in the town centre is of a bespoke design and should be repaired to match.

Recommendations

- Generally, railings should only be used where the protection of pedestrians or grass verges/greenspace is necessary.



Fig 22 - Where new pedestrian guard rail has been introduced it is of a standard type but key to its integration in the street scene is the fact that it has been painted in BS12B21

- Where railings are used to protect greenery there is a distinct Welwyn Garden City railing design (see Fig 23). Where new guardrail is installed for a similar purpose an identical style and colour should be used throughout the town centre. In some instances, the use of post and rail fencing as well as hedging has been used to protect verges.



Fig 23 - Bespoke guardrail design protecting greenspace along Howardsgate

- There are also other parts of the town centre where a bespoke guardrail design is used. Similarly, these should be protected and respected.



Fig 24 - Bespoke guardrail design to the ramped access adjacent Anniversary Gardens

- Within the town centre all pedestrian guardrail must be galvanized and must be finished either with a green powder coating or painted in the 'Welwyn Garden City green' colour (BS12B21).

- Maintenance is an issue. Where guardrail is damaged through an accident, insurance compensation should be sought to repair and repaint. Otherwise there is currently no maintenance budget and an application would have to be made to the County Highway Locality Budget. Whilst this may be the current position it should be noted that this may change in the future.
- Where crossings are redesigned the need for guard rail should be re-considered. Similarly where existing guardrail is no longer considered to be necessary it should be removed.

5.3 Bollards

Current issues

- Bollards are used for several reasons; for the safety of pedestrians, preventing pavement parking and closing roads to vehicular traffic.
- There are currently far too many designs in town centre which is resulting in an uncoordinated and cluttered appearance.



Fig 25 - Bollards used on private land and on the highway - a mix of designs.

- Uniformity and consistency in bollard type should be achieved through bollard replacement following agreement on a preferential design approach.

Recommendations

- Bollards installed by the county council are generally used to protect pedestrians, pavements or building frontages from vehicles. Where these are required it is suggested that the default bollard should be the three ring exposed aggregate bollard shown in Fig 26.



Fig 26 - The recommended bollard for use on public highway, shown here in two height variations and in the 'warm' cream shade.

- In some locations the role of a bollard could be achieved by considering the multi purpose aspect of using other street furniture to achieve these outcomes.
- Maintenance is again an issue and therefore the removal of unnecessary bollards should be an ongoing programme. Bollards should be removed when un-strengthened paving is replaced with strengthened paving, where there are parking controls to prevent footway parking, and where crossings no longer require them.
- Where bollards are installed by private landlords it is recommended that a 'Morpeth' or 'Manchester' style of bollard is used in a black finish.

5.4 Benches

Current issues

- The provision of seating contributes to the social life of the town centre, provides useful rest points and enables the enjoyment of the Garden City. Whilst there are currently different designs of bench in the town centre, these have recently been refurbished and repainted in a water repellent coating which has created a more homogenous appearance in the town centre.



Fig 27 - Recently retreated benches in Howardsgate

Recommendations

- Generally there is adequate seating within the town centre and so the addition of new seating should only be encouraged in places where people will use it e.g. in a sunny location or where there is an attractive view or where it will contribute to the streetscene whilst giving careful consideration in relation to issues such as anti-social behavior. In placing new benches in the town centre these should be also be sited adjacent to a bin.
- As benches are gradually replaced in the town centre (or where new benches are proposed), the borough council have selected IS/A/190 1.9m Islington Seat with arms, Treated with 3 coats of Rystix UV water repellent - from Branson Leisure as the preferred style.
- Some benches in the town centre are memorial benches. Licences for a memorial bench can be purchased by the borough council for a period of 10 years. The fee includes the cost of the bench, its installation, the creation of a plaque with an agreed inscription. After the expiration of the initial 10 year period, the licence holder will have the choice to renew their licence. Alternatively, should the licence holder decline to renew, their dedication will be removed and the bench will be made available for someone else.



Fig 28 - one of the memorial benches on Parkway

5.5 Litter Bins

Current issues

- Litter bins are essential to keep the town centre tidy and are needed at regular intervals within the streetscene. At present there are different designs of bin in the town centre which again results in an uncoordinated approach to street furniture to the detriment of the appearance of the town centre.

Recommendations

- The proposal to adopt a single design of litter bin in the town centre to replace the mix of old style bins that can presently be found has already been taken on board. The borough council is responsible for the management and maintenance of bins and is currently part way through a project to review the standard of provision in the town centre. Where bins are found to be in need of replacement a standard design has been selected which continues to use the black/gold finish and can also incorporate a top ashtray for locations in the town centre where such a feature is deemed to be necessary (see fig xx).



Fig 29 - An example of the new standard litter bin (with ashtray).

- Due to current budget constraints it is recognised that the replacement of bins in the town centre with the new standard design will occur over a period of time. Whilst it would be preferable to undertake a single comprehensive programme of replacement this would require significant forward funding.
- At present it is considered that the bins are generally well sited. Where schemes or proposals are considered that would introduce or relocate existing bins it is recommended that bins should continue to be sited near generators of waste (fast food restaurants) and exits from Howard Centre and other pedestrian flows.
- It is recommended that a maintenance, repair and retreating policy/programme should be adopted so that cyclical reviews of the standard of provision in the town centre can be undertaken.

5.6 Cycle racks

Current issues

- The provision of cycle racks actively encourages cycling and fits with the Garden City ethos. Within the town centre there are several areas of cycle racks but these are well used and there is always pressure to expand the network.
- Racks in the town centre are generally the standard 'Sheffield hoop' and most usually are arranged in a layout perpendicular to the kerb (although a parallel layout could be considered).



Fig 30 - Cycle racks outside the Howard Centre are very well used

Recommendations

- Where new racks are proposed these should be suitably located so as to consider other town centre users and their appearance within the streetscene. Generally racks should be located to the edge of the footway.
- New racks should be the standard Sheffield hoop design and be of a black finish.
- The current location of the cycle racks outside the Howard Centre suits commuters, but a convenient relocation might be considered if the vision for this area is clarified. Additional capacity should be considered as they are often over full during the week.

5.7 CCTV masts

Current issues

- There are seven CCTV columns in the town centre. Whilst CCTV enhances town centre safety and security the current purpose built masts are considered a dominant feature in the town centre.
- To improve the appearance of the current masts have recently been repainted the Welwyn Garden City green (BS 12B21) to blend with the lighting and guardrail in the town centre.

Recommendations

- No further masts should be added in the town centre and in future cameras should be relocated onto buildings or combined with other street furniture.

5.8 A Boards

Current Issues

- A-boards can be seen as street clutter forming a pavement obstruction and a trip hazard. They are dangerous for blind and partially sighted people. However, they are a useful form of advertising that can add to the character of the town and should be allowed, provided that A boards are limited to one per shop/restaurant and do not cause obstruction of the footway.

Recommendations

- The town should consider the development of a standard design in consultation with traders. Hertfordshire County Council are currently developing an A board protocol to ensure that A boards are managed and sited responsibly. This is a project that the Town Centre Partnership could promote with the support of the county and borough councils.

5.9 Telephone kiosks and post boxes

Current Issues

- Telecom operators are responsible for the installation and maintenance of telephone kiosks and individual operators may all have their own design styles. The kiosks in the town centre are generally unsympathetic to Garden City design and are a target for fly posting.



Fig 31 - Overly-modern phone kiosks.

- There is a single free standing traditional Royal Mail red 'pillar boxes' at the northern entrance to the Howard Centre. Whilst this is not listed it is a recognisable feature in the streetscape.

Recommendations

- The current kiosks in Theodore's Way, if used, should ideally be replaced with the original Gilbert Scott designs as in the old photographs of the town (see fig. 12) or a design more sympathetic to the concept of the Garden City.
- Where new telephone kiosks are proposed these should be carefully sited so as to consider other town centre users, issues such as fly posting and sufficient space between the door opening and the wider carriageway (so as not to impede pedestrian flow). New locations should also take account of wider issues in the conservation area such as key views, character and streetscene.
- Should new post boxes be introduced these should also be the traditional free standing Royal Mail red 'pillar boxes' and the post box that currently exists should be retained and maintained.

6.0 Pavement Cafes, Street Trading, Events & Activities

This chapter considers some of the elements and activities that help add animation to the streetscene and how they can be designed and managed in a manner that can contribute to the success of the town centre.

6.1 Key Objectives

- To support pavement cafes where there is suitable space available to ensure that pedestrians (particularly those with a disability) can pass by easily.
- To ensure that where pavement cafes are agreed good quality matching tables, chairs, benches and umbrellas are used.
- To ensure that street trading, events and activities are well managed so that their benefits outweigh any temporary disruption or inconvenience that may occur.

6.2 Pavement Cafes

Current issues

- Pavement cafes are becoming more popular and fit the ideals of the Garden City, enabling people to enjoy the space and greenery and bringing life and colour to the streets. The aim of creating a more pleasant environment is to bring people into the town centre and pavement cafes add to the buzz and atmosphere and attract footfall. They should be encouraged in 21st Century High Streets (British Retail Consortium). If not designed well, however, they can become obstacles and detract from the setting of the historic environment.
- Businesses are sometimes not aware that in order to operate a pavement café both permission from the highway authority and planning permission is required. The Highways Act 1980 provides legislation against obstructions on the highway and the county council does have the ability to remove any unauthorised tables and chairs. In addition licensing approval from the borough council may also be required.



Fig 32 - Pavement cafes are an increasingly popular feature in the town centre

Recommendations

- In designing any scheme a pavement café the following principles should be considered:
 - Furniture should be located adjacent to the building from which the café trades and leave sufficient footway space for the volume of pedestrians using the street.
 - The area to be used should be enclosed by a suitably designed means such that it that does not have a negative impact on the streetscene or character of the town centre and to ensure that the pavement café furniture cannot be accidentally walked into by blind or partially sighted people.
 - The pavement café should not display strident advertising. Whilst larger chains may have a 'corporate' image, this should be tailored to ensure that it is still sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.
 - Street furniture of a quality and style appropriate to the character of the garden city should be used e.g. plastic chairs would not be encouraged.
- Bearing this in mind, the obvious areas to encourage pavement cafes are at the top of Howardsgate and outside the front of the Howard Centre (see fig 30). A rethink of this area could help address some of the issues highlighted in the Conservation review 2007 'the area in front of the Howard Centre is not an inspiring introduction to Welwyn Garden City, with its patchy lawn, unvarnished wooden benches and concrete paving'.

6.3 Street Trading, Events and Activities

Current issues

- Specialist food, crafts and farmers' markets, events and other activities can bring both footfall and vitality to the town centre and are to be encouraged. The majority of formal activity in the town centre is managed and hosted by the town centre partnership in conjunction with the borough council. There are several areas in the town centre used for events/markets including Stonehills, Anniversary Gardens, Wigmores South and the area outside the main entrance to the Howard Centre. The biggest event of the year is usually the 'switch on' of the Christmas lights in the town centre.



Fig 33 - Example of a specialist food fair held in the town centre.

Recommendations

- Care should be taken to ensure that pitches are appropriately located and are of good design.
- There is an increasing calendar of annual events and any significant remodeling of the public realm (particularly Stonehills or Howardsgate) should consider the opportunity to re-design space to accommodate a wider range of activities, events and street trading opportunities in the town centre whilst preserving the 'garden' appeal throughout the year

7.0 Building frontages

While it is not the purpose of this document to propose guidelines for building frontages in terms of facade treatment, shopfront design, or commercial signage, it must be recognised that these frontages do have a significant impact on the quality of the town centre environment. As a result, building frontages including shopfronts, signage, lighting and shutters, should be considered as part of the overall space and streetscape.

7.1 Key Objectives:

- Building frontages should enhance rather than dominate the streetscape and reflect the neo-Georgian original design. New buildings should also enhance rather than detract from the original Garden City design (see WGC Conservation Area Appraisal 2007).
- Most buildings in the town centre are privately owned and, as such, this design manual will have to rely on private landlords and tenants support for it and be supported by suitable planning instruments.
- A large number of the important architectural features of the town centre buildings are being compromised. Examples include brickwork, fenestration and doorways.
- Shop fronts contribute greatly to the feel of a place and, as such, there is scope to improve all shop fronts, including the Howard Centre.



Fig 34 - There are several styles of shopfront in the town centre.

The borough council and the WGC Town Centre partnership have recently developed a Shopfront and Advertisement Design Guide which is available to download from the www.welhat.gov.uk.

The design guide identifies and explains the main types of shopfront prevalent in the town centre and where a new or replacement shopfront is required the following principles are recommended:

- Do not design the shopfront in isolation but take into account the scale and style of the existing building and/or the terrace in which it sits. In most cases the shopfront is part of a larger building/terrace where uniformity is a key feature.
- Ensure that the shopfront respects the scale and proportions of the building and its neighbours so that it can harmonise with the street scene.
- If a large shopfront is required extending across more than one premises use vertical subdivisions such as dividing piers or pilasters and stallrisers to preserve the appearance of a series of individual units. Individual fascia boards should also be used or retained.
- Retain traditional architectural detailing or framework elements where these features have survived, reinstate where they have not and incorporate these into the new design wherever possible.
- Choose materials that are of good quality and compatible with the rest of the building. The use of traditional materials such as natural stone or painted soft wood is encouraged.
- Choose a colour finish that is complimentary. The use of bold or strident colours is generally not appropriate and should only be used with care and discretion and to a limited extent.
- Take care over smaller details such as door handles, letter boxes and other architectural ironmongery so that it complements the age and character of the building.
- Independent access to upper floors is important. Where this is currently provided it should be integrated into the overall shopfront design.
- Consider accessibility and security issues from the outset. New shopfronts should be designed to afford easy, dignified access to disabled people and others who are mobility impaired.

8.0 Equality Act 2010 and Equality Duty 2011

The Equality Act 2010 (EA) provides the legal framework that protects people, including disabled people, from discrimination. It replaces a range of anti-discrimination legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) although it should be noted that the EA generally carries forward the protection provided for disabled people by the DDA.

The Act introduced a new public sector Equality Duty which came into force on 5 April 2011 and requires that public authorities in the exercise of their functions have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty.

The town centre provides a range of facilities that are used by the whole community and in the light of this legislation it is important to ensure that the streetscape is 'fit for purpose' and accessible to everyone, including people who have physical or sensory disabilities. Indeed, it is just as useful to consider those who may encounter mobility problems such as those with small children/prams, those carrying heavy shopping or luggage and older people.

The aspiration is to ensure that the streetscape is accessible, safe and inclusive whilst recognising its heritage and the need to protect and enhance the character of the town centre. The siting of street furniture should be such that all users of the town centre are unhindered by inappropriately located obstacles.

9.0 Maintenance

The provision of a high quality public realm can be let down if poorly maintained. The borough council seeks to ensure high standards of maintenance and cleaning with respect to litter and graffiti whilst the county council is responsible for the ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the general wear and tear of those elements of the adopted highway.

Where public realm enhancement projects are being considered the design should allow for future street cleansing and it is recommended that maintenance teams should be consulted.

In relation to the adopted highway, the use of high quality materials should make future maintenance less arduous and represent better value for money when considered over the long term. The county council has a duty to maintain the public highway and should undertake regular inspections.

Utility companies often need to renew and repair apparatus such as pipelines, ducts and cables. Often these result in temporary re-instatements which can leave the street looking messy and uncared for. Pressure needs to be brought upon public utilities to carry out their final reinstatements as quickly as possible and the work must be undertaken to match the adjacent paving (blacktop is not acceptable).

Many of the current aesthetic issues in the town centre could be solved by a system of regular quality checks once work completed and to deal with damage/wear and tear.

10.0 Next steps

This document is a living document that requires input and ultimately support and agreement from all stakeholders.

Our recommendation is for a strategic review of the town centre to take place to effect significant change for the 2020 centenary celebrations. In the meantime we would suggest we begin by talking to the relevant parties to get agreement on a final palette of street furniture.

CONTACT DETAILS

Should you have any questions about this document please contact the Town Centre Partnership's Town Centre Manager, the Planning Implementation Team at Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and/or the Highways Team at Hertfordshire County Council.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY TOWN CENTRE
AREA COVERED BY THE STREETScape DESIGN MANUAL



Map of Welwyn Garden City town centre as considered by this document.
Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA100019547

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
Herts County Council, Highways Operations & Strategy Team - 0300 123 4047
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Planning Implementation Team - 01707 357306

Published April 2015

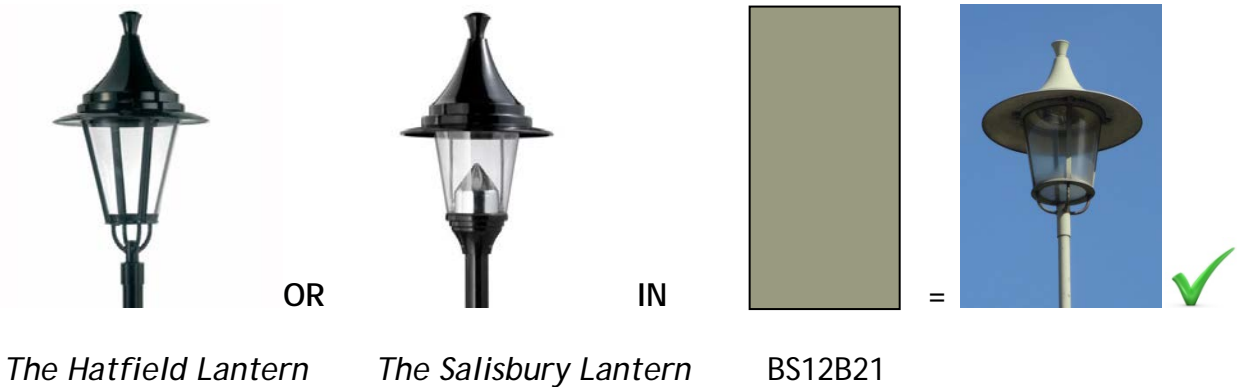
Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Streetscape Design Manual

Quick Reference Guide for HCC Contractors

Welwyn Garden City Town Centre is part of the wider Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and is special in both architectural and planning terms. The key aim of the Streetscape Design Manual is to improve the environmental quality of the town centre by having an agreed and consistent palette of materials, street furniture and design approach.

Street Lights - Special Design Apparatus (SDA)

- Street lighting in the town centre is of a bespoke design (referred to as SDA).
- Where replacement is proposed in the town centre 2 types of lantern are recommended (dependent on the design of the original SDA). Both designs are produced by the lighting company DW Windsor.
- A plain stepped column (or alternatively a tapered column) of a height to match that existing is recommended. Dependent on the location of any new columns issues such as the need to hold decorations and/or additional signage should be considered.
- Of particular importance is that **both the column and the lantern** of any new lighting should be finished in BS12B21, the 'Welwyn Garden City green' colour



Yellow Lines

- Within the town centre (and the wider conservation area) yellow lines should be a narrow width of 50mm and in primrose yellow in accordance with best practice (Primrose Yellow - BS381C No.310).



Paving

- Bitumous material (black top) **should not** be used for footway areas in the town centre.



- Interim repairs or replacements need to tie in with the existing designs. Slab options for day to day management and maintenance should be agreed in advance.
- Slab options for larger scale replacements should enable a more standard environment. Standard concrete paving slabs of either **600x600mm** or **600x900mm** in a grey tone is recommended.
- Larger slabs can be susceptible to cracking under vehicle loading. Where vehicle overrun may occur the first metre of paving should be strengthened.
- Careful attention must be paid to cutting slabs around street furniture to leave a neat finish. Good reinstatement by utility companies is essential to maintain the quality of the finish and ensure level and unbroken paving.
- **Red tactile paving** for controlled crossing points and **Buff tactile paving** at uncontrolled crossing points with a **6 dome standard blister pattern** and using a slab size of **400x400mm** is recommended where pedestrian crossings are being repaired, revamped or introduced to be compliant



Example of the two types of tactile 'blister' paving used at crossing points (Parkway)

- In some locations it is appropriate to continue the paving into adjacent privately owned areas without a change in either materials or the bonding pattern. Where this occurs the boundary between the public and private areas should be marked with a series of brass studs.
- Granite setts may be used in certain locations to delineate areas e.g. private access to rear loading bays/parking areas for retail blocks.

Kerbing

- The standard type of kerb in the town centre is the non exposed aggregate.

Railings

- Generally, railings should only be used where the protection of pedestrians or grass verges/greenspace is necessary.
- Within the town centre all pedestrian guardrail must be galvanized and must be finished either with a powder coating or painted in the 'Welwyn Garden City green' colour (BS12B21).
- There are also other parts of the town centre where a bespoke guardrail design is used. Similarly, these should be protected and respected.



Cycle Racks

- New racks should be the standard **Sheffield Hoop** design in a **black finish**.



Bollards

- If bollards are required the **three ring exposed aggregate bollard** is recommended.



WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING AND PLANNING PANEL – 25 JUNE 2015
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (GOVERNANCE)

THE LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Consultation on the Local Plan Consultation Document, the Sustainability Appraisal and the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan took place between January 23rd 2015 and 20th March 2015. Almost 6,000 thousand representations have been received to the consultation documents.
- 1.2 The representations are currently being processed and analysed. This report sets out some of the emerging key issues raised in the responses, a list of new sites and further technical work which needs to be carried out.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Panel note the next steps for the preparation of the Local Plan and agrees to the publication of an e-newsletter.

Implications

3 Financial Implication(s)

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. The costs of the production of the technical work will be met from existing budgets.

4 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The preparation of the Local Plan is a corporate target of the council, as part of the *Our Places* priority.

5 Legal Implication(s)

- 5.1 It is a legal requirement that consultation associated with the preparation of a Local Plan is carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The Localism Act 2011 introduced the Duty to Cooperate, not only with other planning authorities but also with bodies such as the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Local Nature Partnership and the Environment Agency.
- 5.2 Policies in an emerging plan will have increasing weight the further they progress through the system particularly if they have not received any objections.

6 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 6.1 No climate change implications have been identified resulting from this report.

7 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 The requirement to make speedy progress on the preparation of the Local Plan, the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the concept of Neighbourhood Plans in the NPPF make it critical that progress is made on moving forward with the Local Plan to adoption at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.2 However there is a risk of the Local Plan being found unsound if it is not justified by the technical evidence or if it does not result in a deliverable strategy. The tests of soundness require a plan to be: positively prepared; justified; effective; and consistent with national policy.
- 7.3 The risk of delaying preparation of the Local Plan needs to be weighed against the risk of legal challenge or being found unsound at a later stage. Analysing the consultation responses to the Local Plan will allow the council to assess what technical work needs to be updated and to consider if any changes to its proposals should be made before finalising the draft plan for submission.

8 Policy Implications

- 8.1 Once adopted the Local Plan will be the main consideration for determining planning applications and set the framework for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents. It will identify sites required to meet the need for growth, sites which should be protected and will also set out the approach for assessing planning applications.

9 Explanation

- 9.1 Approximately 5,900 representations have been received to the 3 local plan consultation documents which are available for viewing on our website. Whilst no petitions have been received there are a number of standardised responses which have been received. The responses are now in the process of being analysed and it is therefore not possible to provide a full summary of the issues raised in the representations at this stage. A further report will therefore be brought back to this Panel on this matter.
- 9.2 At this early stage it has been possible to identify a number of key issues raised in response to the consultation and to identify where technical studies need to be updated.

Further Technical work.

- 9.3 This Panel has previously been advised of the need to update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment to take account of the latest demographic and economic projections. In addition there have also been a few representations on the calculation of the Objective Assessment of Need that it is either too high or too low. A number of adjoining authorities have also questioned the difference between our respective housing market boundaries. An update to the SHMA has now been commissioned to review the representations received and update the data. Members should note that this might lead to a revised Objective Assessment of Need.
- 9.4 The Environment Agency has advised that a Stage 2 SFRA should be carried out to consider in more detail sites which contain floodplains. This has now been commissioned and will include an update to the Stage 1 SFRA to take account of latest flooding information, including surface water flooding.

- 9.5 The Environment Agency is also asking for further evidence on sewerage and water supply capacity. A Hertfordshire wide water study is in the process of being jointly commissioned.
- 9.6 Members of this Panel have previously been advised of the need to carry out further transport modelling work. The county council has commissioned a new transport model for junctions 3 and 4. We will need to review the need for additional testing in the light of new sites.
- 9.7 Historic England (formerly English Heritage) has asked for an assessment of the impact of development on the historic environment to be carried out. This relates particularly to sites around Panshanger Park and a similar representation was made BY Historic England to East Herts. District Council at the time of their last consultation.
- 9.8 The submission of new sites will require the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to be updated. New sites will also need to be reviewed in terms of their contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and Landscape sensitivity and capacity.
- 9.9 Overall there is support for producing masterplans for the strategic sites and this will now need to commence in order to confirm the deliverability and viability of these sites.
- 9.10 HCC have stated that Urban Open Land designations do not comply with the NPPF requirements Local Greenspace designation and should be reviewed particularly where this relates to school sites. The have also requested that a number of their schools be removed from the Green Belt to allow for their expansion to meet future needs.
- 9.11 Although not in response to representations other key pieces of evidence will also be updated to ensure they are still relevant when we get to the point of submitting the plan. This includes the Economy Study and the Retail and Town Centre Needs Assessment.

Sites

- 9.12 The majority of representations relate to the suitability of sites and these will all be carefully considered.
- 9.13 Two sites identified as suitable for housing have now been withdrawn and a number of new sites and amendments to site boundaries have been proposed in response to the consultation as follows:
- WeG10 and HW12 have been withdrawn;
 - 12 new sites within the existing settlement boundaries –5 of which lie within designated employment areas and 1 in a proposed employment area;
 - 15 new Green Belt sites including a proposal for a new settlement HAT15;
 - 4 extensions to existing Green Belt sites (BrP7, Cuf3, OMH5 and Wel11); and
 - 3 alternative options to 2 existing Green Belt sites which are still being promoted (WGC10 as alternative option to WGC6; Cuf10 and 11 as alternative options to Cuf4).
- 9.14 The details of these sites are attached as Appendix A to this report this includes a proposal for a new village for approximately 1,100 dwellings. The extent of the site area for residential development at Gosling has also been included as this

was not previously available. These sites will require further analysis to determine their suitability.

Housing Target

- 9.15 There have been a number of representations relating to the housing target. There has been some confusion as to whether the Objective Assessment of Need (OAN) is the actual target for the plan. Members will recall that the document did not set a target but that if the council were only to select the More Favourable sites then this council would not be meeting the Objective Assessment of Need.
- 9.16 A number of adjoining authorities have expressed concern at this prospect and have urged the council to leave no stone unturned in terms of meeting the need even if this means using finely balanced and less favourable sites.
- 9.17 Some have reminded the council of the implications of not meeting our OAN for the Duty to Cooperate which they consider we have not yet met.

Selection of Sites

- 9.18 A number of representations have queried whether consistent judgements have been made when selecting sites and in the sustainability appraisal of sites.
- 9.19 There has also been some questioning of the robustness of the use of the 'local' green belt purpose (that is coalescence between villages and village and town), to dismiss sites which it is considered should not be used to rule out suitable sites.

New Barnfield

- 9.20 A number of responses have been received objecting to the possible removal of New Barnfield from the Green Belt as is recommended in the Waste Site Allocation Development Plan Document.
- 9.21 Objections have also been received to the proposal in the consultation document that the allocated waste sites should not be removed from the Green Belt until detailed proposals have come forward for the respective sites.

10 Equality and Diversity

- 10.1 As this report is simply for noting rather than developing a new policy or amending an existing policy approach, an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

Sue Tiley
Planning Policy and Implementation Manager
12 June 2015

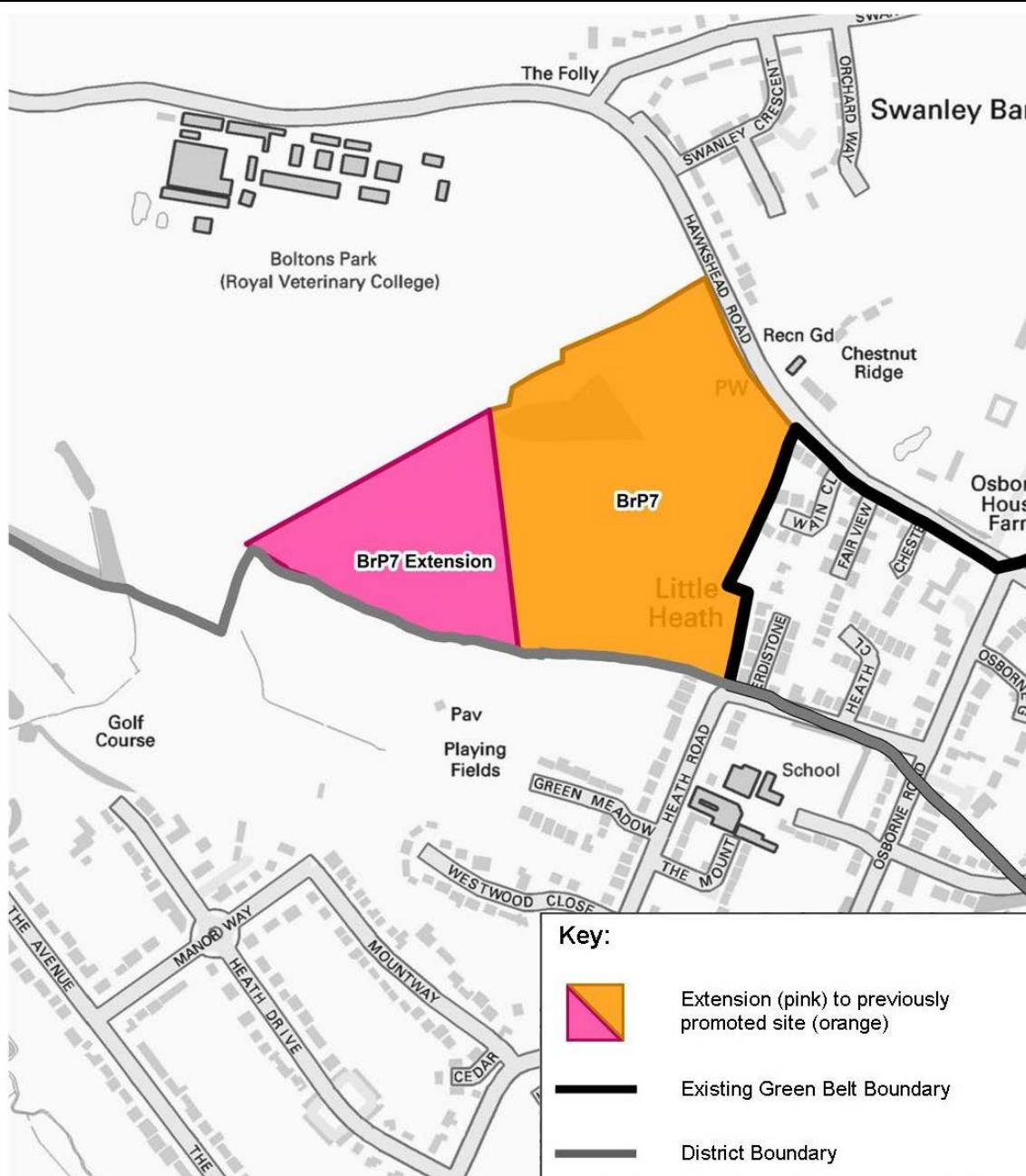
Appendices:
Appendix A New and Amended Housing Sites

**Appendix A New and amended housing sites
within the Green Belt**

BrP7 Extension – South of Hawkshead Road, Little Heath

GREEN BELT SITE

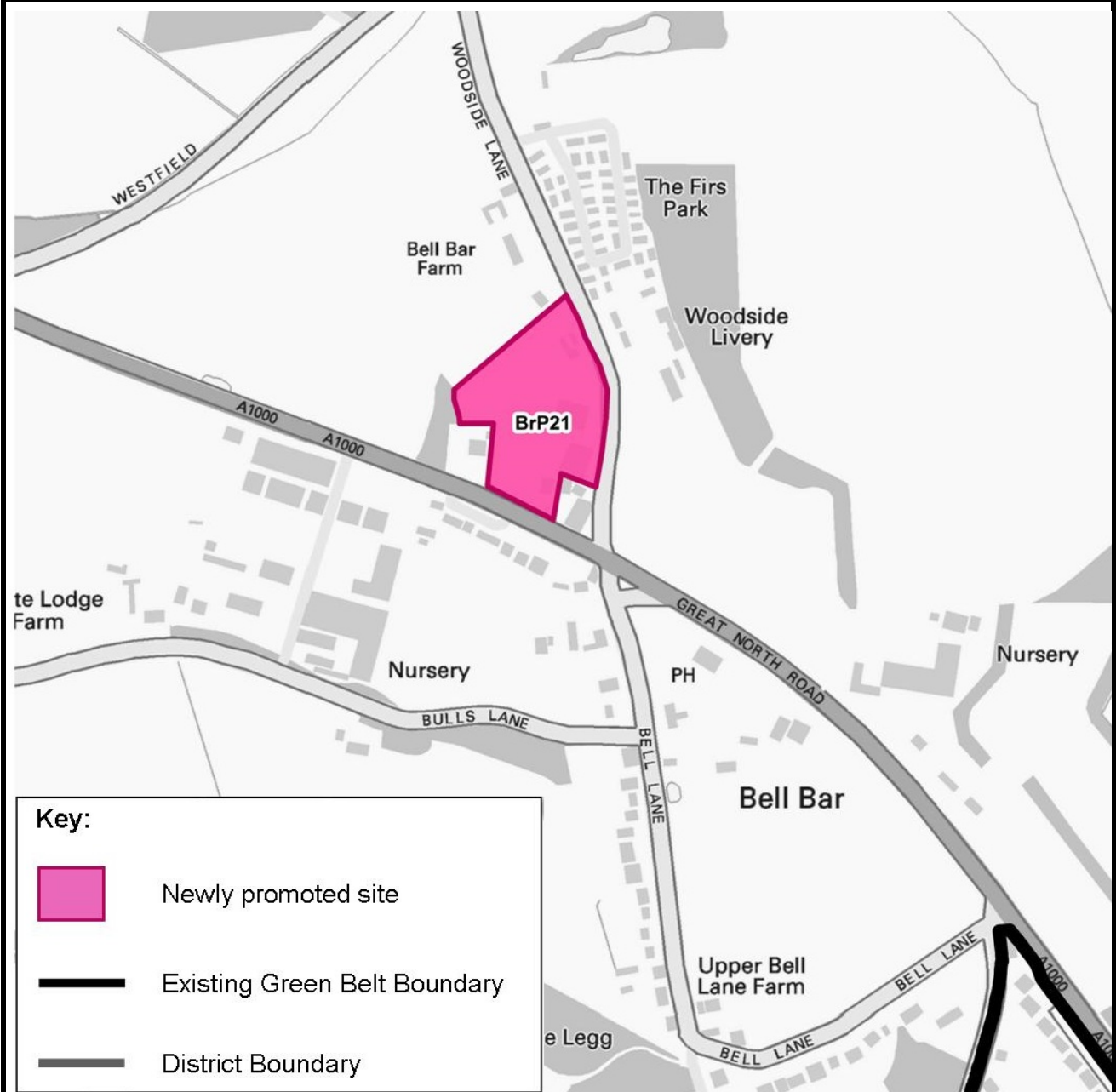
Status of the site	Extension to site BrP7	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current land use	Agricultural	Size of site	Extension: 3.1 ha gross area Original: 4.7 ha net development area Total: 7.8 ha
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	195 dwellings (based on 7.8 hectares @ 25 dph)



BrP21 – Great North Road/Woodside Lane, Bell Bar

GREEN BELT SITE

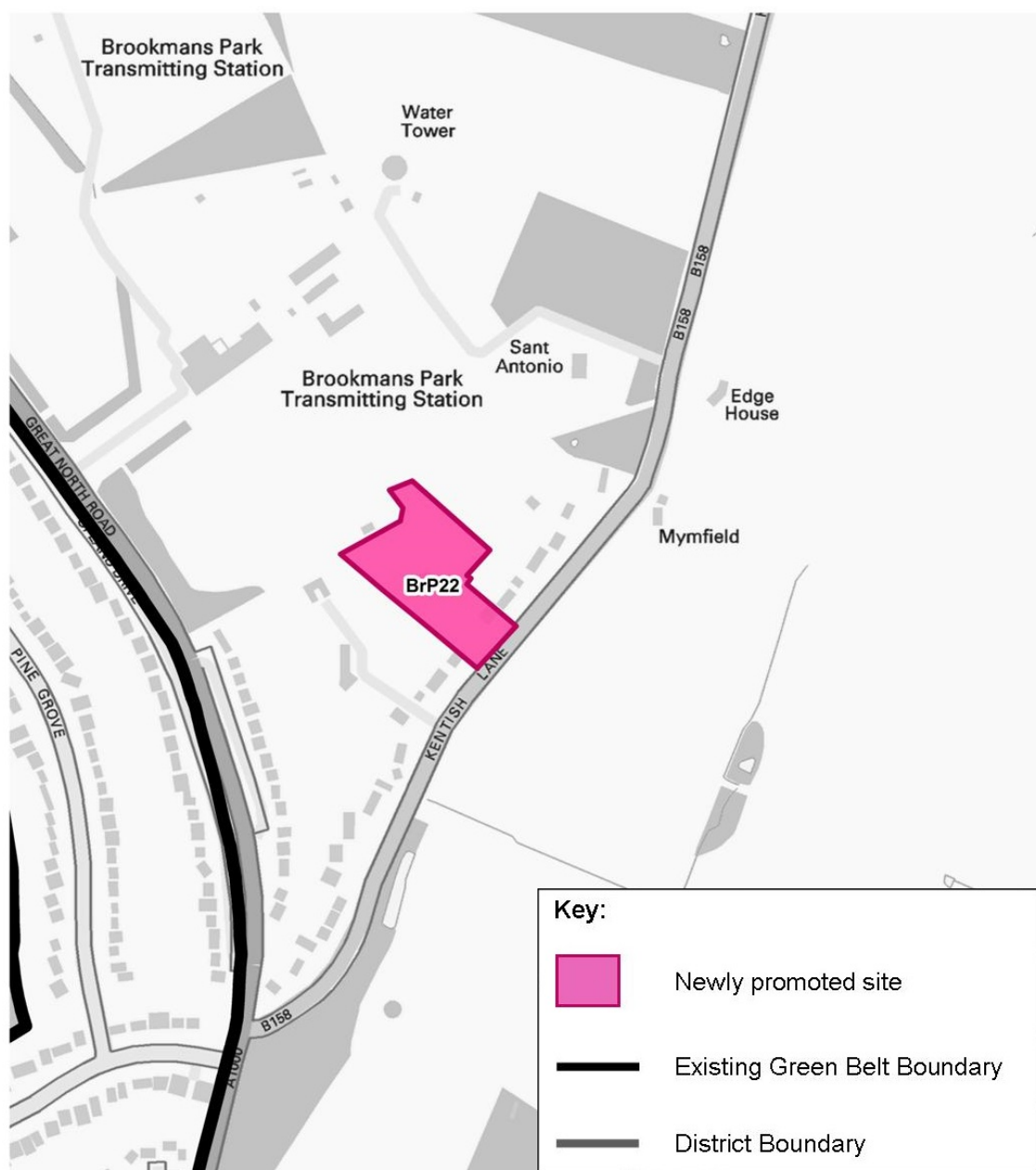
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current land use	Commercial, residential & equestrian	Size of site	1.66 ha
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	65 dwellings (based on 40 dph)



BrP22 – 45 & 47 Kentish Lane, Brookmans Park

GREEN BELT SITE

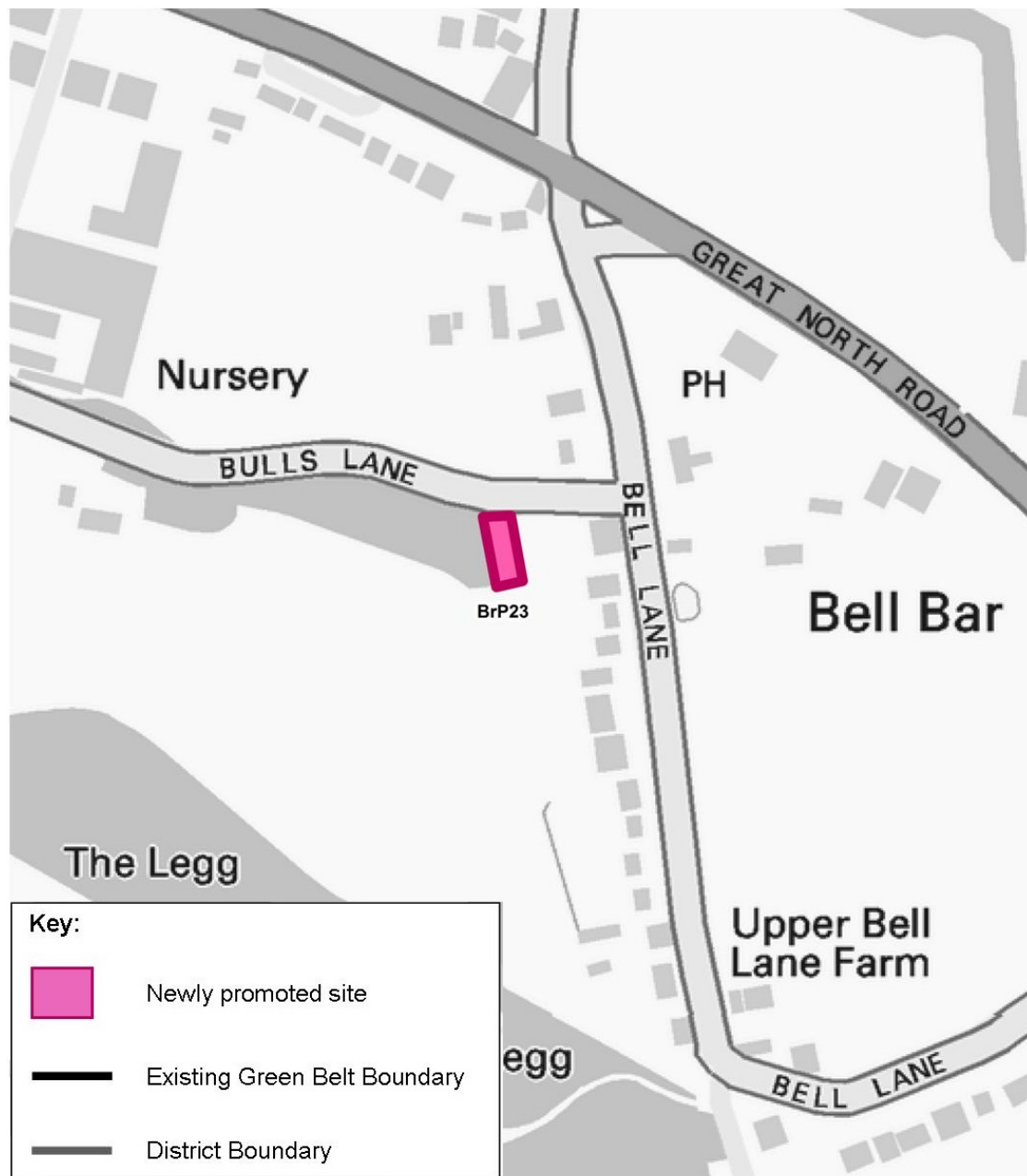
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowners
Current land use	45: Residential property and garden 47: Residential garden	Size of site	1.24ha – 1.47ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	50 – 60 dwellings (based on 40 dph gross)



BrP23 – Adjacent 12-14 Bulls Lane, Bell Bar

GREEN BELT SITE

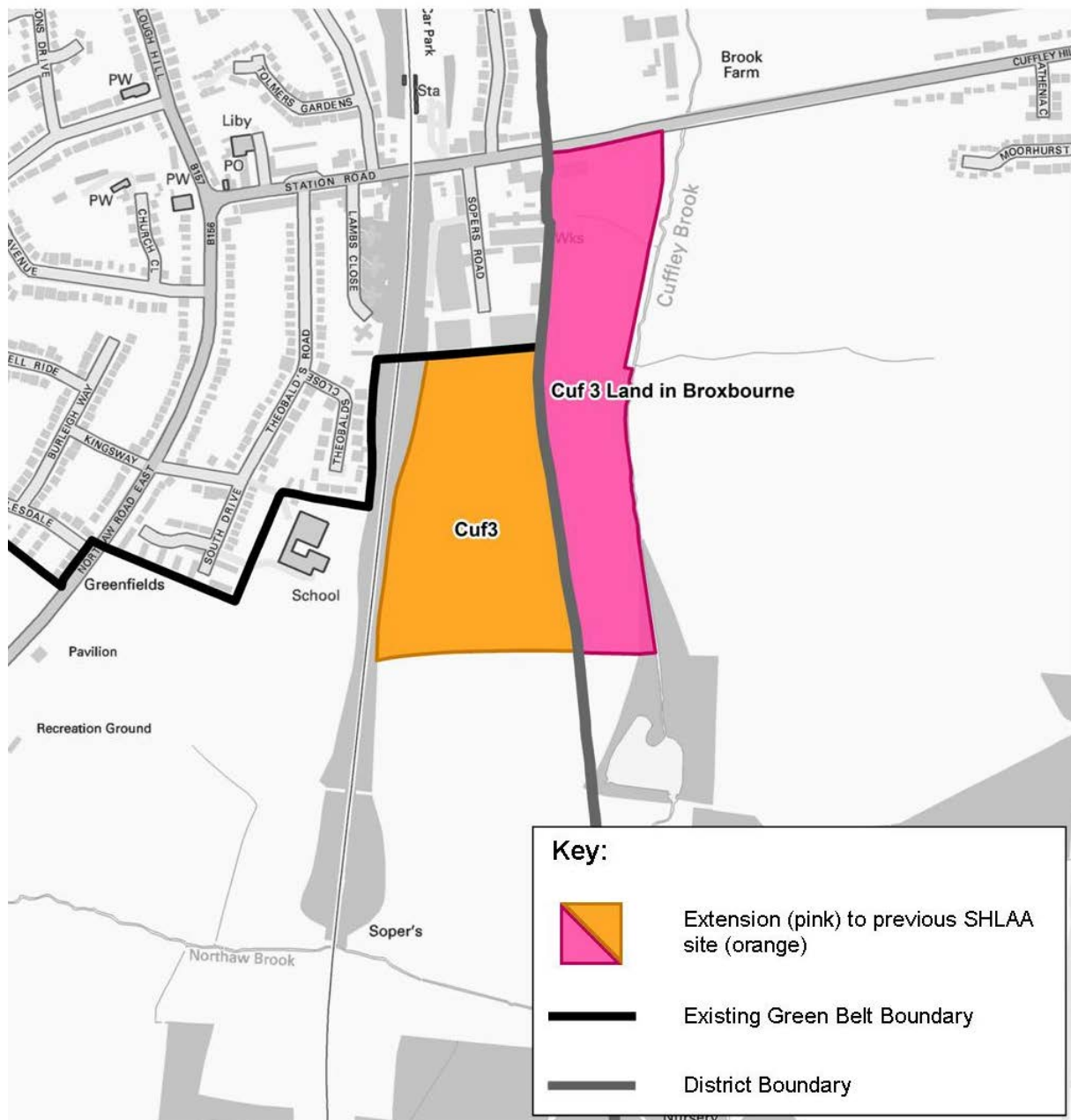
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Disused garden land	Size of site	0.045 ha
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	2 dwellings (based on 40 dph gross)



Cuf3 – South side of Cuffley Hill, Cuffley

GREEN BELT SITE

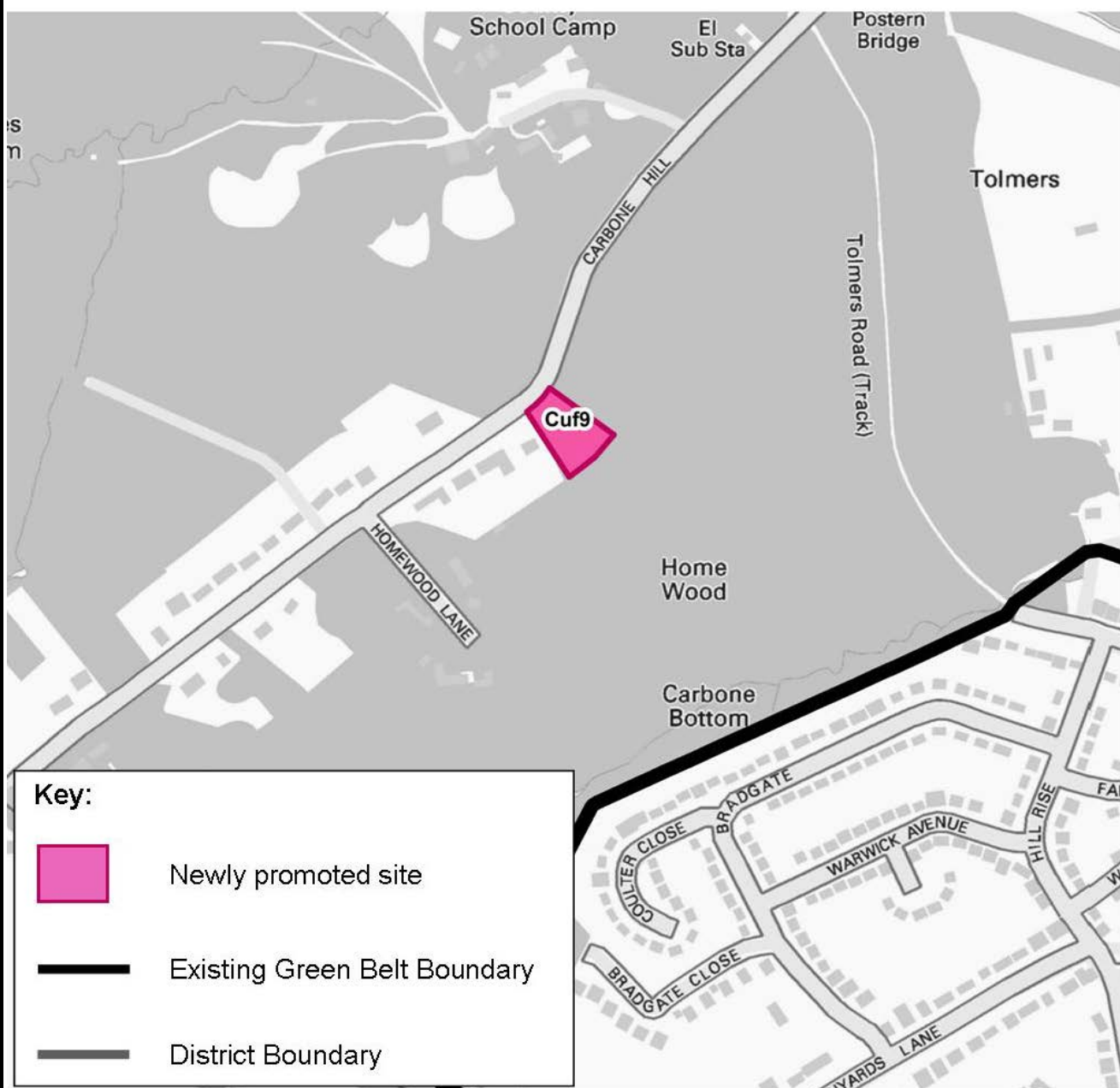
Site status	Extension to previous SHLAA site falling within Broxbourne	Site promoter	Agent on behalf of some (not all) owners and leaseholders
Current use	Agricultural and Youth & Community Centre	Size of site	Previous SHLAA site in WHBC: 8.2ha gross Extension in BBC: 7.9ha gross
Proposed use	Residential and replacement community centre	Notional capacity	Land in WHBC: 205 dwellings Land in BBC: 200 dwellings (based on 25 dph gross)



Cuf9 – Adjacent to 32 Carbone Hill, Cuffley

GREEN BELT SITE

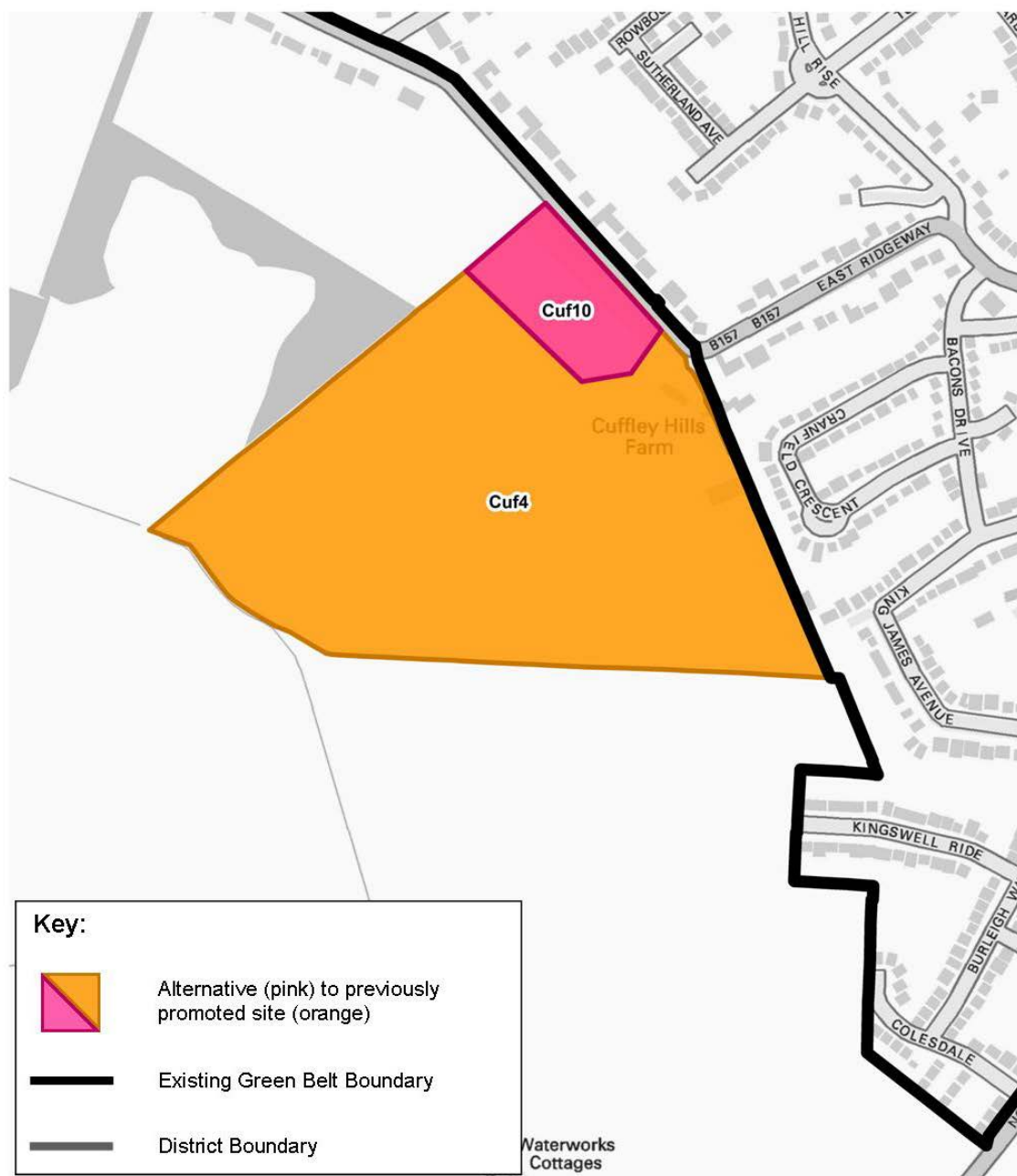
Site status	Newly promoted site.	Site promoter	Landowners
Current use	Scrub woodland	Size of site	0.26 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	10 dwellings (based on 40 dph)



Cuf10 – North west of Cuffley Hills House, Cuffley

GREEN BELT SITE

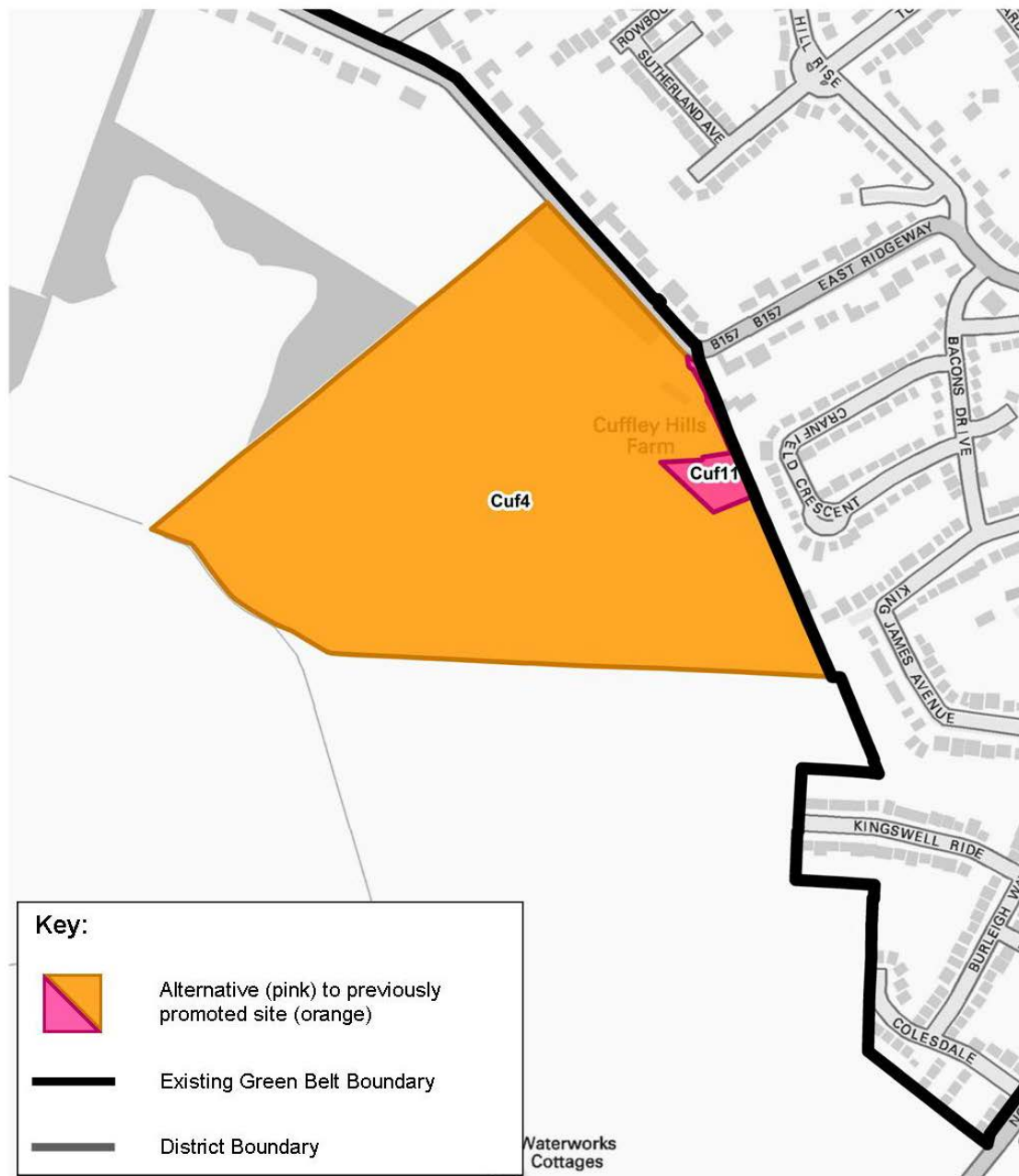
Site status	Alternative to previously promoted site (Cuf4)	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current use	Grazing pasture	Size of site	1.66 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	65 dwellings (based on 40 dph)



Cuf11 – Barn adjacent to Cuffley Hills House, Cuffley

GREEN BELT SITE

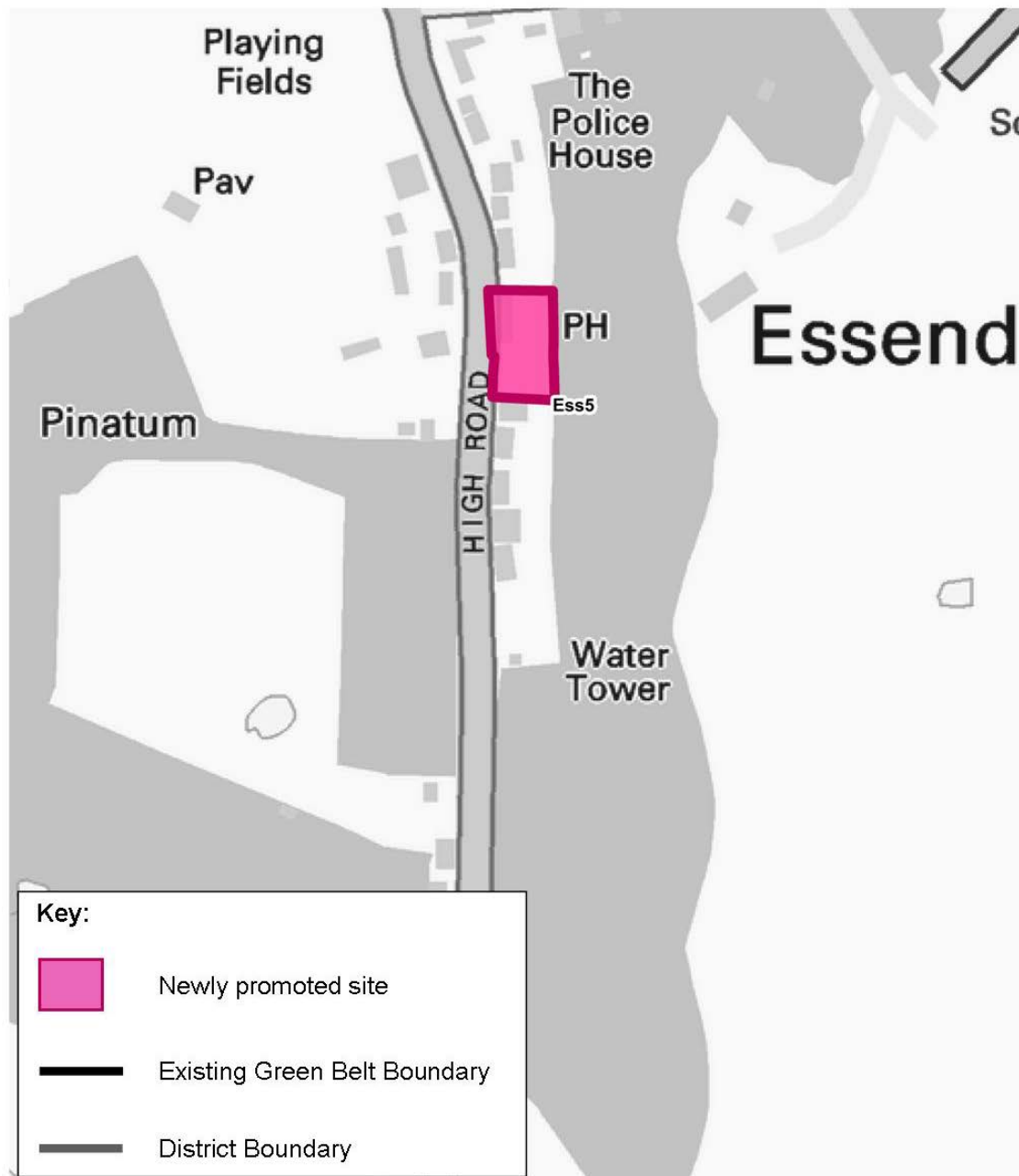
Site status	Alternative to previously promoted site (Cuf4)	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current use	Former agricultural barn (now miscellaneous storage)	Size of site	0.37 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	15 dwellings (based on 40 dph)



Ess5 – Rose & Crown, 22 High Road, Essendon

GREEN BELT SITE

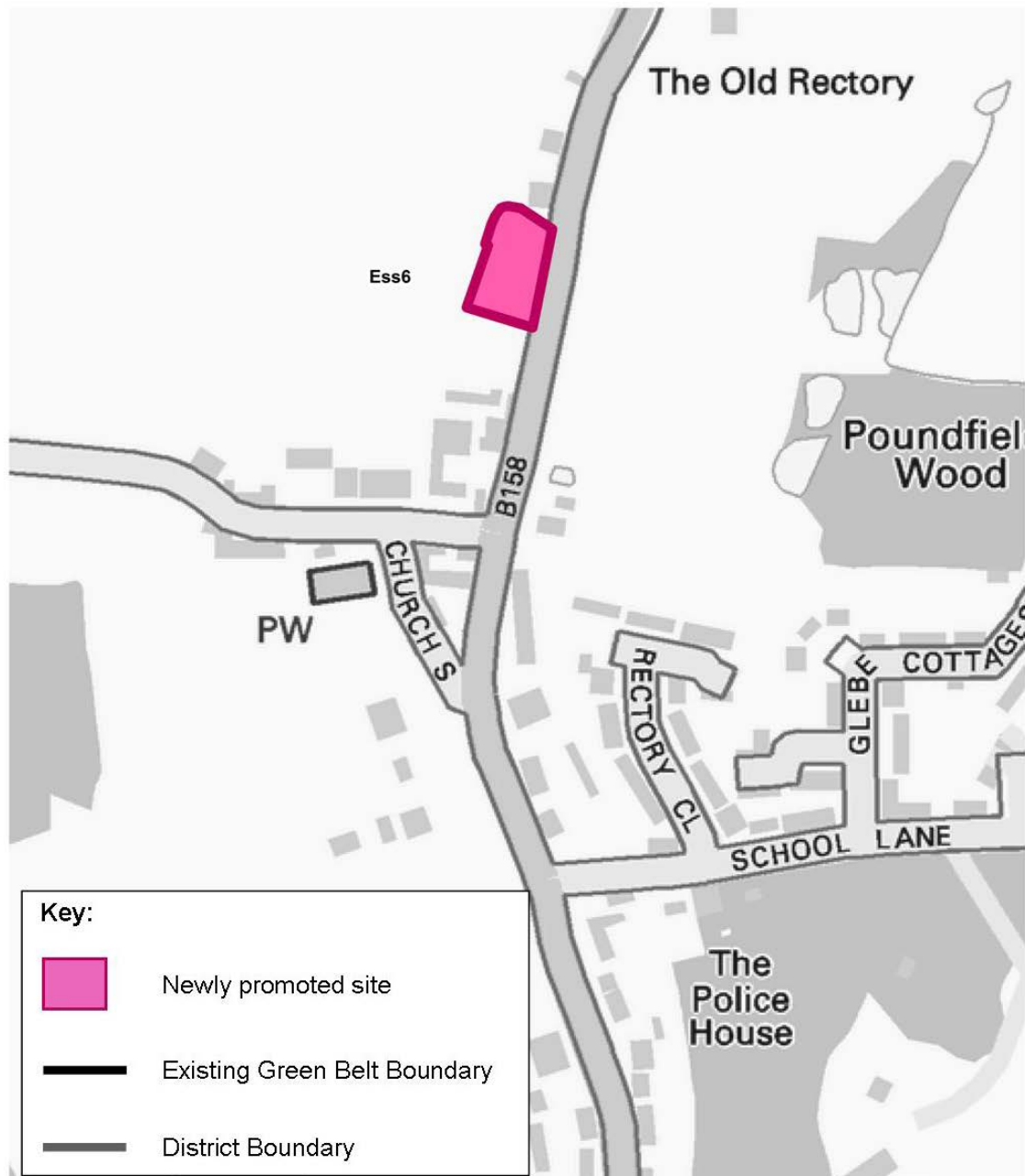
Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowners & agent
Current use	Public House	Size of site	0.16 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	6 dwellings (based on 40 dph)



Ess6 – Essendon Manor, Essendon

GREEN BELT SITE

Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current use	Garden land	Size of site	0.175ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	7 dwellings (based on 40 dph)

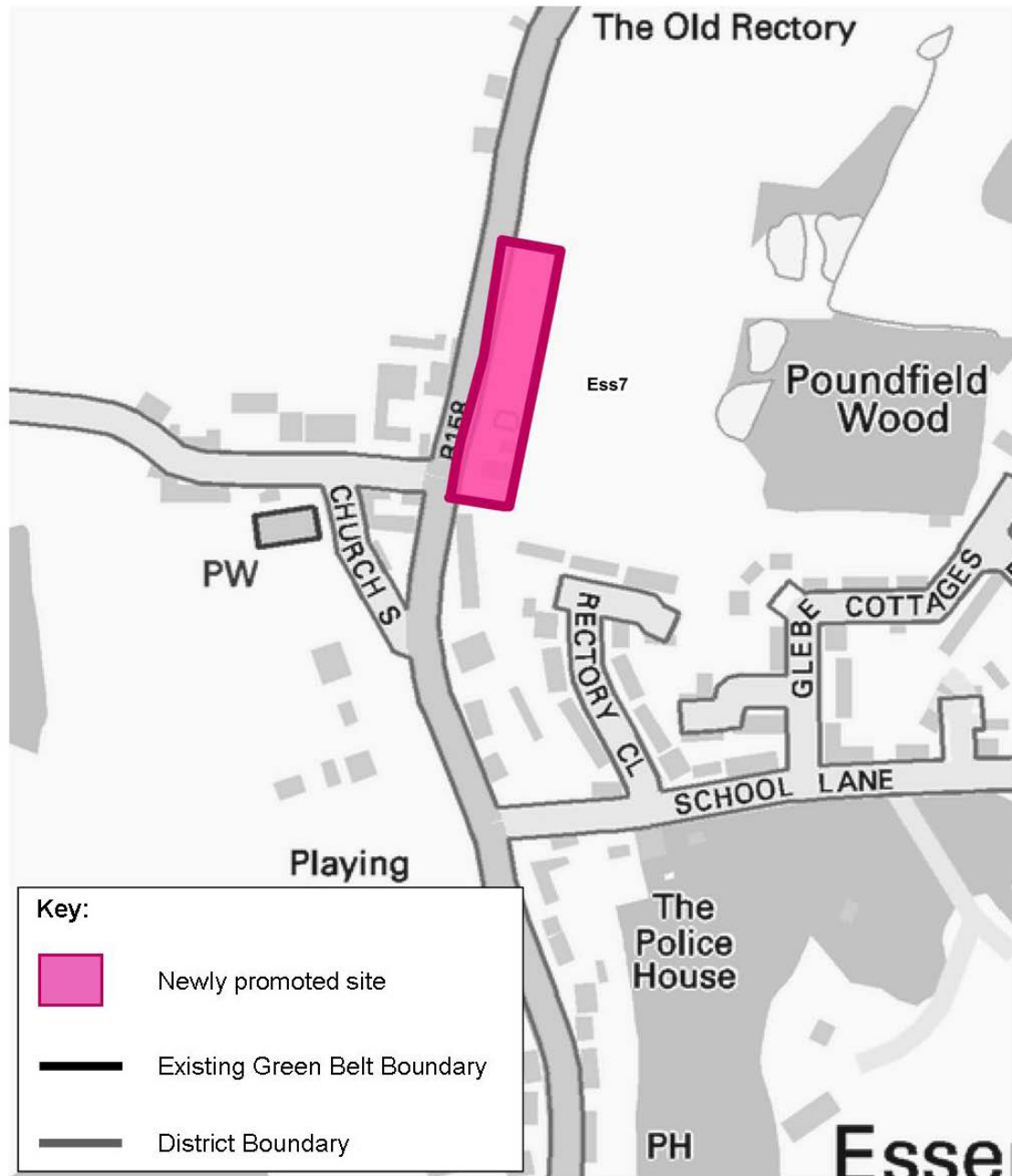


© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA1000 19547 2015

Ess7 – East of Essendon Hill, Essendon

GREEN BELT SITE

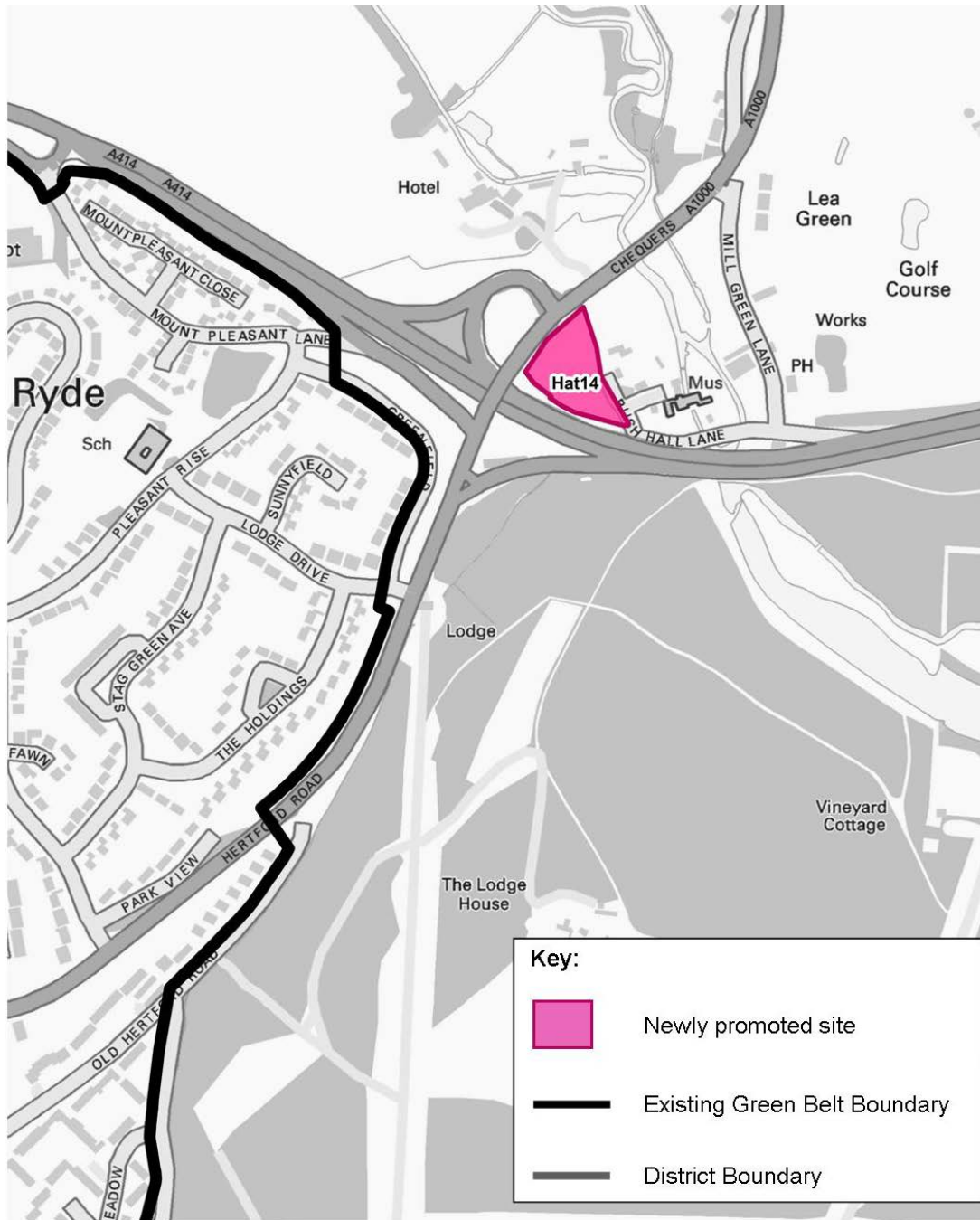
Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current use	Part industrial, grazing pasture	Size of site	0.37 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	15 dwellings (based on 40 dph)



Hat 14 – Three cornered field, Mill Green

GREEN BELT SITE

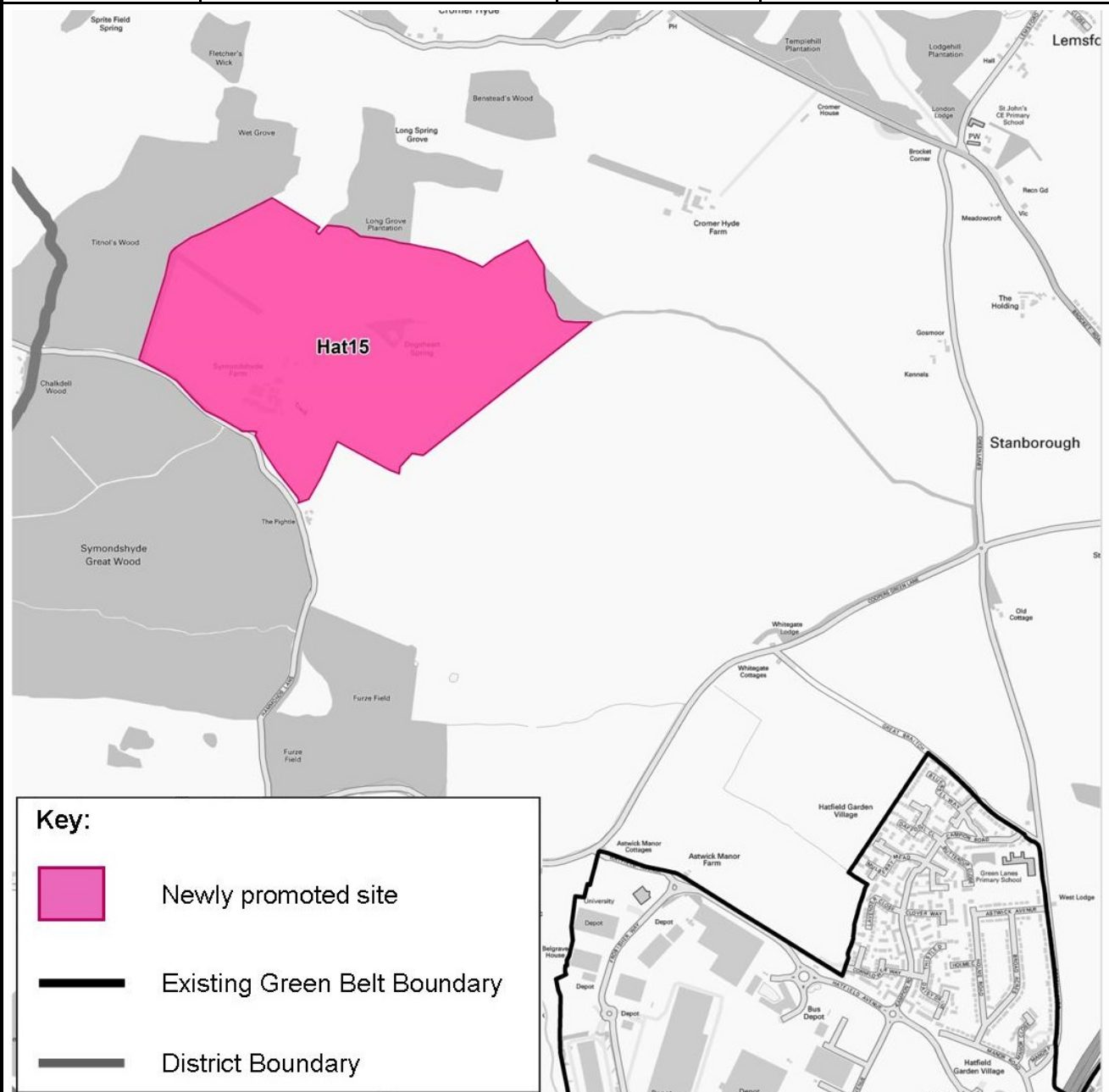
Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowners
Current use	Grazing pasture	Size of site	0.57 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	25 dwellings (based on 40 dph)



Hat 15 – Simonshyde Village, Hatfield

GREEN BELT SITE

Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current use	Agricultural	Size of site	56.5 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	1410 dwellings (based on 25 dph gross)

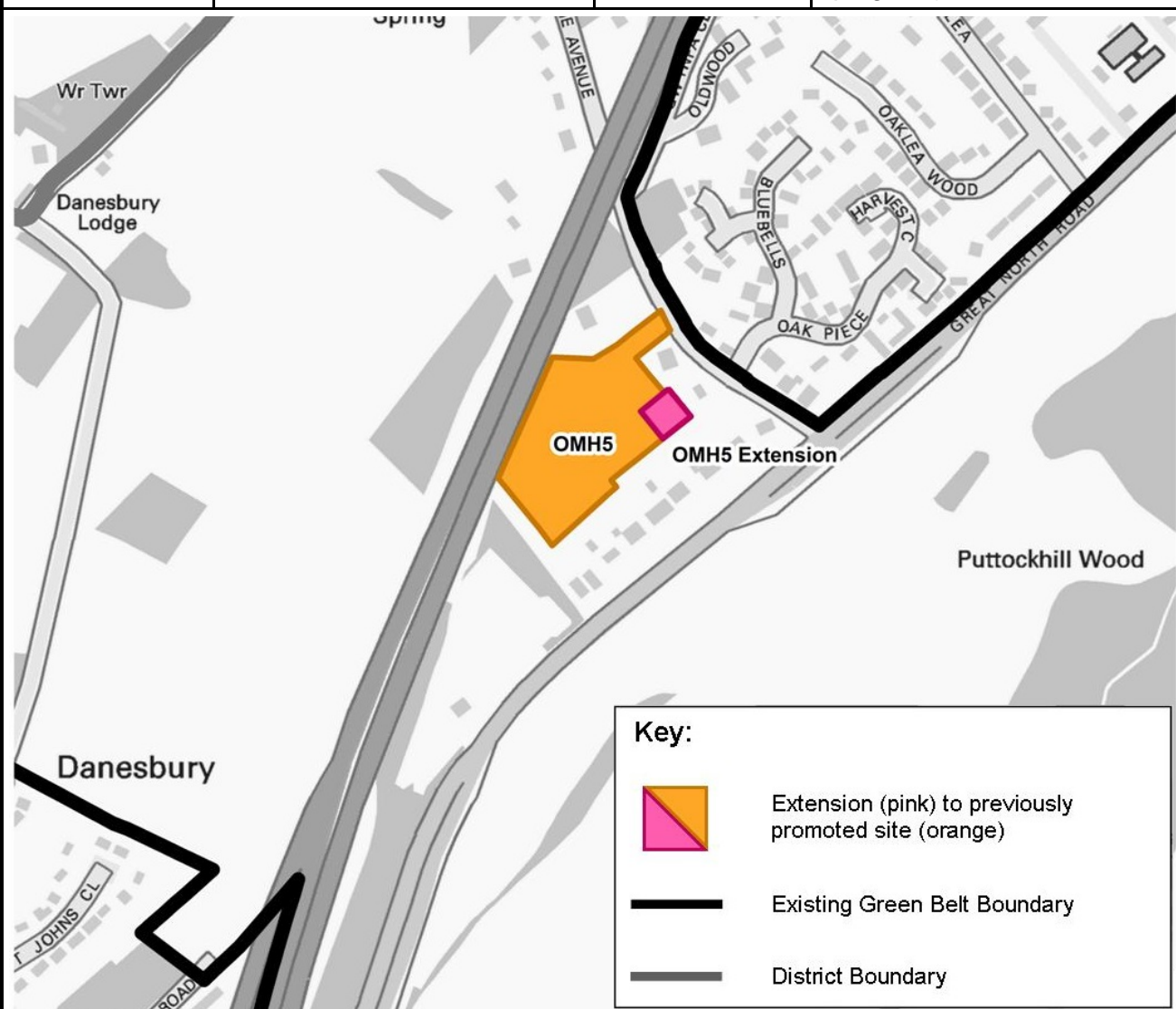


© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA1000 19547 2015

OMH5 Extension – 12 Great North Road, Oaklands & Mardley Heath

GREEN BELT SITE

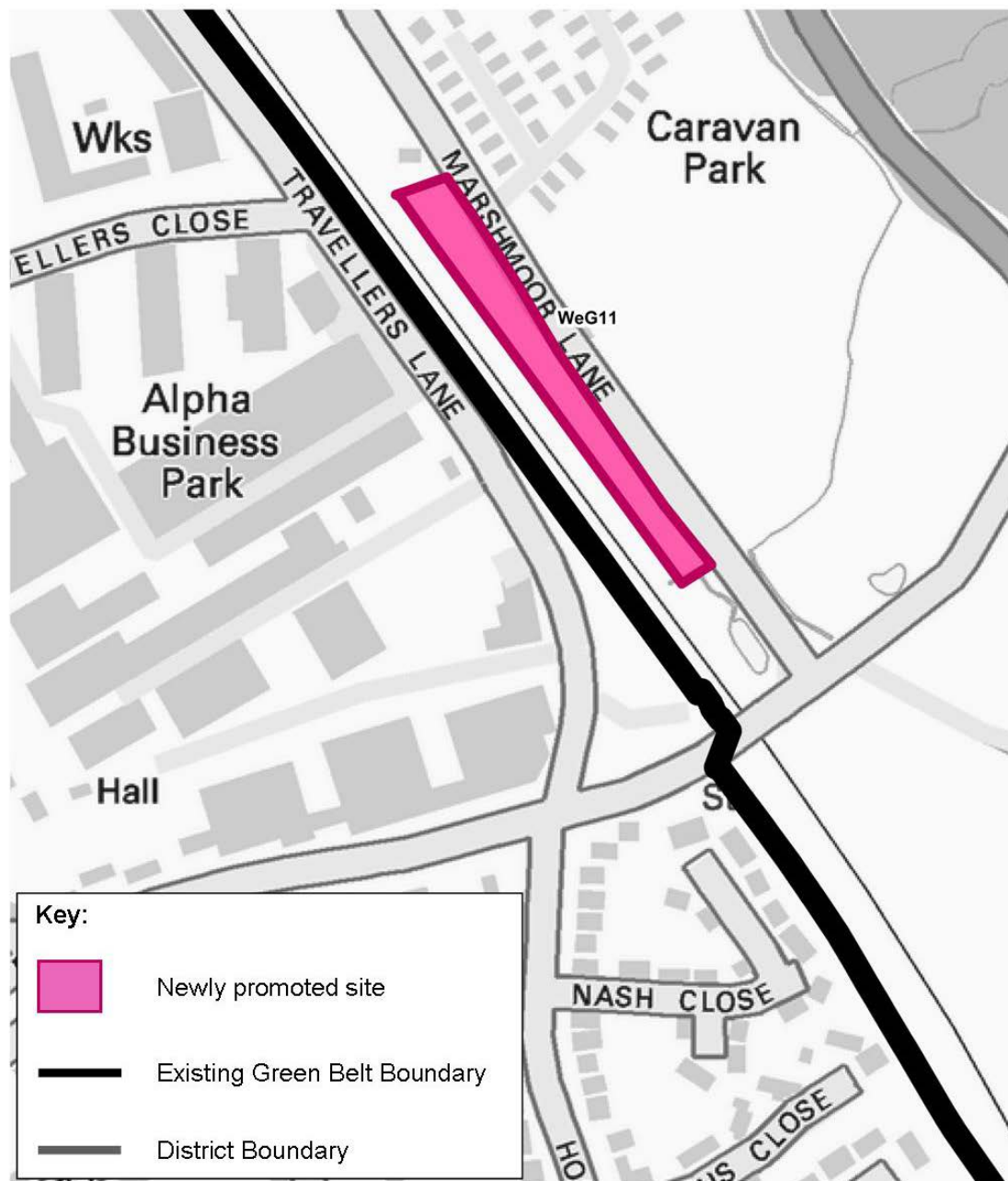
Site status	Extension to previously promoted site (OMH5)	Site promoter	Landowner
Current use	Garden land	Size of site	Extension: 0.1 ha gross Previous site: 1 ha net developable area Total: 1.1 ha
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	22 dwellings for whole of OMH5 (based on 1.1ha @ 20 dph gross)



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA1000 19547 2015

WeG11 – Marshmoor Lane, Welham Green

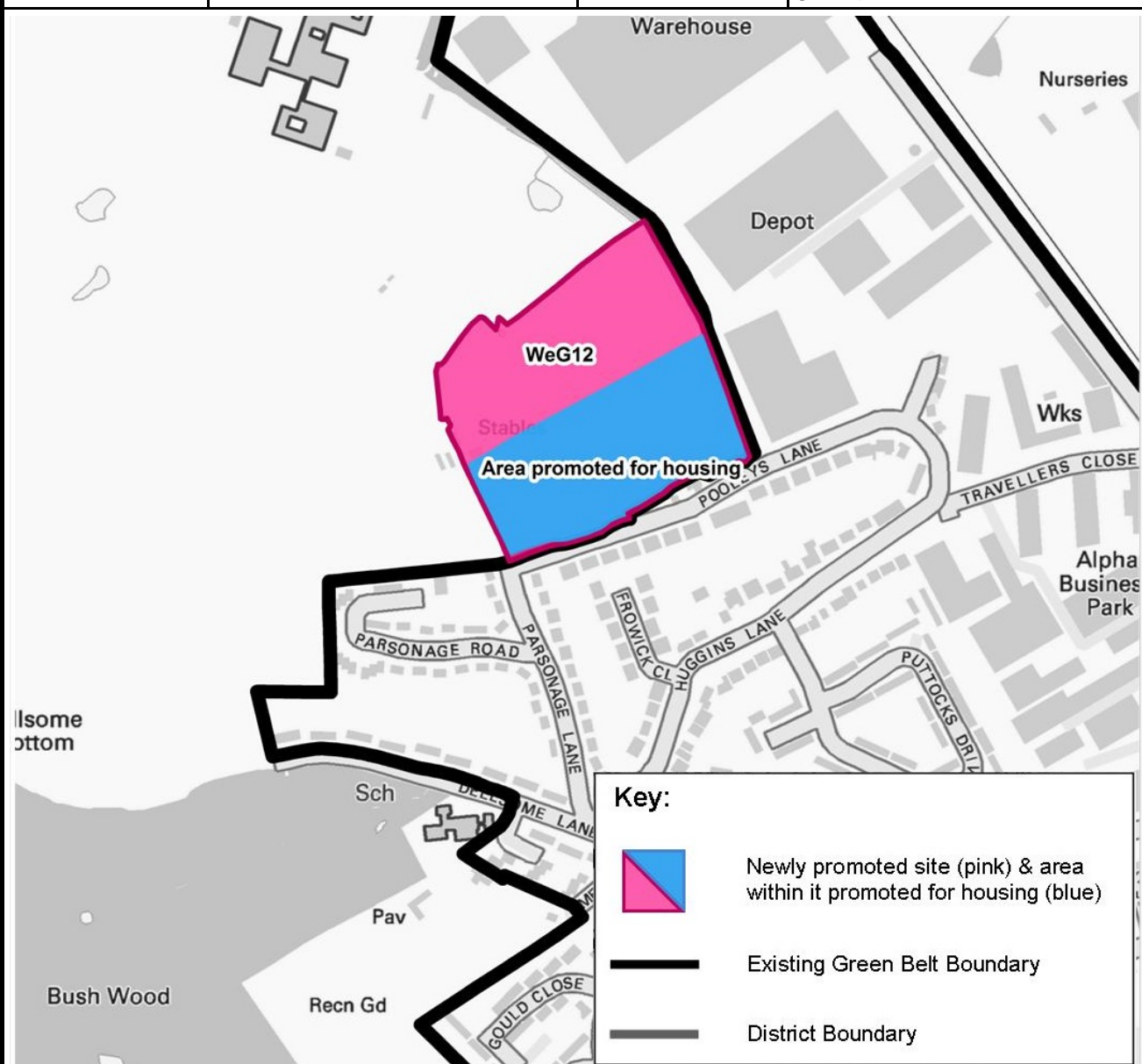
GREEN BELT SITE			
Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowners & agent
Current use	Unknown. Formerly equestrian	Size of site	0.45 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	20 dwellings (based on 40 dph gross)



WeG12 – Land at Pooleys Lane, Welham Green

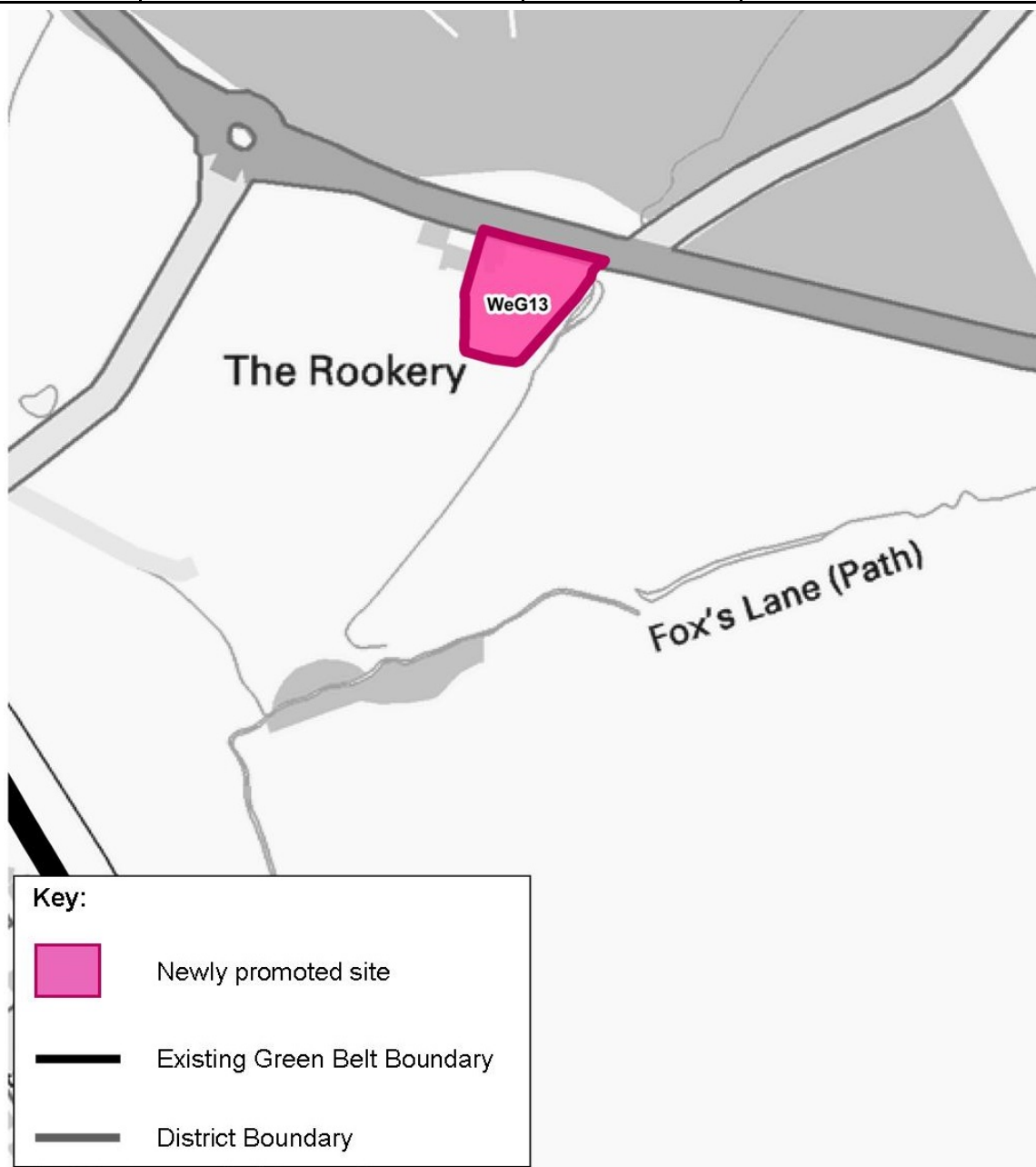
GREEN BELT SITE

Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current use	Equestrian	Size of site	4.6 ha gross 2.1 ha gross promoted for housing
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	65 dwellings (based on 2.1ha @ 30 dph gross)



WeG13 – The Rookery Café, Welham Green

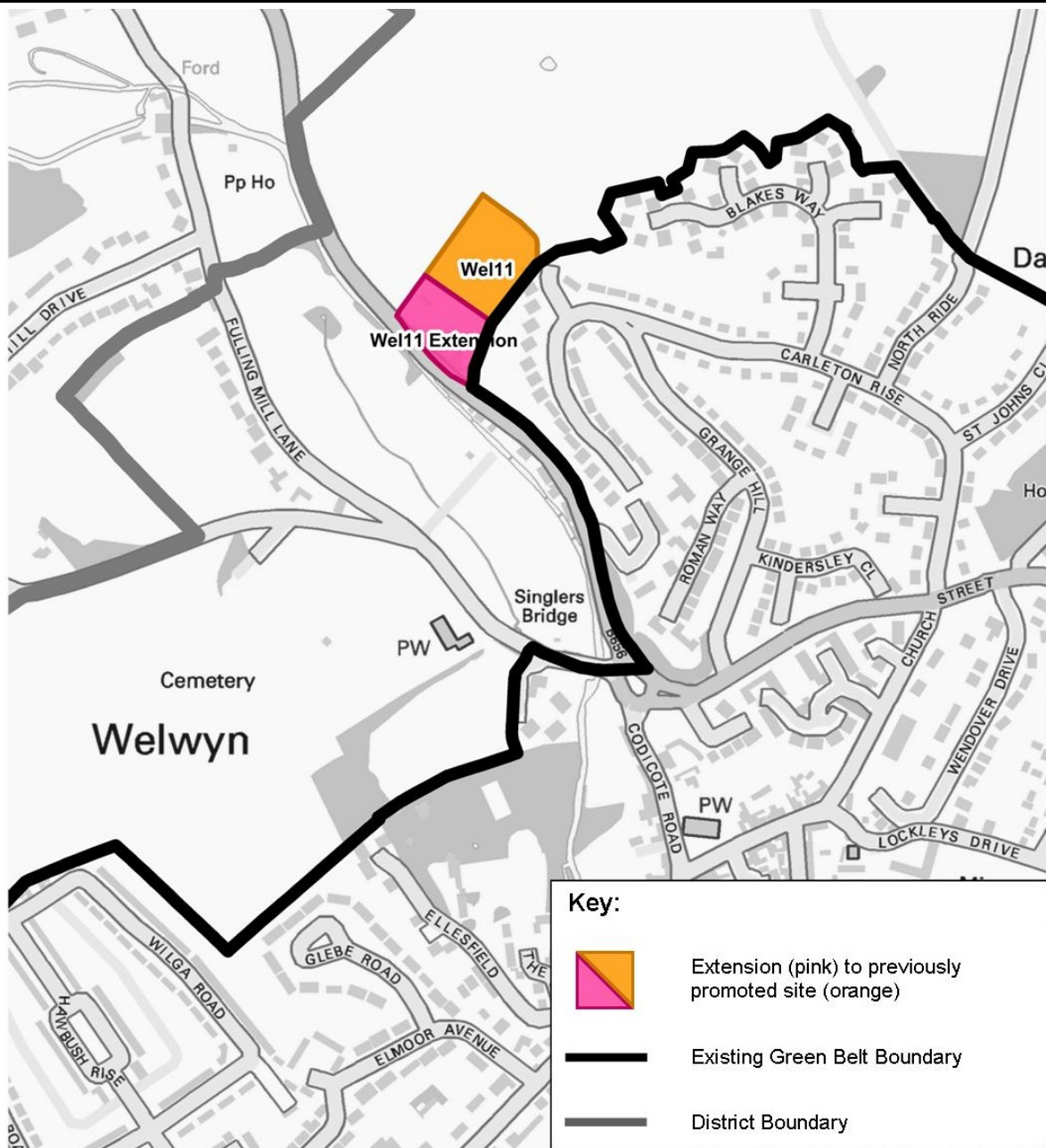
GREEN BELT SITE			
Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowners & agent
Current use	Café, Truck Stop & Residential	Size of site	0.27 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	10 dwellings (based on 40 dph gross)



Wel11 Extension – The Vineyards, Welwyn

GREEN BELT SITE

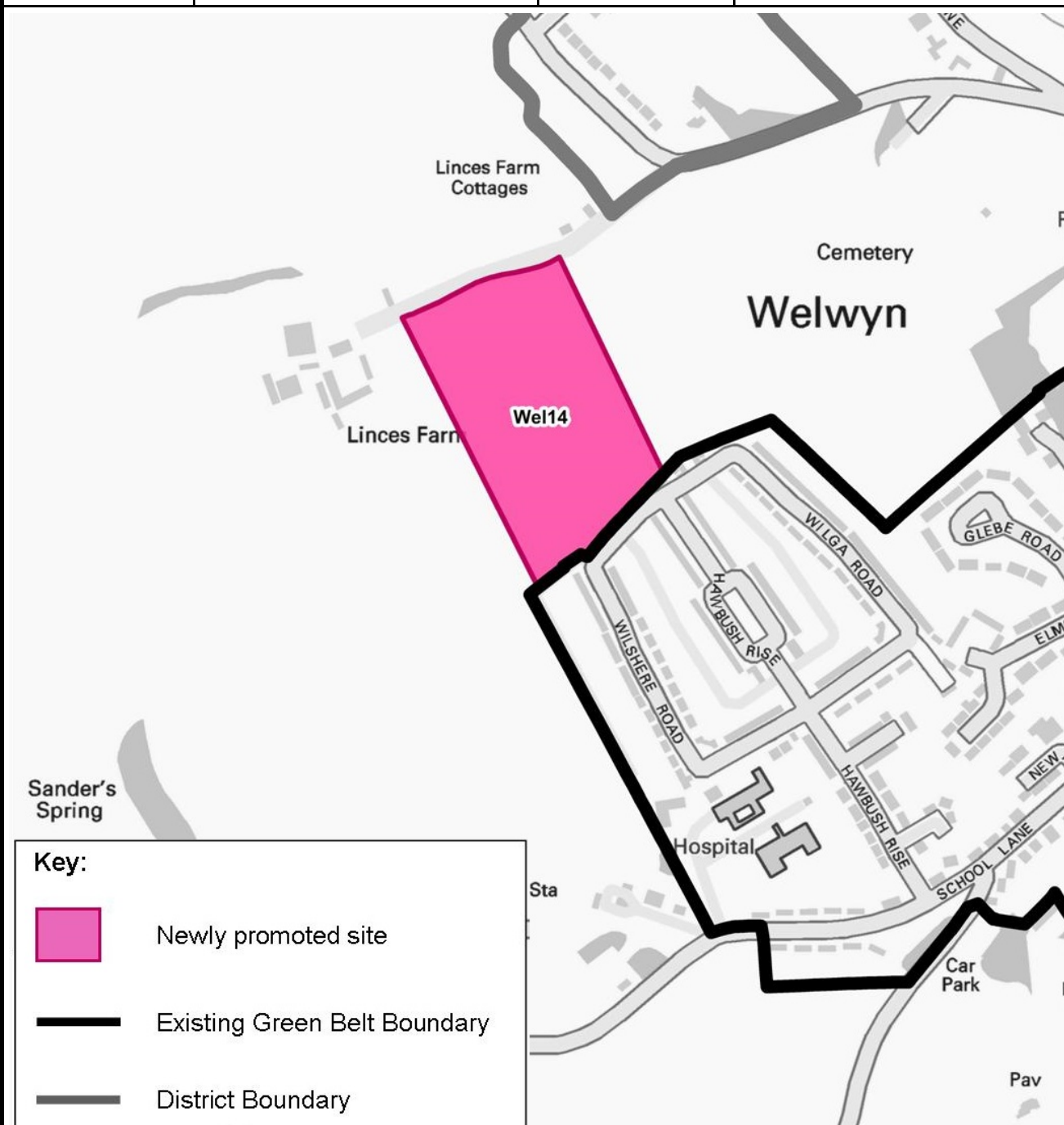
Site status	Extension to previously promoted site (Wel11)	Site promoter	Landowners & agent
Current use	Residential & Commercial	Size of site	Extension: 0.5 ha gross Previous site: 1 ha gross Total: 1.2 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	50 dwellings (based on 1.2 ha @ 40dph gross)



Wel14 – Linces Farm, Welwyn

GREEN BELT SITE

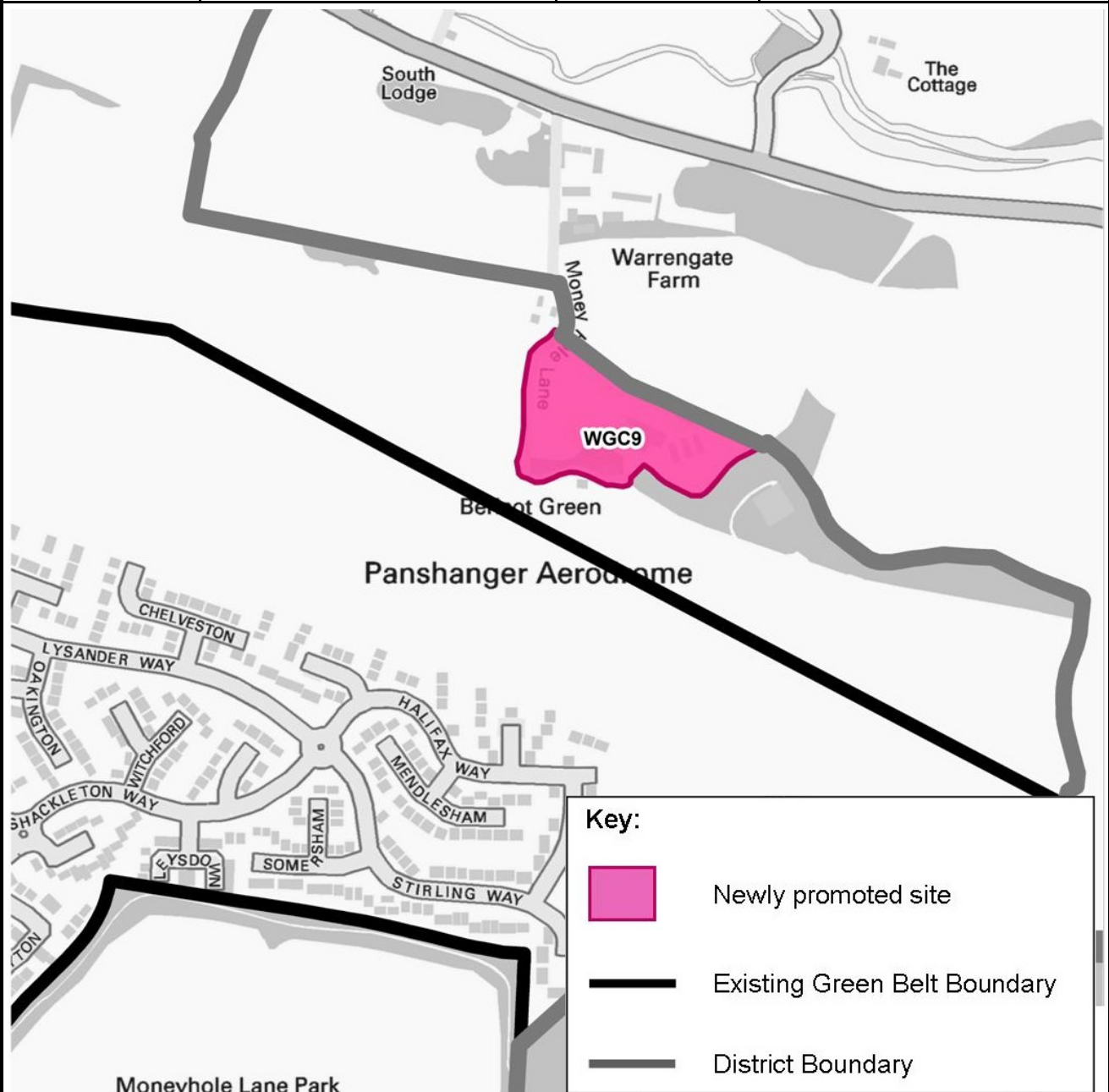
Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowners & agent
Current use	Agricultural	Size of site	3.9 hectares
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	120 dwellings (based on 30 dph gross)



WGC9 – Warrengate Farm, Berricot Green, Welwyn Garden City

GREEN BELT SITE

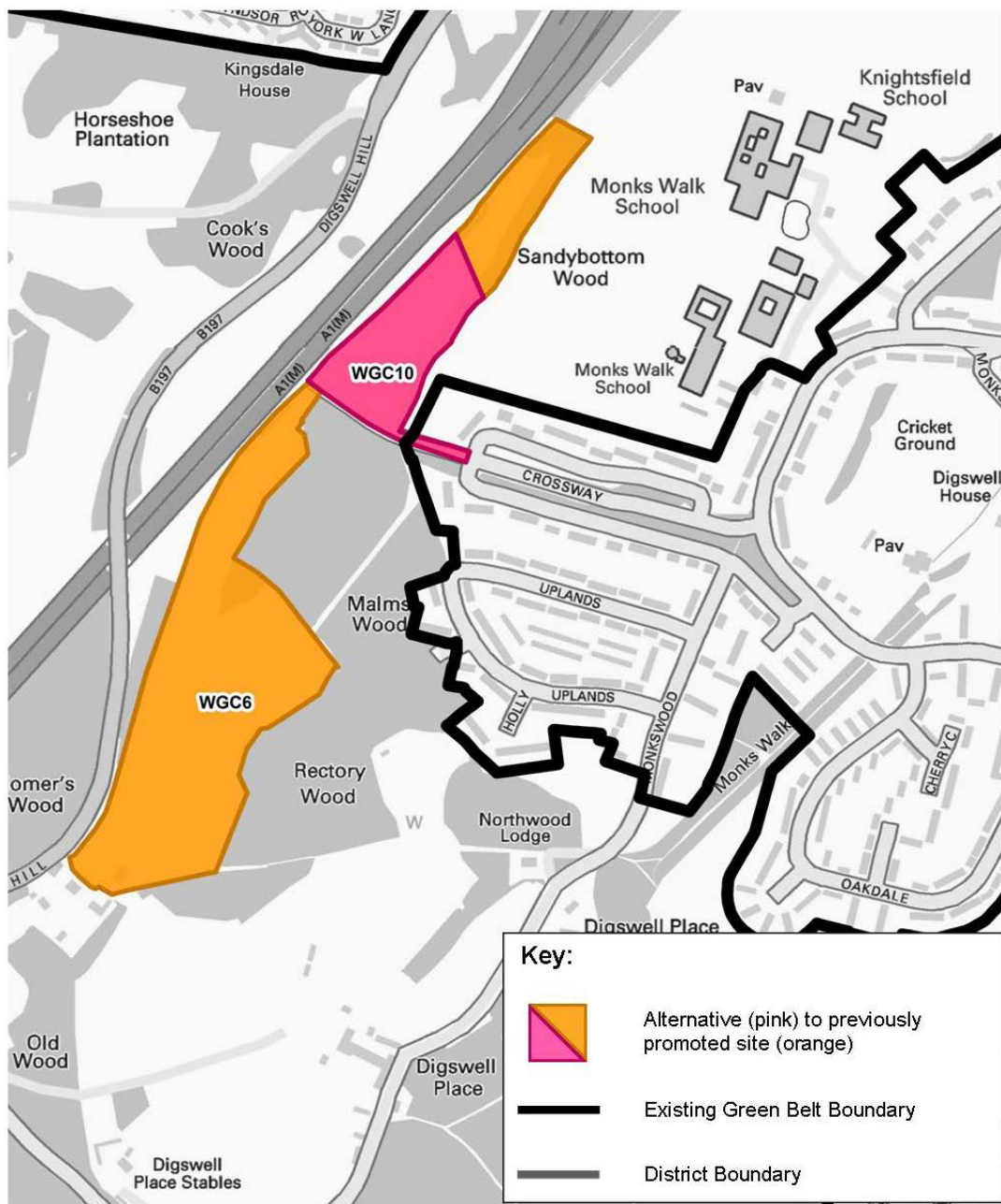
Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowners & agent
Current use	Commercial, residential	Size of site	1.7 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	70 dwellings (based on 40 dph gross)



WGC10 – 62 The Crossway, Welwyn Garden City

GREEN BELT SITE

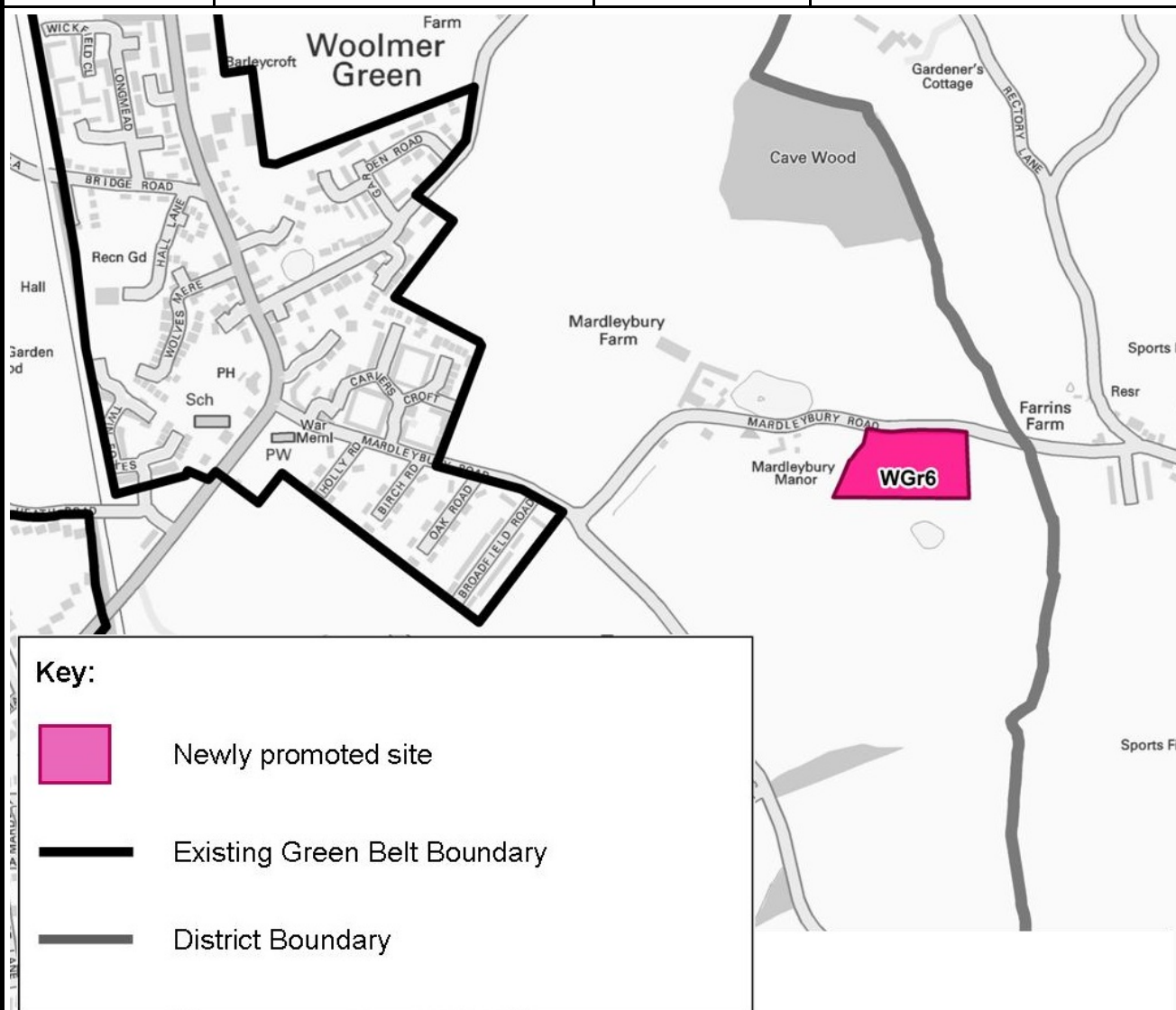
Site status	Alternative to previously promoted site (WGC6)	Site promoter	Landowners
Current use	Equestrian & Residential	Size of site	1.2 ha gross (1.5 ha incl. road access)
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	50 dwellings (based on 1.2 ha @ 40 dph gross)



WGr6 – Mardlebury Manor, Woolmer Green

GREEN BELT SITE

Site status	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current use	Grassland	Size of site	1.2 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	50 dwellings (based on 40 dph gross)

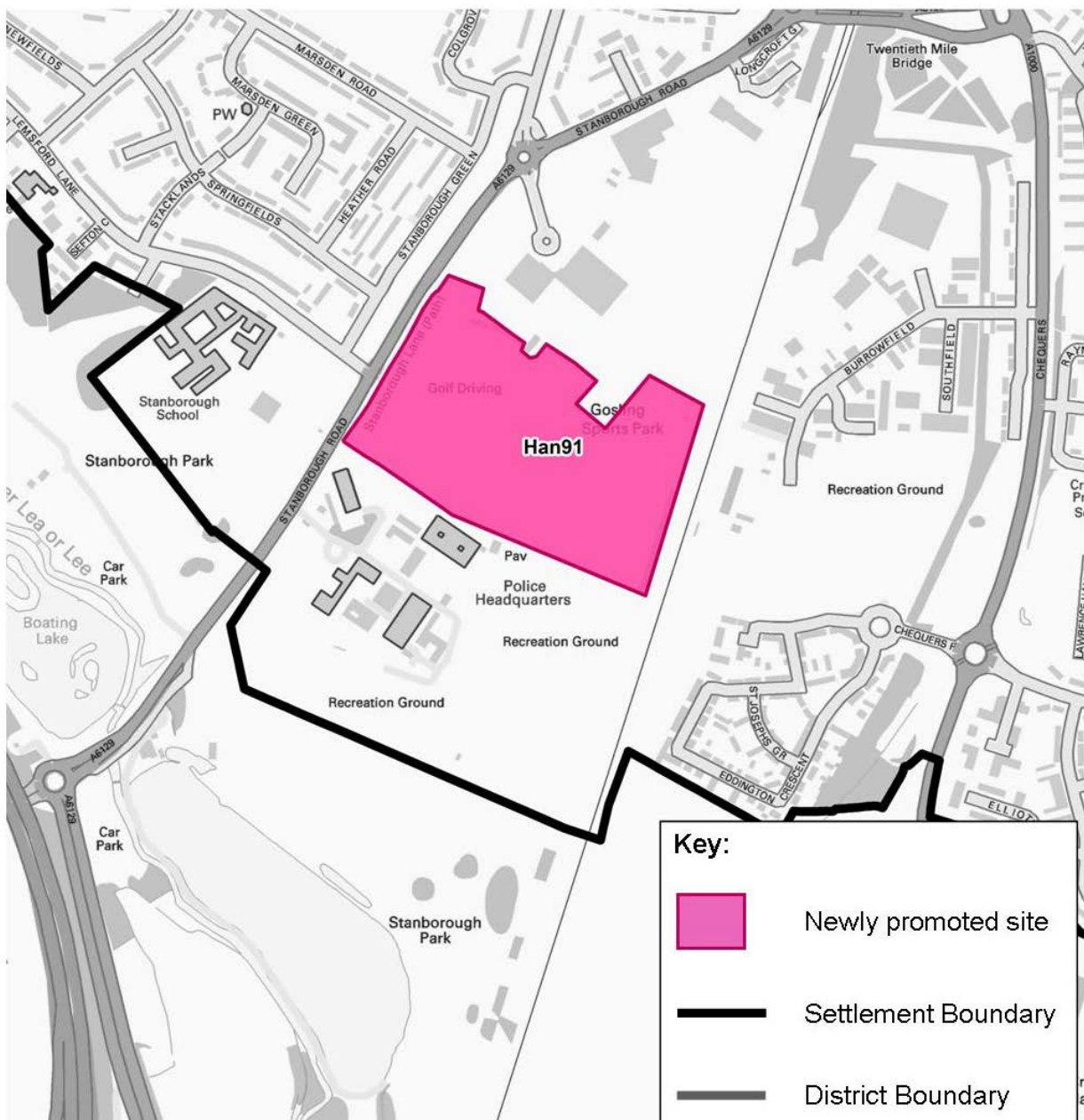


New and amended housing sites within Urban Areas

Han91 – Land at Gosling Sports Centre, Welwyn Garden City

URBAN SITE

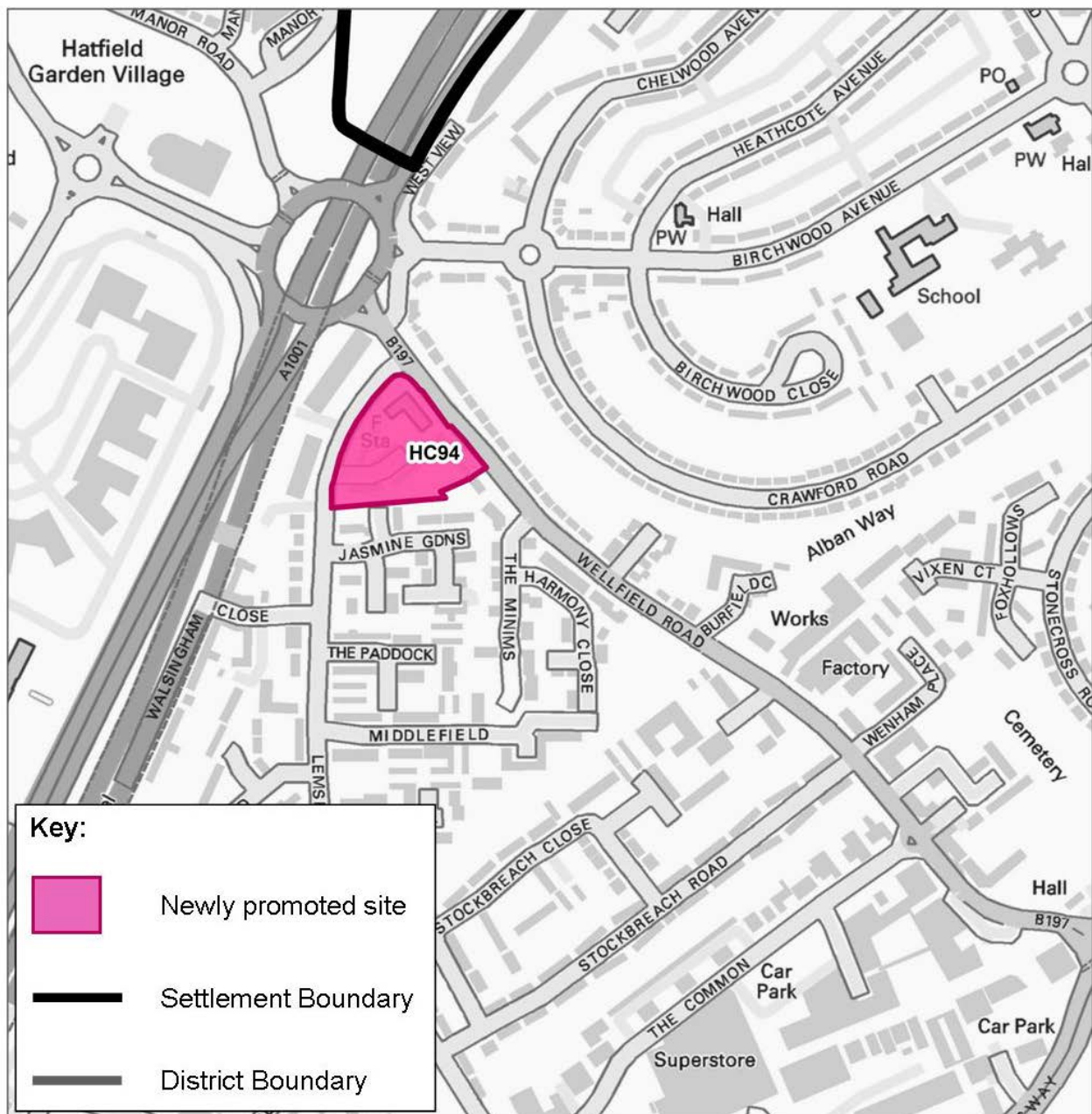
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Leisure	Size of site	10.01 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	340 dwellings (based on 33.5 dph gross - SHLAA 7a methodology)



HC94 – Hatfield Fire Station, Hatfield

URBAN SITE

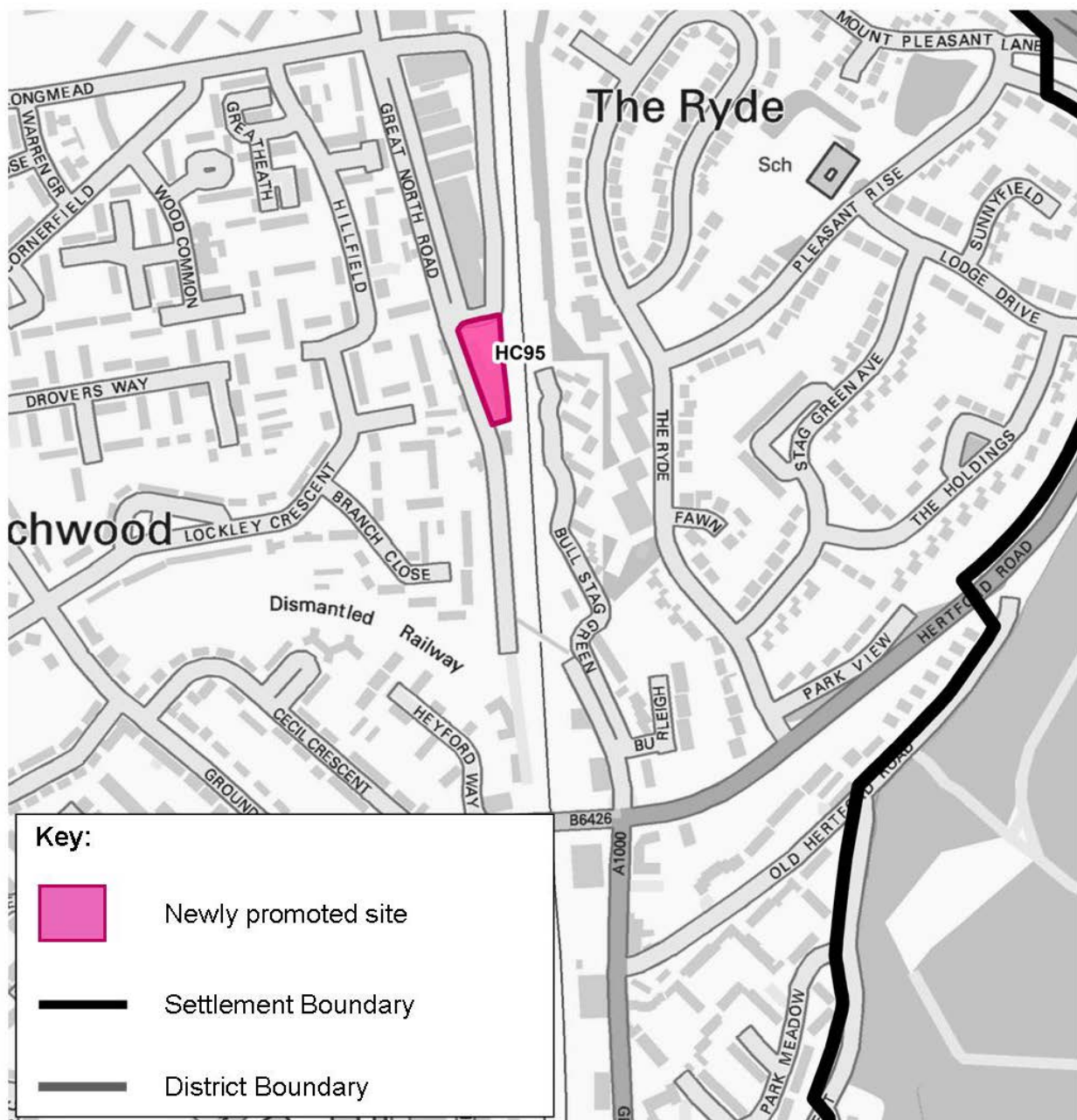
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Fire station	Size of site	0.96 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	52 dwellings (based on 70 dph gross - SHLAA 1 scenario 6B and demolition of 15 units)



HC95 – Morgan Smith Electronics, 126 Great North Road, Hatfield

URBAN SITE

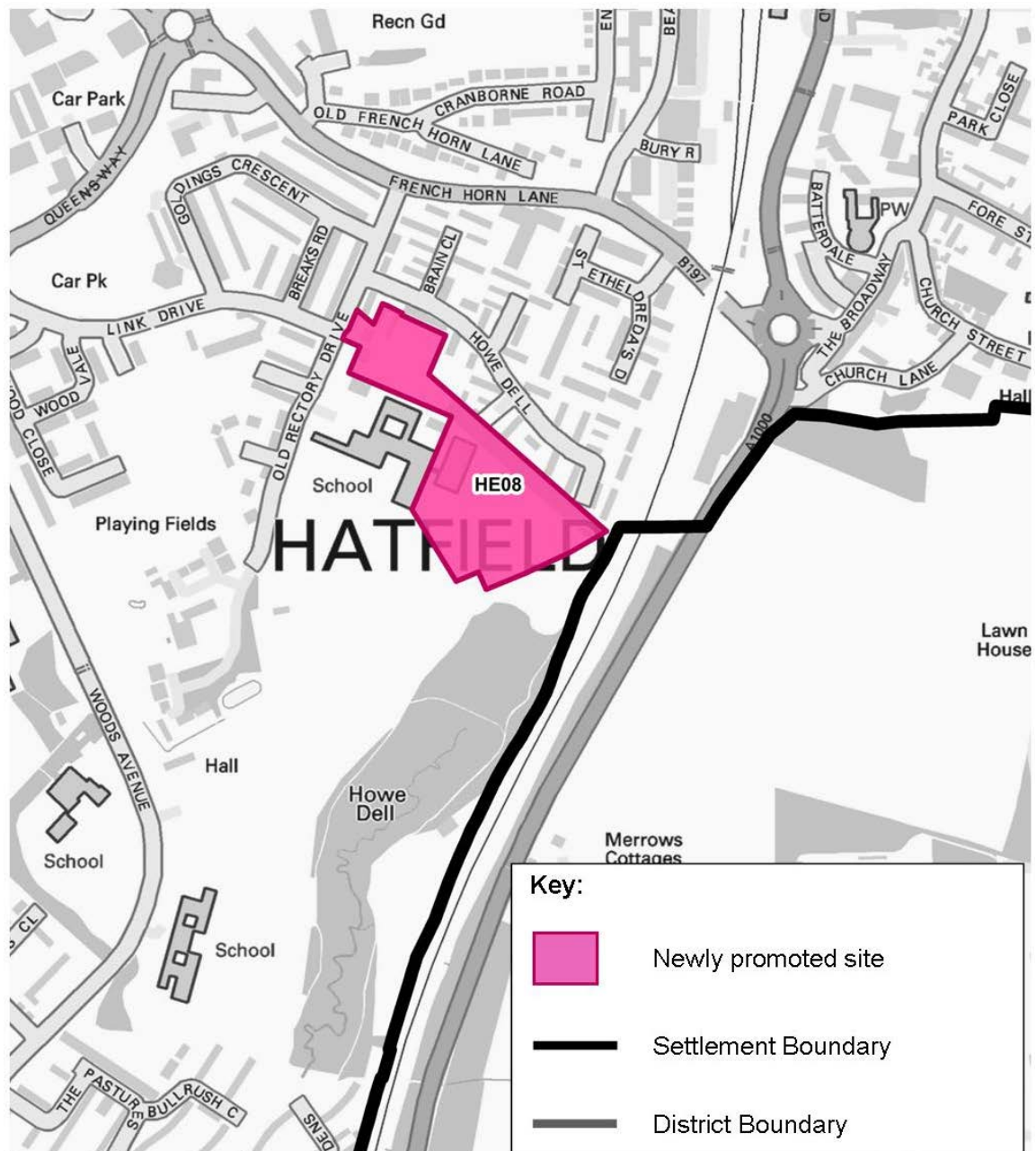
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Commercial	Size of site	0.25 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	17 dwellings (based on 70 dph gross - SHLAA 1 scenario 6B)



HE80 – Onslow St Audrey's School, Howe Dell, Hatfield

URBAN SITE

Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Developer
Current land use	Education / playing fields	Size of site	1.88 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	71 dwellings (based on 38dph gross – SHLAA1 scenario 3A)

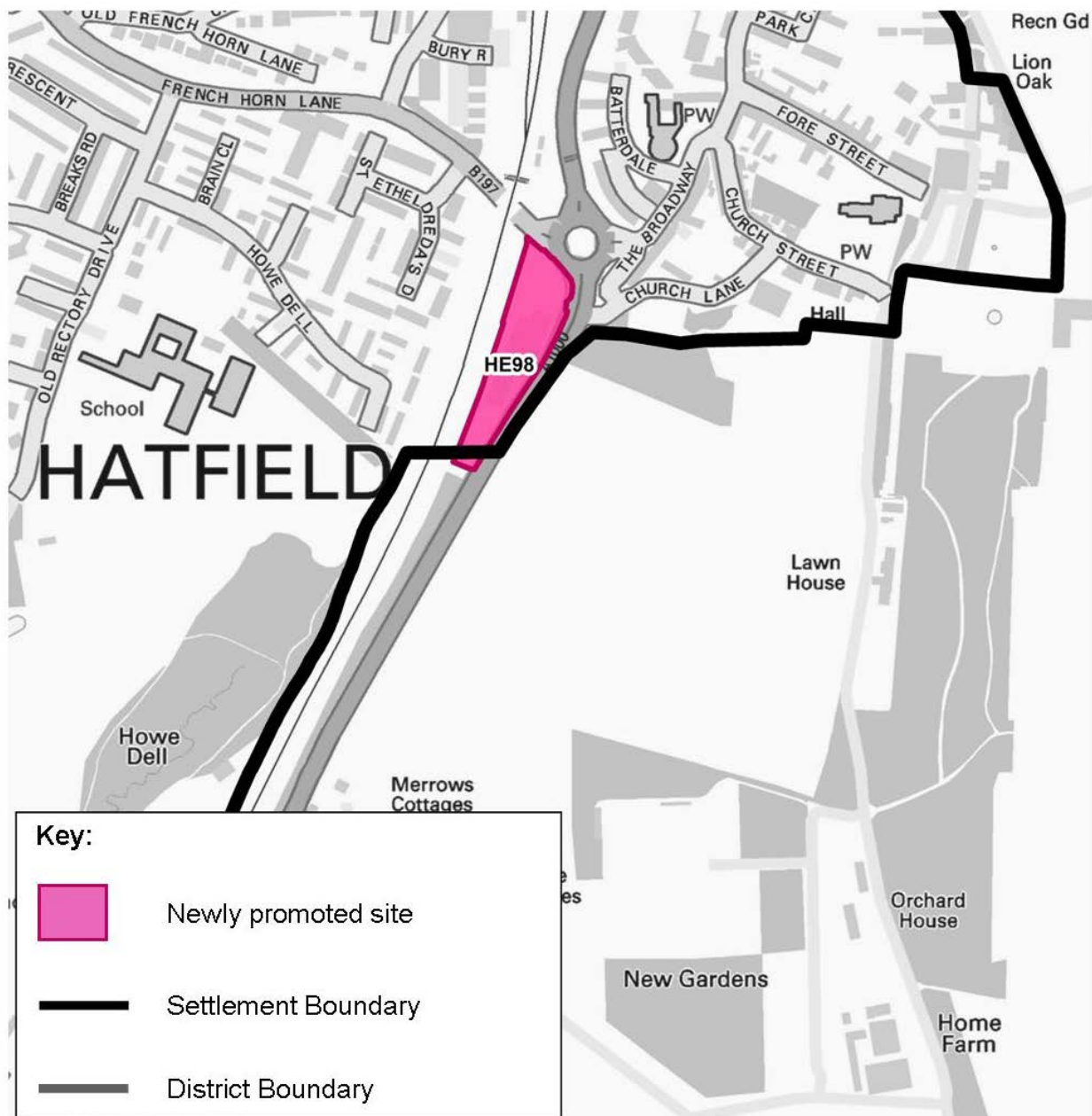


© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA1000 19547 2015

HE98 – Citroen Garage, Great North Road, Hatfield

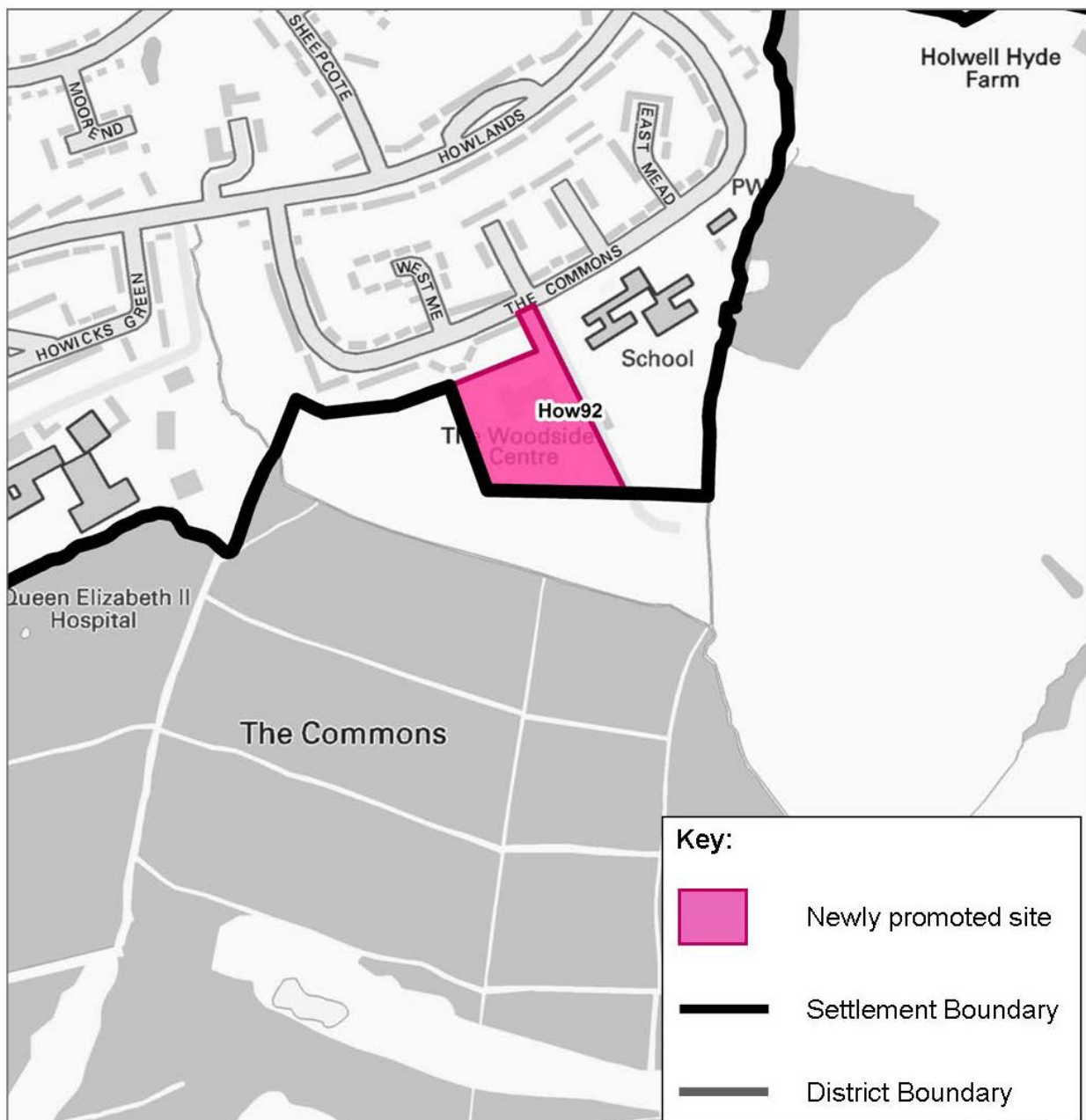
URBAN SITE ([PART GREEN BELT])

Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current land use	Commercial	Size of site	0.75 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential/mixed use	Notional capacity	53 dwellings (based on 70 dph – SHLAA 1 scenario 6B)



How92 – Woodside Centre, Welwyn Garden City

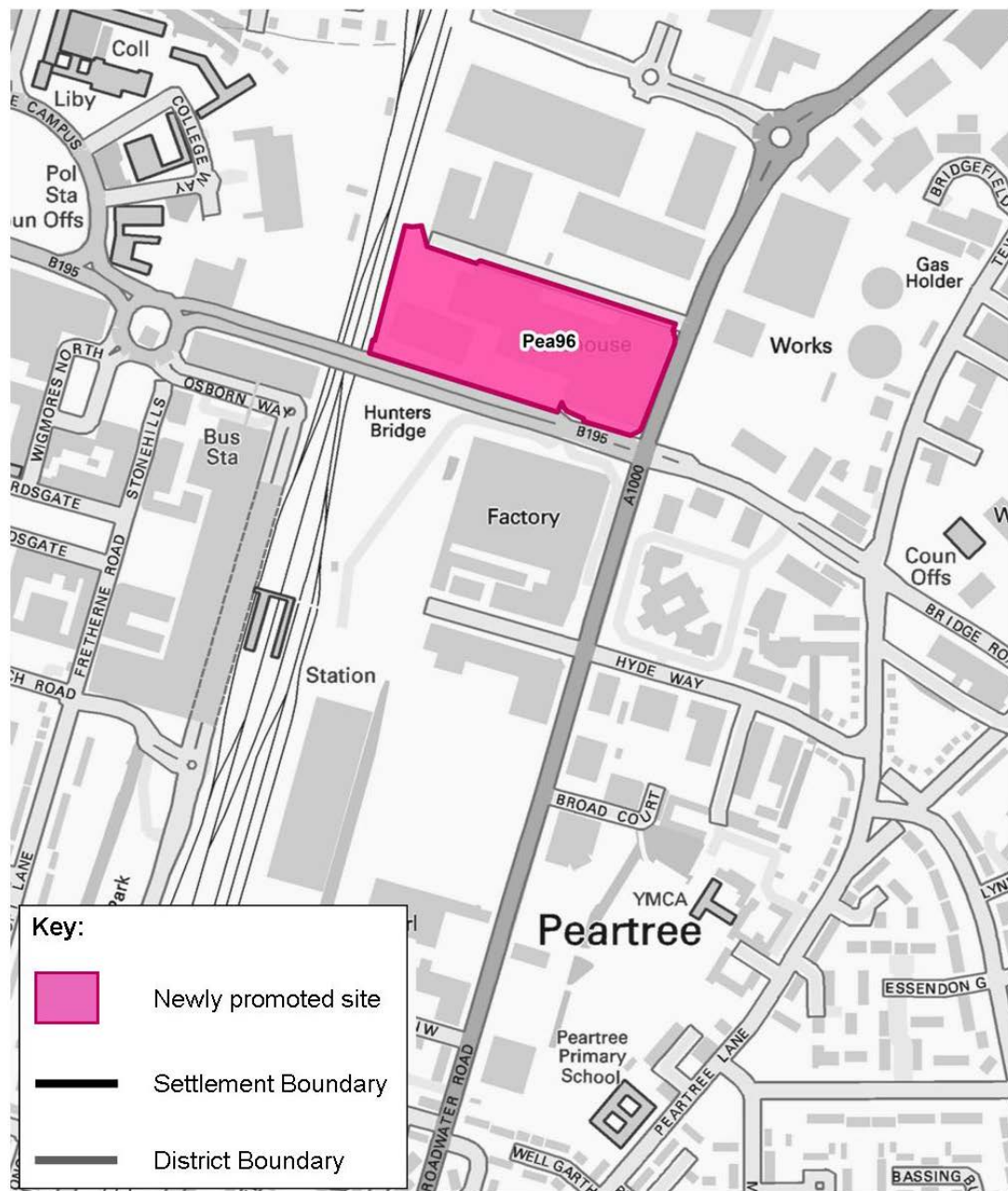
URBAN SITE			
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Community/business and Urban Open Land	Size of site	0.48 ha excluding area of UOL 1.33 ha gross including UOL
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	18 dwellings excluding UOL 50 dwellings including UOL (both based on 38 dph gross - SHLAA 1 scenario 2A)



Pea96 – Argos site, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City

URBAN SITE

Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current land use	Commercial	Size of site	3.05ha gross
Proposed use	Mixed use (residential and commercial)	Notional capacity	265 dwellings plus commercial (based on 87dph gross - benchmarked against Spenhill application)

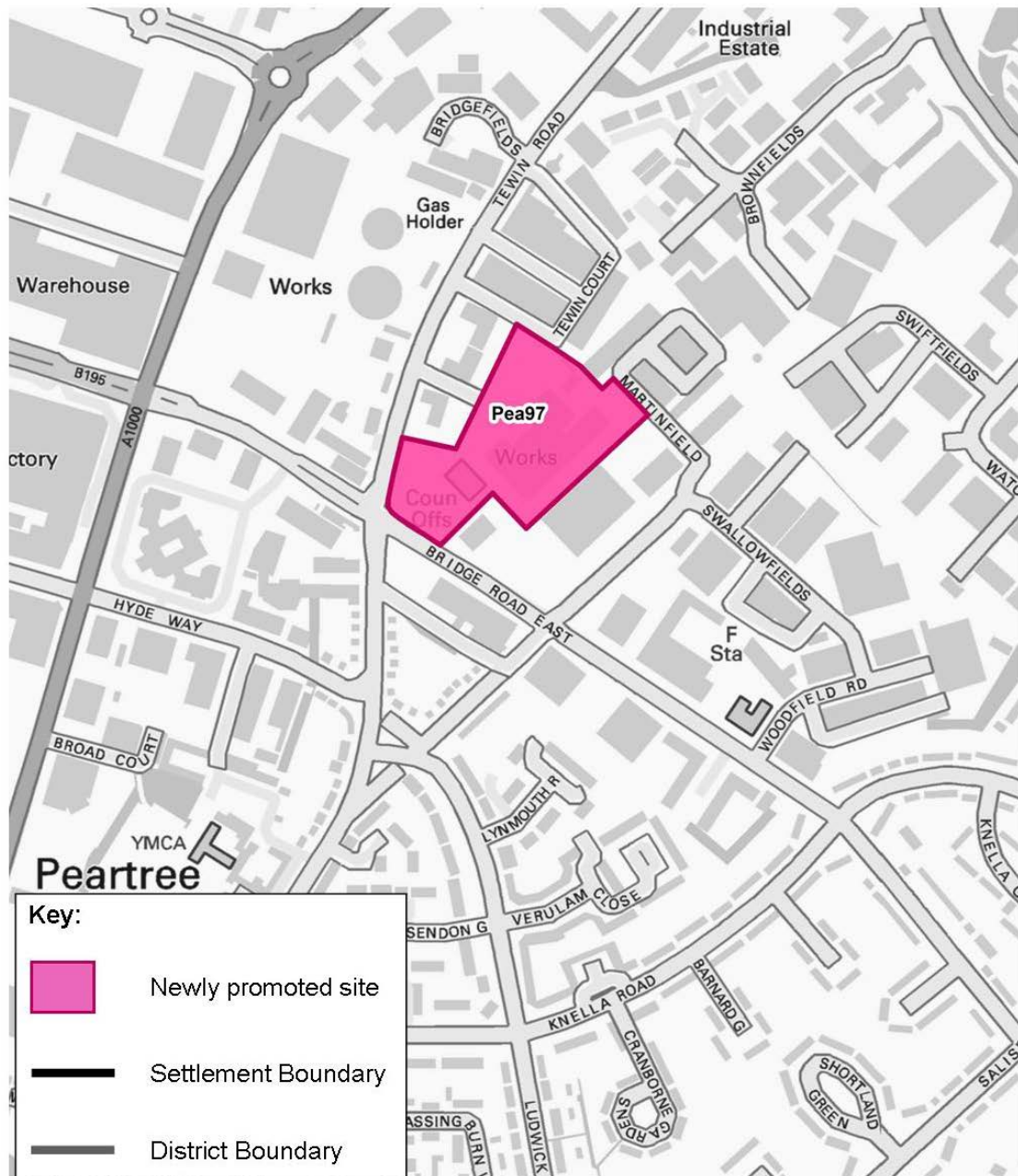


© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA1000 19547 2015

Pea97 – Norton site, Bridge Road East, Welwyn Garden City

URBAN SITE

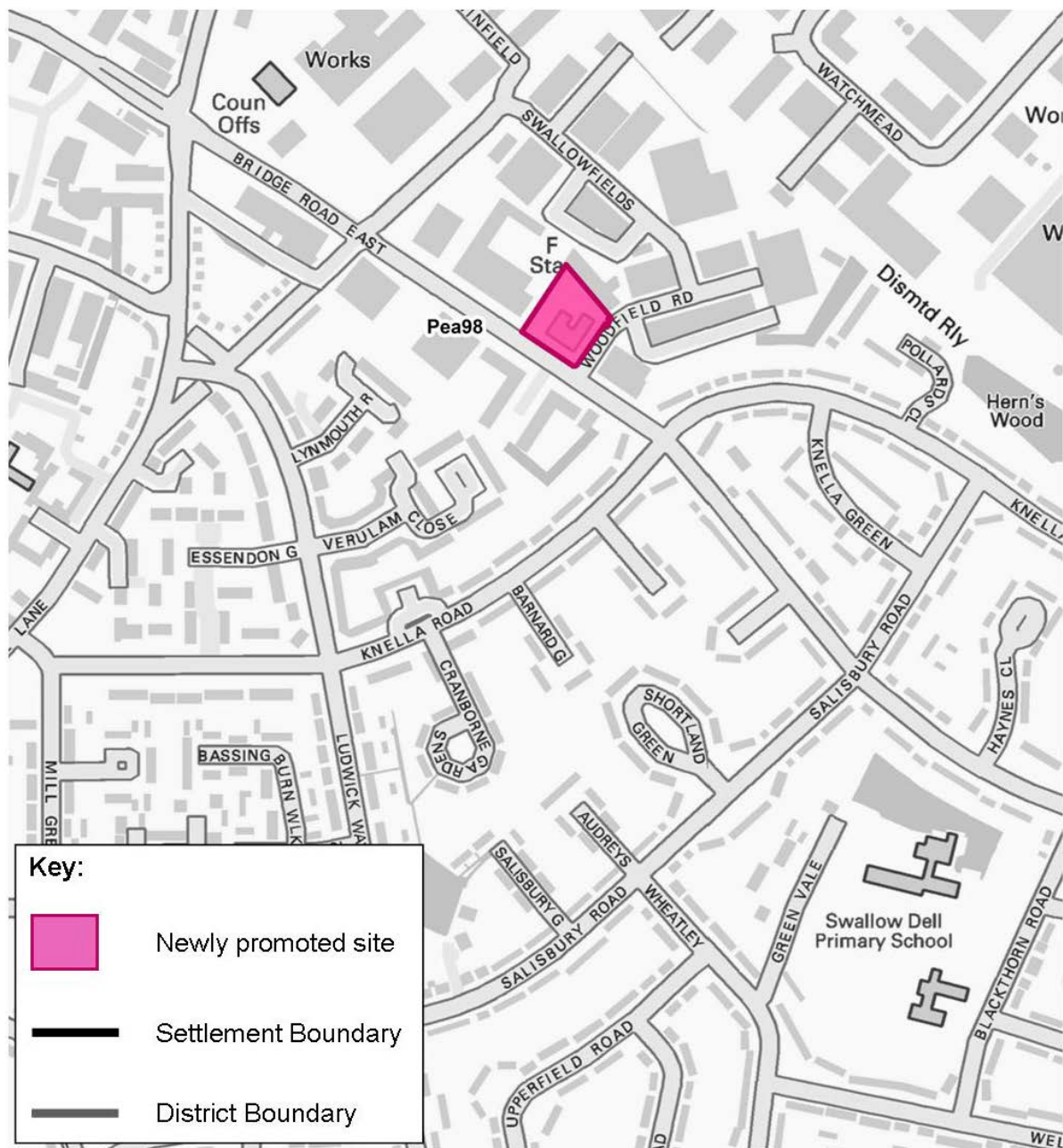
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner & agent
Current land use	Commercial	Size of site	2.38 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	143 dwellings (based on 60dph gross - SHLAA 1 scenario 3B)



Pea98 – Welwyn Garden City Fire Station, Welwyn Garden City

URBAN SITE

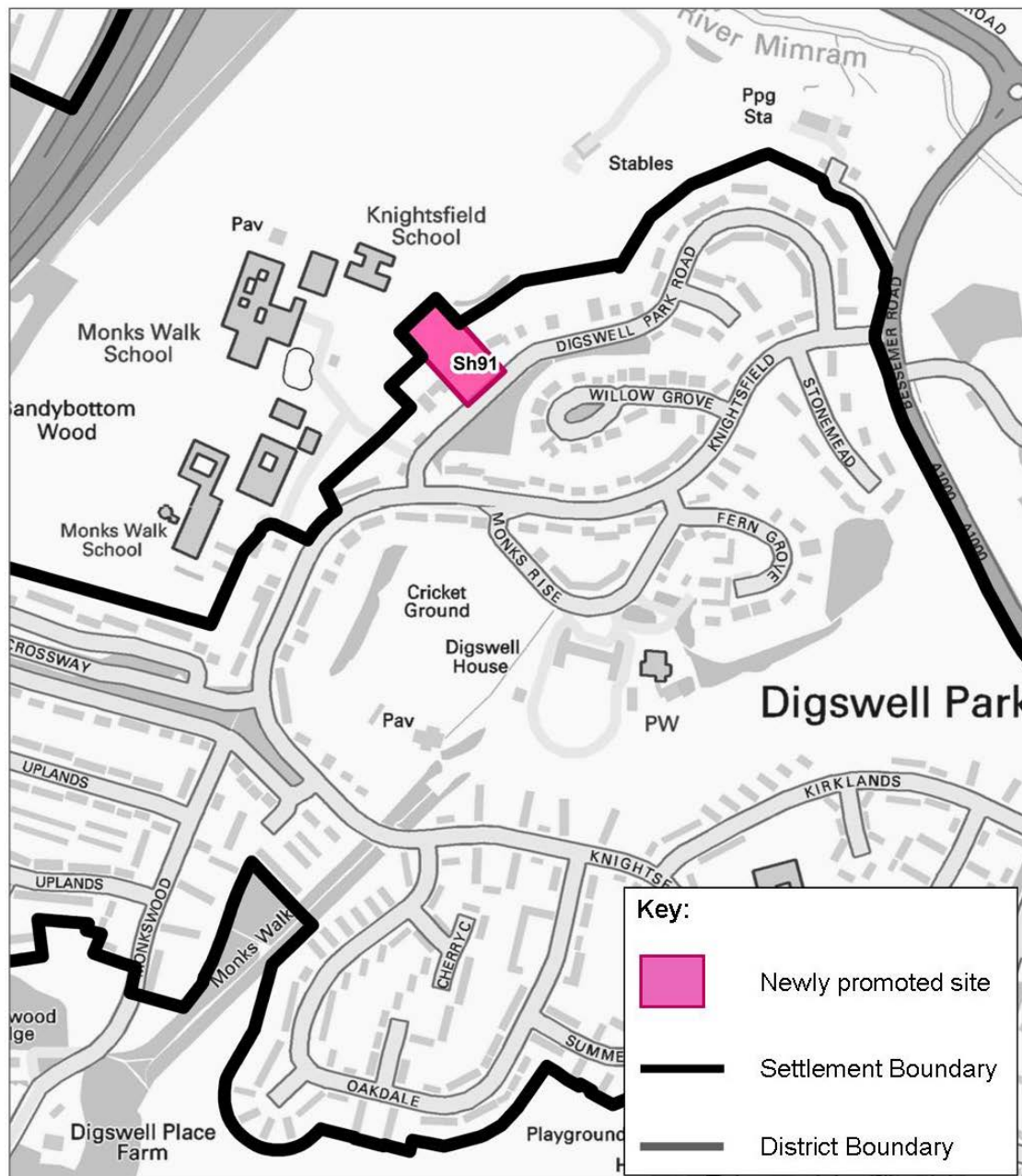
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Fire station	Size of site	0.37 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	23 dwellings (based on 61dph gross - SHLAA 1 scenario 1B)



Sh91 – 15 Digswell Park Road, Welwyn Garden City

URBAN SITE

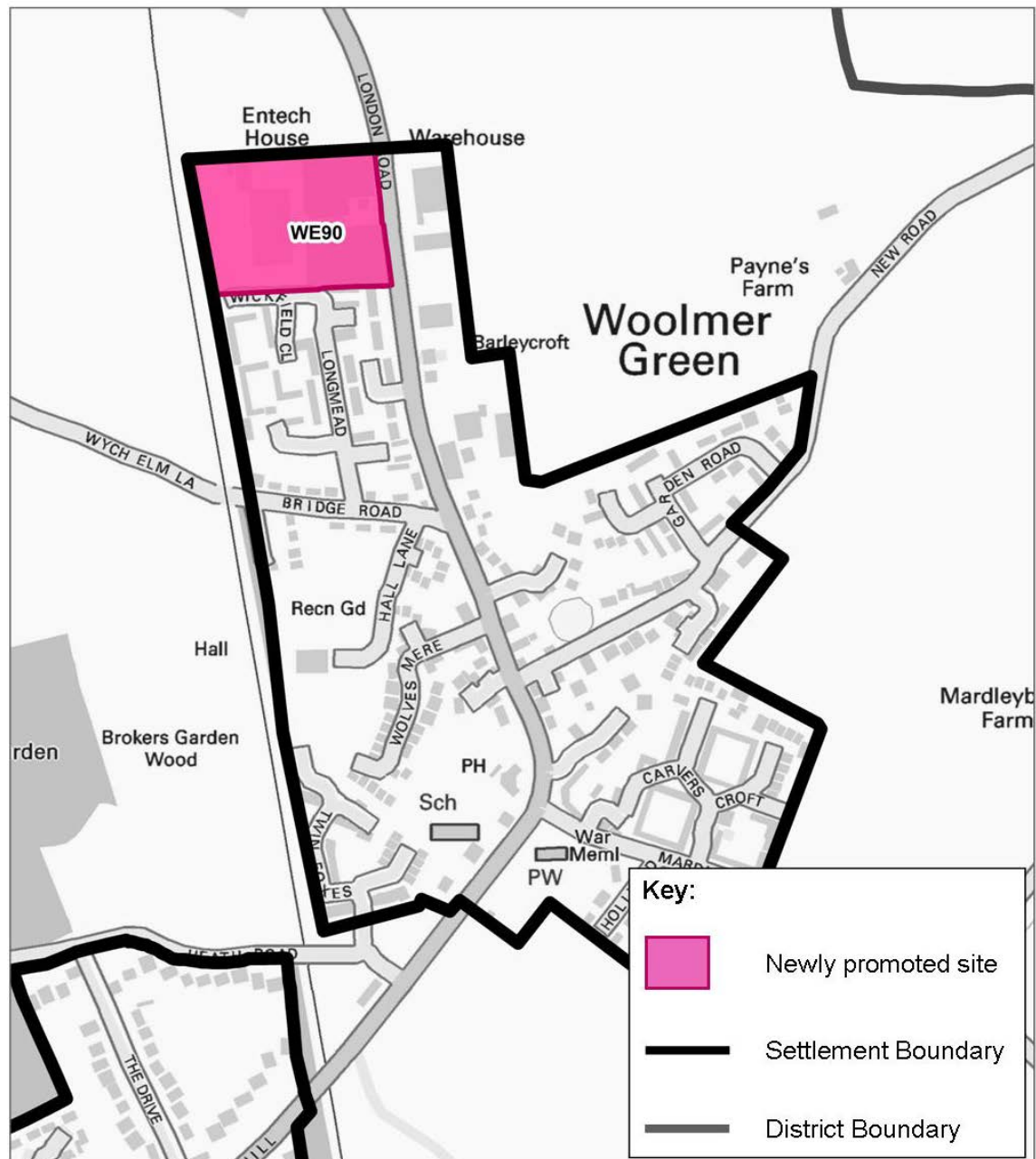
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Residential	Size of site	0.41 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	11 dwellings (based on 30dph gross – SHLAA 1 scenario 6A and demolition of 1 unit)



WE90 – Entech House, London Road, Woolmer Green

URBAN SITE

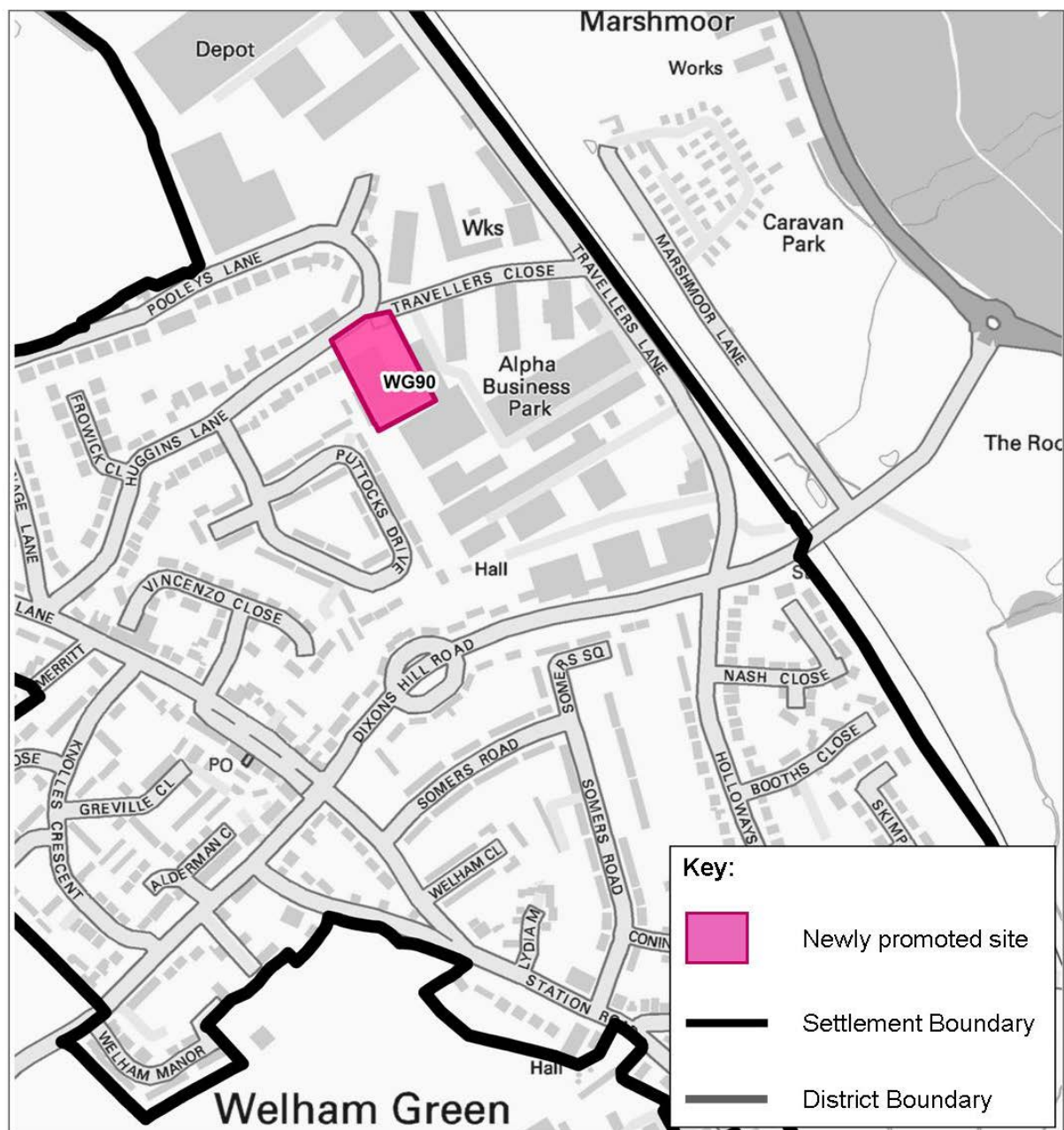
Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Commercial	Size of site	2.06 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential/mixed use	Notional capacity	82 dwellings (based on 40dph gross)



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA1000 19547 2015

WG90 – Unit 3, Travellers Close, Welham Green

Status of the site	Newly promoted site	Site promoter	Landowner
Current land use	Commercial	Size of site	0.6 ha gross
Proposed use	Residential	Notional capacity	23 dwellings (based on 38 dph – SHLAA 1 scenario 1A)



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council LA1000 19547 2015

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING & PLANNING PANEL – 25 JUNE 2015
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (GOVERNANCE)

Planning Policy Update

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on government changes to the planning system and recent local plan decisions.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Members note the report.

3 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 3.1 This report relates to the Council's Corporate Priority 3 (Our Places).

2 Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are resource implications associated with setting up and administering a register for self build and preparing Local Development Orders.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 There are no legal implications arising directly as a result of this report. The report advises of a new legal duty to set up a register for those interested in self build.

4 Climate Change Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct climate change implications associated with this report.

5 Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct risk management implications associated with this report.

6 Policy Implications

- 6.1 The new initiatives will have implications for the preparation of the council's planning policy framework and the delivery of the Local Plan. These are discussed in more detail in section 7 below.

7 Explanation

- 7.1 The previous government consulted on a number of initiatives which were subsequently introduced just before the election.

Starter Homes Initiative

- 7.2 The government carried out consultation on this proposal early in 2015. Changes to the Planning Practice Guidance were subsequently introduced in March 2015.
- 7.3 This states that local planning authorities should work in a positive and proactive way with landowners and developers to secure a supply of sites suitable for housing for first time buyers. In particular, they should look for opportunities to create high quality, well designed starter homes through exception sites on commercial and industrial land that is either under-used or unviable in its current or former use, and which has not currently been identified for housing.
- 7.4 Where applications for starter homes come forward on such exception sites, they should be approved unless the local planning authority can demonstrate that there are overriding conflicts with the NPPF that cannot be mitigated.
- 7.5 Planning obligations should be attached to permissions for starter homes on Starter Homes exception sites, requiring that the homes are offered for sale at a minimum of 20% below open market price, to young first time buyers (under 40) who want to own and occupy a home. They should also prevent the re-sale and letting of the properties at open market value for a 5 year period and the discounted price of a home should be no more than £250,000 (outside London).
- 7.6 In view of their contribution to meeting housing needs, Starter Homes exception sites should not be required to make section 106 affordable housing or tariff style contributions.
- 7.7 Exception sites may include a small proportion of market homes, at the planning authority's discretion, where this is essential to secure the required level of discount for the starter homes on the site.
- 7.8 Although not specifically stated one interpretation is that this approach should be introduced as a policy through a local plan similar to the rural exception sites policy. There has however been no accompanying change to the NPPF.
- 7.9 The government has set up a register for those interested in acquiring a starter home. The Housing Bill is to provide a statutory framework for the starter home initiative.

Self Build

- 7.10 The government has supported self build as a concept for a number of years with references in the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance.
- 7.11 It has also introduced new legislation earlier this year known as The Self Build and Custom House Building Act to encourage delivery of self build homes. The Act requires local authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land to bring forward self-build and custom house building projects and to have regard to those registers in carrying out planning and other functions relating to housing, the disposal of land of the authority and regeneration. The register must be publicised.
- 7.12 The Act allows for volume house builders to include self-build and custom-build projects to contribute towards affordable housing obligations, when development takes place in partnership for this purpose with a Registered Social Landlord.

The CIL regulations already allow for Self Build development to be exempt from CIL charges.

- 7.13 Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to include policies for self build where there is evidence of need. The requirement to have a register would clearly provide evidence of such need. It is understood that the Housing Bill is likely to include further measures to encourage the delivery of self-build.

Local Development Orders for Brownfield Sites

- 7.14 Members of this Panel will recall responding to the government consultation on Local Development Orders. The Queens Speech has confirmed that the Housing Bill will also include measures requiring local planning authorities to have Local Development Orders in place on 90% of brownfield sites by 2020. There is no reference to the interim target but it is not clear whether this has been dropped.

Deregulation Act 2015 and Housing Standards

- 7.15 Section 42 of the act amends the Building Act 1984 to empower local authorities to introduce more demanding "optional" building regulations in the Local Plan, as envisaged in the government's housing standards review.
- 7.16 The standards comprise of internal space standards, water efficiency standards, wheelchair accessible and adaptable standards. Local Planning Authorities who wish to introduce such standards will have to provide evidence of need and viability.
- 7.17 Officers are currently reviewing whether there is sufficient evidence to justify the introduction of such standards into the Local Plan and whether there are any implications for the Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document.

Local Plan decisions

- 7.18 The Inspectors for the **Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire** have concluded that their joint examination should be suspended following hearing sessions on their development strategy, the Green Belt, transport and housing. The Inspectors found that the methodology for assessing the importance of the Green Belt was difficult to understand; the OAN had not taken account of market signals; and the councils had failed to demonstrate whether the 2012 based household projections would suggest a different level of need (even though these were released after the relevant hearing had already taken place).
- 7.19 On the matter of urban extensions/new settlements, the Inspectors noted that that locating development on the urban edge has significant advantages in sustainability terms. Further, that "depending on their overall scale new settlements should be sustainable due to their self- containment...". However, the inspectors also found that there are various challenges to the delivery of self-contained settlements and out-commuting to workplaces and other facilities and services is likely. If development is to be directed to new settlements rather than the edge of the urban area, it needs to be clear that the challenges of making such development as sustainable as possible have been addressed, in particular infrastructure requirements and sustainable transport options. The lack of evidence available did not provide any reassurance that the Plans will deliver sustainable development and the councils' reliance on meeting development

needs in new settlements was considered to run the risk of a finding of unsoundness. The suspension would allow the councils to revisit their sustainability appraisals so as to appraise all reasonable alternatives (including sites on the urban edge) to the same level as the preferred option, and to suggest modifications based on that work. The councils are considering their position.

- 7.20 **Malden Council** requested that the Secretary of State call in its Local Plan following a dispute between the Inspector and the Council. The Inspector had explained why the plan would be found unsound and favoured the suspension of the examination (after a year) due to the absence of an up to date and robust evidence base and its failure to adequately plan (and allocate sites) to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers resulting in a fundamental failure in policy which could not be rectified by modification or suspension. The Inspector found that all of Maldon's housing policies, taken together were fundamentally unsound and that they should be reconsidered as a whole and progressed as an integrated series of policies with associated infrastructure. This has also delayed the examination of Maldon's CIL charging structure. The fact that there were no (or few) objections to the relevant policy had no bearing on the Inspector's conclusions as the merits and soundness of a policy are not solely dependent upon how many people have objected. The Secretary of State has now taken the (rare) step of calling in Maldon's Plan.
- 7.21 **Cornwall** is considering its position following their Inspector finding that more work was required. The Inspector said that an allowance for an uplift in the housing target should be made to allow for second home and the Council should consider whether a further increase in the plan's target is needed to meet affordable housing needs and to demonstrate in the evidence the scope for narrowing the gap between need and expected delivery by some increase in market housing.

8 Equalities and Diversity

- 8.1 There are not considered to be any equality or diversity impacts arising from this report.

Sue Tiley
Planning Policy and Implementation Manager
12 June 2015

Background Papers

National Planning Practice Guidance

Queens Speech Briefing Pack
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/430149/QS_lobby_pack_FINAL_NEW_2.pdf