



Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan

Consultation draft: May 2019

*Securing a better future for Baldock,
Bygrave and Clothall*



This is the draft Neighbourhood Plan for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall. It has been produced by a small number of volunteers drawn from community organisations in the town, together with representatives from Bygrave Parish Council and Clothall with Luffenhall Parish Meeting. The group is independent of the district and county councils, and of any political parties. Further information about the group is available on our website www.bbplan.co.uk.

The plan has been produced to get the best outcome for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall from whatever development takes place in and around the town in the future.

We would welcome your views on the draft plan. The consultation period runs for six weeks, from 7 May until 18 June 2019, and details of how to comment are available on our website www.bbplan.co.uk.

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Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan 2018-31

Consultation draft

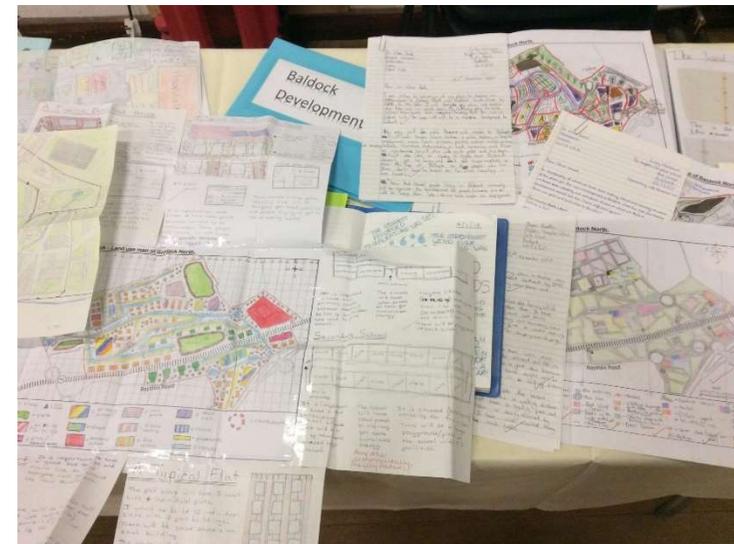
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Baldock and neighbouring parts of Bygrave and Clothall will see big changes over the next few decades, due to proposals by the district and county councils for major development around the edges of the town. These proposals are contained in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, produced by the District Council, and are being taken forward mainly by Hertfordshire County Council, who own most of the land.

The Localism Act 2011 gave communities the right to prepare their own plans to guide future development. A neighbourhood plan cannot block the amount of growth proposed in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, but it does give the community a chance to influence what will happen. **The Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan has, therefore, been prepared with one aim in mind: to get the best outcome for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall from whatever development does take place.** This means ensuring that the right facilities are provided, that the character of Baldock and the villages is safeguarded, and that new development is of a high quality.

The Neighbourhood Plan area includes the whole of Baldock and the parishes of Bygrave and Clothall. This is because the proposed developments cross the boundaries between these areas, and it also allows the potential impact of the developments on the villages to be considered. The plan covers the period to 2031, which corresponds with the end date of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

Annex A explains how the Neighbourhood Plan has been put together. Many individuals and organisations have been involved, which is important so that it reflects local views and aspirations as much as possible. Particular thanks are due to members of the steering group, who have invested considerable time in the process, to AECOM for their help with the design work, and to the bodies that have provided or offered financial support: Rotary Club of Baldock, Baldock Society, Cllrs Steve Jarvis and Michael Muir (through their locality budgets) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (which funded AECOM's design work).



Baldock Street Fair 2018, and Knights Templar School project work

The first part of the plan - ‘setting the scene’ - provides a brief overview of the Neighbourhood Plan area as it is today, and some of the key changes that are likely to happen in future, as background for the policies that follow.

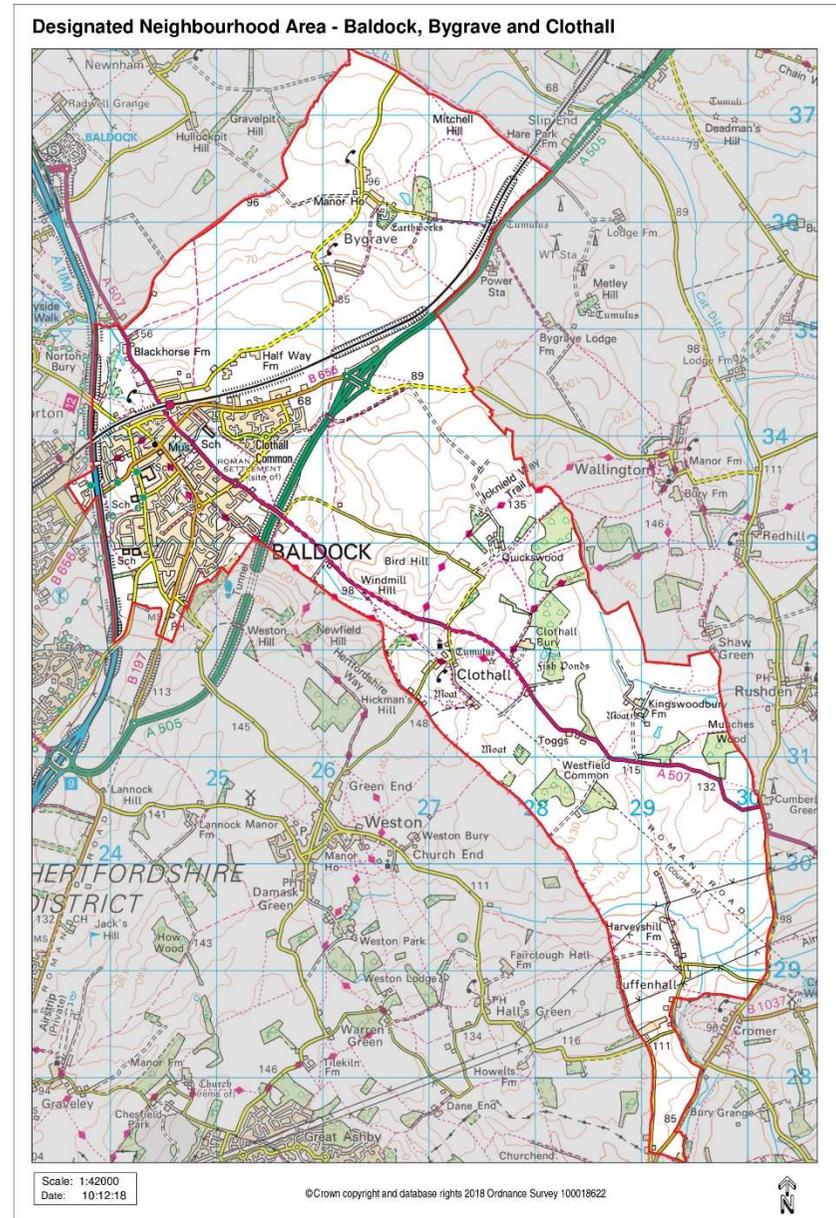
The planning policies themselves are the key statements that will be used in future to inform proposals for development and make decisions about them. The Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory ‘development plan’ for the area that it covers, alongside the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. The law requires decisions on planning applications to be made in line with the development plan unless other ‘material considerations’ indicate otherwise.

The planning policies are divided into three groups:

- some general policies that apply to the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan area or particular parts of it (these general policies are prefixed ‘G’);
- policies for the sites proposed for development at the edge of Baldock, and for two redevelopment sites within the town (prefixed ‘E’); and
- policies for the villages within the Neighbourhood Plan area (Bygrave, Clothall and Luffenhall) – prefixed ‘V’.

Each policy is supported by some text that explains the reasons for it. The policies apply to applications for reserved matters consent as well as planning permission, where relevant.

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan should not be read in isolation. The plan supplements the policies contained in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, so the two need to be looked at together when considering development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Where individual policies in the Neighbourhood Plan express support for particular types of development proposal, it is subject to those proposals also being considered against other policies in the development plan taken as a whole.



Alongside its policies, the Neighbourhood Plan contains some important design guidelines that development on key sites will be expected to follow. These are referenced in policy E3, and set out fully in Annex B to the plan (published separately). These guidelines form an intrinsic part of the plan and should therefore be taken into account when considering relevant development proposals.

There are limits to what a neighbourhood plan can cover: its policies must relate to things that can be dealt with through the planning system, rather than other public services or commercial decisions. However, the process of producing the plan has inevitably identified some wider issues that the community would like to see considered. These are recorded in the evidence report that accompanies the plan, which has been brought to the attention of the district and county councils.

Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall today

Baldock is a compact, historic and attractive market town set within the rolling chalk landscape of north Hertfordshire. The town and its surroundings are rich in archaeological remains, reflecting a long history of settlement from prehistoric times onwards, including the site of a Romano-British small town at Walls Field. The centre of Baldock retains the layout of the medieval town laid out in the 12th century, and contains a significant concentration of historic buildings, many of which are listed.

The town occupies a strategic location at the crossroads of the old Great North Road and the Icknield Way. Once an important coaching town, it has been bypassed twice: first by the A1(M), and more recently by the Baldock bypass opened in 2006. However, traffic congestion remains an issue in the centre of Baldock, with the Whitehorse Street/Station Road crossroads being a particular bottleneck.

One reason for this congestion is the importance of east-west movement through the town: Baldock sits at one end of a near-continuous urban corridor running through Letchworth to Hitchin, which generates a lot of trips between the towns for work, shopping and leisure. Baldock's employment base is relatively small compared to its population, so many residents commute to these and other centres (such as Stevenage, Cambridge and London).

At the same time, Baldock attracts visits for shopping and leisure, as it has excellent independent retailers, a growing range of cafes and restaurants and a large Tesco superstore. It also has a strong community spirit and hosts a number of events and festivals throughout the year, notably the Baldock Festival in May and the Balstock music festival in September. The opening of the Arts and Heritage Centre in 2013 gave the town an important new venue for performances and exhibitions.

Baldock also enjoys some good public services, with well-regarded schools, a frequent rail service, doctors' surgery and health centre, fire station and library. However, some of these facilities are at or approaching capacity, while Baldock relies on other towns for some services (in particular for various sports like hockey and rugby pitches and swimming pools).

Outside Baldock, most of the land in the Neighbourhood Plan area is in agricultural or woodland use, and is quite sparsely settled (with the majority of it being

designated as Green Belt in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan). Two local nature reserves - Ivel Springs and the Weston Hills – are located next to Baldock and provide important recreation opportunities as well as conservation benefits.

The three villages in the Neighbourhood Plan area are small, but have distinctive characters.

Bygrave sits on high land to the north-east of Baldock, and has two distinct parts. Upper Bygrave was a medieval village, and today comprises a small collection of houses around the Grade II* listed church of St. Margaret of Antioch, and a separate cluster along the road to Ashwell. Lower Bygrave is detached from it, and made up of relatively large houses with extensive gardens built in the 1930s. These were intended to form part of a larger community which would practice self-sufficiency, but this wider plan was abandoned, leaving the two streets that exist today. There are no shops or other facilities serving Bygrave apart from the church and a very infrequent bus service.

The village of Clothall also occupies raised ground, to the south east of Baldock, and is situated on the course of the former Roman Road to Braughing. It has, like upper Bygrave, an important medieval church (St. Mary the Virgin, also listed II*), with a small amount of housing scattered mainly to the south of it. Its facilities are marginally better than Bygrave, as it has a newly-built village hall, and there are more bus services during the day, although not at times that would allow journeys to and from work.

Luffenhall is a small and relatively isolated village in the far south-east of Clothall parish, on the border with East Hertfordshire. It has a linear and very rural character, with houses and farms dispersed along a country lane, a number of which are listed due to their special historic interest. There are no public services within the village.

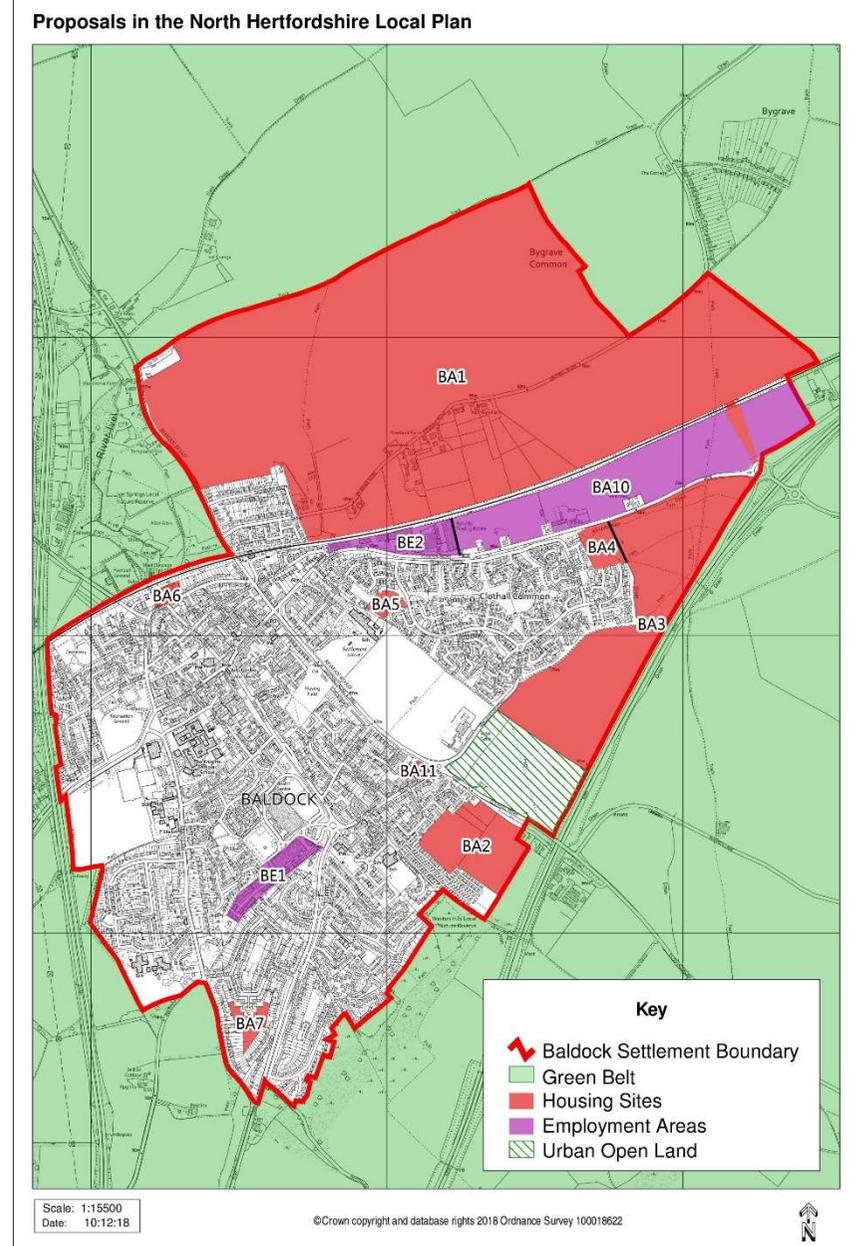
How Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall could change

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan proposes that 3,298 homes are built in and around Baldock between 2011 and 2031, together with a new employment area to the north of Royston Road. This will not happen all at once, and indeed is likely to take much longer than estimated in the Local Plan. Major sites take time to build – often much longer than anticipated – and the intention of Hertfordshire County Council is to phase the developments, starting with the land at Cambrai Farm (site BA2) and south of Clothall Common (BA3). Even so, the rate and scale of change is likely to be much greater than Baldock has experienced in the past. This will create challenges, but also opportunities.

The developments are much larger than those that would be required to meet Baldock’s own needs, and will bring additional people to the town to live and for work. This should help to support local shops and an even wider range of community activities. At the same time, one of the key concerns of existing residents is the impact which this growth will have on the capacity of local services and infrastructure, particularly the road network.

A number of improvements are required by the North Hertfordshire Local Plan to address this, including additional schools, shops and health facilities to serve the development proposed to the north of Baldock (site BA1). It also requires new link roads to the north and south-east of Baldock to help take traffic away from the centre of the town.

The Local Plan does not deal with all of the key facilities that will be needed (in particular open space and recreation), while the impact on local roads will depend on the accuracy of assumptions that have been made about future travel patterns and highway improvements. These are two issues which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to tackle, so that a full range of necessary facilities is available as Baldock grows, and conditions on local roads do not get any worse.



Large scale development to the north of Baldock could create a town of two halves, due to the physical barrier presented by the railway, and the fact that site BA1 will be provided with its own facilities. Local people would like to see Baldock's strong sense of community continue, which will mean creating physical connections between old and new parts of the town, as well as efforts to promote community activities that can bring existing and new residents together.

The effect of Baldock's growth on the villages within the Neighbourhood Plan area will vary. Bygrave, Clothall and Luffenhall themselves will see very little new development, as the North Hertfordshire Local Plan restricts what can be built due to their small size and/or location within the Green Belt. However, the proposed expansion of Baldock will bring the edge of the town much closer to Lower Bygrave, and the populations of Bygrave and Clothall parishes will increase significantly (as most of the sites on the edges of a Baldock lie within them).

One thing which can be expected to affect all parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area is the impact of climate change, which is likely to mean higher temperatures, water scarcity and more extreme weather events¹. This makes it important that new buildings are constructed in ways that limit energy and water demands, and that steps are taken to manage the impacts of extreme weather such as surface water flooding (which some parts of Baldock are vulnerable to). Most aspects of construction are controlled through building regulations rather than the planning system, but there are ways in which planning can help to address these issues, and where both the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan have a role to play.

¹ For further information see the web site of the Committee on Climate Change (www.theccc.org.uk).



Against this background, and taking into account the priorities identified by the local community during our discussions, an **overall vision** for the area has been developed:

By the end of the plan period, Baldock and the parishes of Bygrave and Clothall will continue to offer a high quality of life and a strong community feel. The range of community services and job opportunities available will have improved, and new transport infrastructure and services will cater for the growth that occurs. There will be more green spaces and recreation opportunities to enjoy, and the conservation and enhancement of historic buildings and sites will make the area's rich history apparent to all. Where significant growth occurs, it will complement the existing town and set high standards of design and environmental performance.

In support of this vision, a small number of **key objectives** have been identified for the Neighbourhood Plan to pursue:

1. Sustain and strengthen Baldock's character as a historic and vibrant market town, and the rural character and separate identities of Bygrave, Clothall and Luffenhall.
2. Ensure that new development is well designed, maintains and reflects important features of Baldock and its surroundings, and is resilient to future climate change.
3. Secure the right infrastructure and facilities needed to serve the expanded town, and to avoid unacceptable impacts from new development.
4. Ensure that Baldock grows in a way that builds strong connections between all parts of the town, and which provides homes, services and job opportunities that cater for both existing and new residents.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not deal directly with every aspect of these, as it supplements the policies already contained in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. For example, it does not contain policies for the mix of homes to be provided, as suitable policies are set out in the Local Plan. A full list of relevant policies contained in both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan is provided at Annex C.



Baldock High Street and Clothall parish notice board

Policy G1 Improving access and parking

Proposals for the following access and parking improvements will be supported (where planning permission is required):

- a) the provision of a limited amount of additional parking to serve Baldock railway station within the existing built-up area of the town or as part of site BA1 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan;
- b) improved access to Baldock station, including the provision of lifts to both platforms and additional secure cycle storage as Baldock grows;
- c) changes to the drop-off and pick-up arrangements serving Knights Templar School to improve safety, especially if the school requires enlargement as a direct result of the allocations for housing in the Local Plan (in which case appropriate contributions towards the improvements will be sought); and
- d) improved pedestrian and cycle access from Baldock High Street to the Tesco superstore.

Reason for this policy

There are several places in Baldock where better access and parking arrangements to serve existing facilities are needed now, or are likely to be needed within the period of this plan. There are also significant transport issues associated with the proposed developments on the edge of Baldock, which are addressed in policies E1 and E6 later in the plan. Some of the actions needed to tackle traffic, parking and access issues are outside the scope of the planning system, although the specific improvements noted in this policy are likely to need planning permission.

The proposed growth of the town will lead to more use of Baldock railway station, whose existing car park has limited capacity. Commuter parking elsewhere in Baldock has become a growing problem, and while daytime parking restrictions have helped to manage this, Baldock's expansion is likely to generate additional demand to park at or near the station². Responses to the Neighbourhood Plan survey showed 72% in favour of providing more parking for the station.

² Markides Associates for NHDC (2018) *North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Strategy Review – Phase 2 Report – Draft*.



Baldock station approach

The scale of any additional parking would need to reflect wider policies to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use. A limited increase in provision would reduce the risk of additional parking attracting commuter traffic from well beyond the town and its nearby villages, and help encourage the use of non-car options to get to the station, while at the same time giving more scope to park for those that have to drive. To ensure that available parking is used most effectively, and avoid further parking pressures on residential roads, complementary (non-planning) measures may need to be considered, such as further parking restrictions and reviewing the eligibility for and price of car park season tickets.

Two potential opportunities for providing additional parking have been identified during the work to prepare this plan, both of which could be connected to the station subject to access being agreed. One is using a small part of the south-west corner of site BA1 (immediately to the north of the railway line), and the other is using part of designated employment area BE2 on Royston Road. The latter would need to be an exception to Local Plan policy ETC1, which seeks to maintain business uses on such land. However, only a small amount of BE2 would be needed, and its loss would be insignificant given the scale of the additional employment land which the Local Plan allocates further along Royston Road.

Other improvements are needed to Baldock station, in particular to provide better access for those with limited mobility³. There is an opportunity to seek appropriate contributions to such improvements from developments that will place additional demands on the station.

Knights Templar School is likely to require further expansion to cater for the early phases of the town's growth, before a new secondary school is provided as part of site BA1. Appropriate contributions to these will also have to be sought, and one particular need which has been identified is improvements to the current drop-off and pick-up facilities, to help limit vehicle movements outside the student entrance and improve safety.

Previous work on barriers to movement within Baldock has also highlighted the lack of direct and convenient access from the High Street to the Tesco superstore, which is the biggest retail outlet in the town⁴. Policy G1 encourages suitable opportunities to improve the quality and convenience of pedestrian and cycle access to the store to be taken forward.

³ WYG for Hertfordshire County Council (2017) *Baldock North: Transport Assessment*.

⁴ Urban Practitioners for NHDC (2007) *North Hertfordshire Urban Design Assessment: Baldock*.

Policy G2 Strategic green space

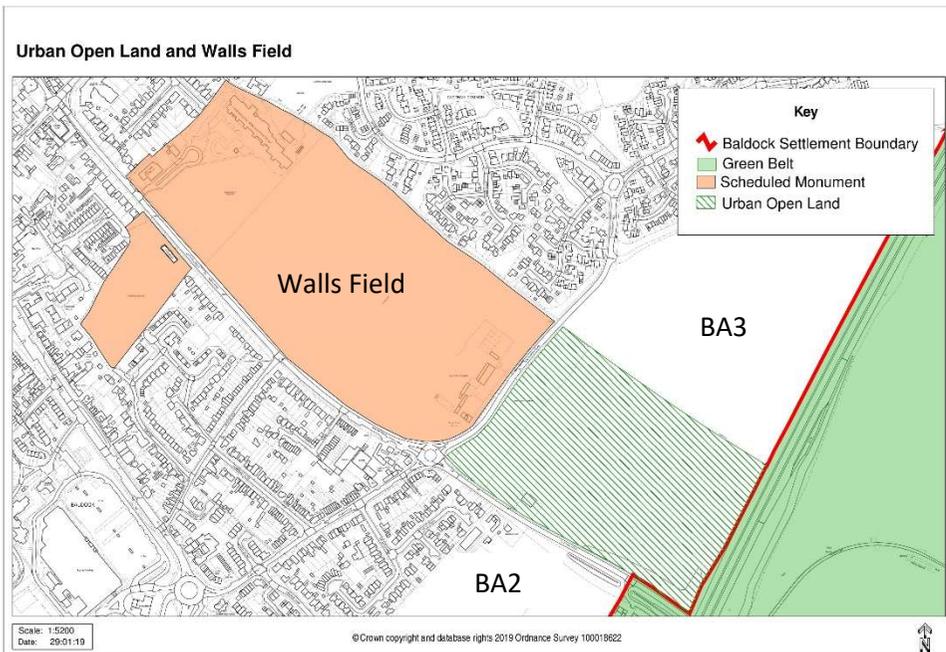
To conserve an important ‘green lung’ at the heart of Baldock, applications for development should maintain the predominantly open character of the land lying between Hartsfield School and the A505 Baldock Bypass⁵, together with views from this area out to the countryside to the east of the town.

Proposals that would improve the visual or recreational value of this area will be supported, particularly if they form part of a comprehensive strategy for improved public access and historic conservation and interpretation. Any proposals affecting Walls Field and its setting should conserve, and where possible enhance, its value as a scheduled monument.

Reason for this policy

Baldock contains a variety of open spaces that serve different functions, such as parks and play areas, school playing fields and cemeteries. The area described in this policy plays a particularly important role in maintaining a sense of openness within and at the edge of the town, the significance of which will grow as proposals for development in the Local Plan are implemented. It also embraces a key part of Baldock’s history, as the Walls Field scheduled monument marks the location of the Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement that once existed here.

The North Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan⁶ identifies the value of Walls Field as part of this ‘green lung’, and the opportunities that exist for enhancing its historic



Walls Field – a historic ‘green lung’ at the heart of Baldock

⁵ This comprises relevant parts of the Walls Field scheduled monument and the adjoining ‘urban open land’ between sites BA2 and BA3 designated in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

⁶ Land Use Consultants for NHDC (2009) *North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan*.

and recreational value. At present, public access is limited to a footpath crossing the site. The scheduled monument has been included in Historic England's Heritage at Risk register, mainly because of the impact of ploughing on its archaeological interest.

There is considerable potential for taking a comprehensive approach to improving the condition and value of the scheduled monument and the adjoining urban open land. New parkland and playing pitches would be a valuable asset as Baldock's population grows, but could also provide greater protection of the buried archaeological remains and opportunities to present this history in a more accessible way.

Scheduled monuments are heritage assets of the highest significance⁷, and so national and Local Plan policies for their protection will need to be considered as part of any proposals affecting Walls Field.

⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) *National Planning Policy Framework*, paragraph 194.

Policy G3 Sustainable design

Applications for new buildings or alterations to existing properties that use designs or features to achieve high levels of energy efficiency, resilience to rising temperatures and/or a sustainable use of resources will be supported (for example through their orientation, use of materials or by employing on-site renewable energy generation). Where roof-mounted solar panels are proposed and are not subject to permitted development rights, they should be sited and designed so as to minimise the effect on the external appearance of the building.

Reason for this policy

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan contains several policies to secure sustainable forms of development – in particular policy D1 (sustainable design). Policy G3 in the Neighbourhood Plan supplements this, to ensure that specific support is given to proposals that aim to be highly energy efficient, will provide a comfortable living environment as temperatures rise and/or which minimise the environmental impact of their construction.

Minimum standards for the energy performance of buildings and other aspects of their construction are set through building regulations. These have become more stringent over time and are likely to tighten further in the future. Developments can exceed these minimum standards, and proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area are encouraged to do so. This is particularly important given the amount of new development proposed through the Local Plan, the environmental impact of which should be as limited as possible.

This policy offers support to building designs and features that can help to achieve or exceed national standards. In doing so, proposals should be informed by other policies in the development plan, in particular those relating to other aspects of design, the treatment of historic buildings and Baldock's conservation area.

Various types of microgeneration equipment to produce small-scale renewable energy can be 'permitted development', meaning there is no need to apply for planning permission before they are installed. However, important exemptions and conditions apply. For solar panels, listed buildings and their grounds are exempt; and there is a requirement that such equipment should, so far as practicable, be sited to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building involved⁸. Where permission is needed – including as part of proposals for new development – policy G3 ensures that similar considerations apply, so that the visual impact of solar panels is taken fully into account and minimised as much as possible. This can be done in various ways, such as by using solar tiles or ensuring that the colour of panels complements that of the surrounding roof.

Because the planning legislation covering the installation of microgeneration equipment is complex, it is important to get advice from North Hertfordshire District Council before any work is carried out.



Solar photovoltaic panels, St Chads development, Tilbury (image © Photon Energy)

⁸ Further information is available on the Planning Portal web site: <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>

Policy G4 Baldock conservation area

Development within Baldock conservation area, or which affects its setting, should conserve or enhance its character and appearance by reflecting the following principles:

- a) maintain and reflect the historic pattern of streets, alleys and medieval burgage plots;
- b) maintain the pattern of continuous built frontages to streets, with mainly wide-fronted buildings and minimal set-backs from the pavement, punctuated by frequent gaps giving access to rear yards;
- c) use building forms and materials that are characteristic of the conservation area – which comprises mainly buildings constructed or re-fronted in classical style during the 18th century, interspersed with some medieval and more recent buildings; a prevailing height of two-three storeys; and a limited palette of materials (mainly red/orange brick, pale render; plain clay tiles and black weatherboarding for subsidiary buildings in rear yards);
- d) retain, and where possible restore, historic features such as original fenestration, boundary walls and chimneys; and
- e) use shopfront designs and signage that reflect the style of the building and the character of the wider conservation area.

Reason for this policy

Baldock's conservation area is central to the town's character. It embraces the layout of the medieval market town, and the Georgian architecture that reflects its later prosperity as a coaching town on the Great North Road, and a centre for malting and brewing. Further analysis of its architectural and historic character is contained in the Character Statement for Baldock Conservation Area and the North Hertfordshire Urban Design Assessment⁹.

The law requires that planning decisions pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas, in recognition of their

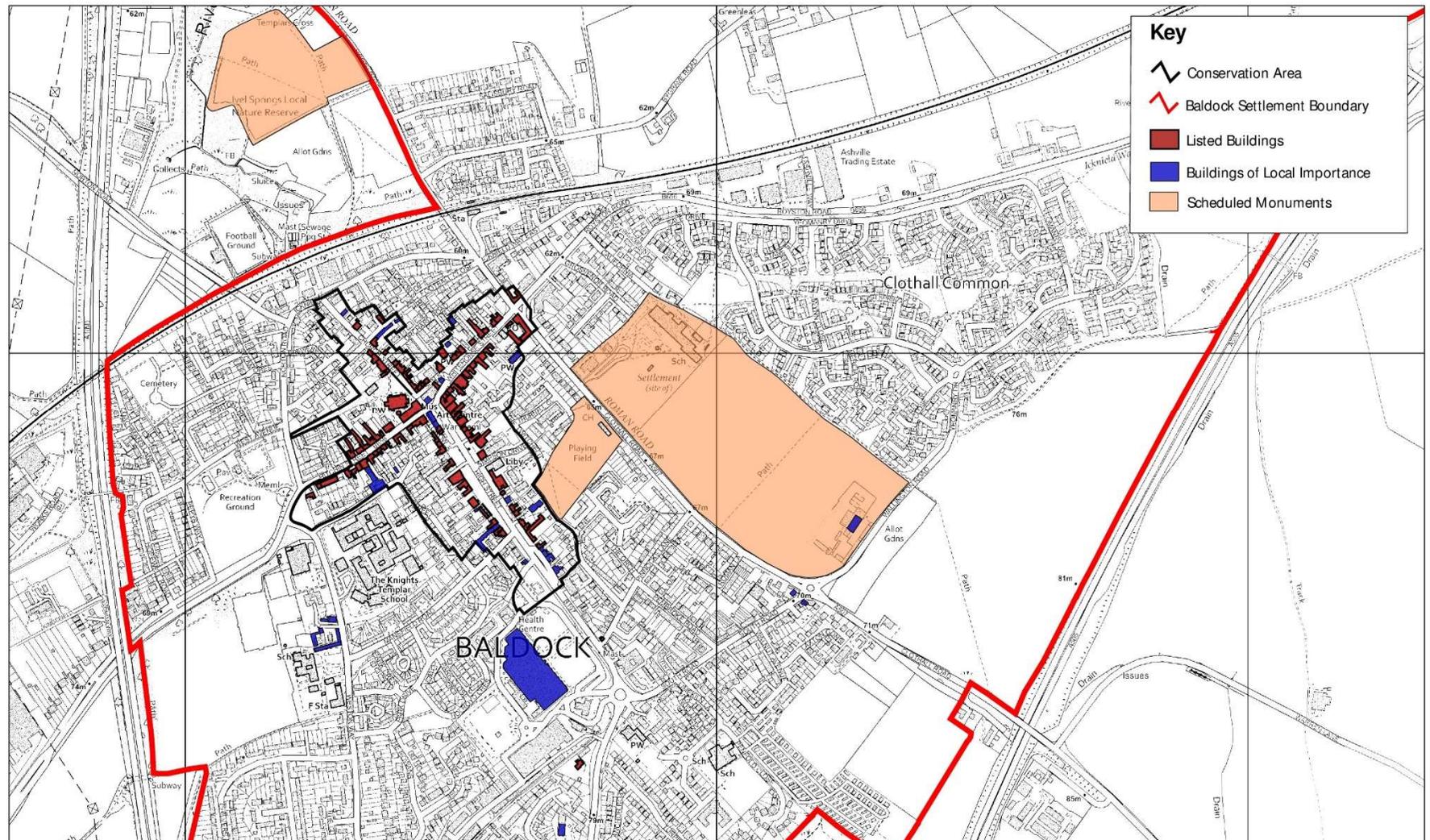
⁹ NHDC (2003) *Character Statement for Baldock Conservation Area*; and Urban Practitioners for NHDC (2007) *North Hertfordshire Urban Design Assessment: Baldock*.



Whitehorse Street, part of Baldock's conservation area

particular value. Policy G4 supplements the general policies for the historic environment in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, by providing more specific guidance related to the particular character of Baldock conservation area. It does not preclude the use of high quality modern design where its form and use of materials respect and complement the character of the conservation area, but such designs will need particularly careful consideration so that they conserve or enhance their surroundings.

Heritage assets in Baldock



Key

- Conservation Area
- Baldock Settlement Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Buildings of Local Importance
- Scheduled Monuments

Scale: 1:10000
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Policy G5 Local heritage assets

Development that would affect the character or setting of a heritage asset of identified local importance should:

- a) seek to conserve or enhance those qualities and features that make it of value; and
- b) be supported by an assessment of the potential impact on these qualities/features, commensurate with the scale of the works and their likely significance for the asset's value.

Reason for this policy

Baldock contains a number of buildings that are not designated as being of national importance, but which have been identified as being locally significant. This may be due to their historic or architectural interest, their contribution to the wider character of the town, or a combination of these. They make an important contribution to Baldock's distinctiveness and sense of history, so it is important that development recognises and respects this.

Policy HE3 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan seeks to prevent harm to (or loss of) these buildings, unless the harm or loss can be justified. Policy G5 in the Neighbourhood Plan complements this, by creating a positive expectation that proposals affecting local heritage assets should seek to conserve or enhance their special qualities, and be informed and justified by an understanding of their value.

North Hertfordshire District Council maintains a register of buildings of local importance in Baldock¹⁰, to which Policy G5 applies. The policy also applies to the remains of the garden at Quickwood Farm, to the north of Clothall. These have been identified by the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust as being of significant historic value, sufficient to justify their inclusion on a local list of heritage assets¹¹.

¹⁰ NHDC (2003) *Register of Buildings of Local Importance in Baldock*. The buildings on the register at the time of preparing this plan are listed in Annex D, and illustrated on the map on the previous page.

Similar registers have not been prepared for the parishes of Bygrave and Clothall, but should this occur then the application of the policy would extend to these registers as well, as it would to any further historic gardens that are identified as being sufficiently important to merit protection.



The former Town Hall and No.2 High Street – two buildings of local importance

¹¹ Further information is available in Dalton, C. (2007) *The Gardens at Quickwood, the Hunting Lodge of the Earls of Salisbury in Hertfordshire Garden History: a Miscellany* (ed Anne Rowe).

Policy E1 Transport and air quality

Applications to develop sites BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4 and BA10 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan should not be permitted if, taking into account proposed mitigation, the residual cumulative impact on the local road network would be severe (which would include the Whitehorse Street/Station Road crossroads operating significantly above its design capacity); or if national Air Quality Objectives would be breached.

To minimise the risk of increased congestion and/or air quality deterioration within Baldock, applications for these sites should provide for or contribute towards:

- a) walking and cycling routes that allow safe and convenient access between the sites and Baldock town centre, railway station, employment areas and primary and secondary schools (including any off-site improvements made necessary as a result of the developments);
- b) the introduction of bus services (or additions to existing routes/stops) once an appropriate scale of development has been reached, to provide access to the town centre and railway station;
- c) information for new residents/business occupiers on sustainable travel options;
- d) parking arrangements and the necessary infrastructure to allow convenient charging of electric vehicles;
- e) measures to help divert traffic away from the Station Road/Whitehorse Street crossroads, such as through appropriate junction designs, access arrangements (including restrictions on heavy goods vehicles), signalling and signage; and
- f) monitoring of NO₂ and fine particle concentrations at this crossroads, in Hitchin Street and at any other locations in Baldock where there could be a risk of significantly increased traffic flows and national Air Quality Objectives being breached, to inform additional or accelerated actions to promote sustainable transport or manage traffic flows, if required.

Reason for this policy

Although the opening of the Baldock bypass in 2006 provided partial relief from through traffic, the benefit was not universal. In North Road and Hitchin Street traffic increased¹², many heavy goods vehicles have continued to take the shortest route through the town, and parts of Baldock still suffer from congestion. The Whitehorse Street/Station Road crossroads is a significant bottleneck that operates at or above capacity¹³, and causes frequent delays to traffic, particularly from the north. The volume of traffic using the crossroads also harms the setting of several listed buildings that surround it.



The Station Road/Whitehorse Street crossroads

¹² Report to Hertfordshire County Council's Highways and Transport Panel, 15 November 2007: *Baldock Bypass: One Year On*.

¹³ WYG Transport Planning for Hertfordshire County Council (2017) *Baldock North: Transport Assessment*.

A further consequence of high traffic volumes within Baldock is the risk of poor air quality around some roads, particularly in the Whitehorse Street/Hitchin Street area. While current nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels are within the level set by the relevant national Air Quality Objective, they would deteriorate over coming years without action to mitigate the impact of the developments proposed in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. In addition, there has been no monitoring of fine particulate matter in Baldock, which is linked to vehicle emissions¹⁴.

The evidence prepared to support the proposed development of these sites anticipates that new link roads and junction improvements will mitigate the impact of additional traffic on the Whitehorse Street/Station Road crossroads¹⁵. However, as experience with the bypass has shown, the impact of road improvements can be difficult to predict, as it relies on assumptions about trip rates and distributions, and wider factors such as changes in vehicle fuels and usage. In this context it is appropriate to require additional measures, beyond those already set out in the Local Plan, to minimise the risk of unacceptable impacts on congestion and emissions, and to monitor impacts as the developments are implemented (allowing further measures to be pursued if needed, as set out in part (f) of the policy).

This is particularly important for sites BA2, BA3, BA4 and BA10, for which the Local Plan provides very few specific requirements relating to sustainable travel¹⁶. These, like site BA1, will result in additional pedestrian and cycle movements to other parts of the town, so should contribute to appropriate off-site improvements. The introduction of bus services – if necessary with some initial financial support from the development – is particularly important for site BA1; not just to assist those with limited mobility, but also because significant parts of the site are more than 20 minutes' walk from the town centre and/or beyond a ten minute cycle ride¹⁷.

¹⁴ NHDC (2017) *Baldock Air Quality Paper*. For information on the national Air Quality Objectives see <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/uk-eu-limits>

¹⁵ AECOM for NHDC (2016) *Technical Note: Preferred Local Plan Model Testing Including Baldock Link Roads*; and WYG Transport Planning for Hertfordshire County Council (2017) *Baldock North: Transport Assessment*.

¹⁶ Promoting more sustainable travel is central to the approach of the latest Local Transport Plan for Hertfordshire: Hertfordshire County Council (2018) *Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan ('LTP4')*.

¹⁷ Markides Associates for NHDC (2017) *North Hertfordshire Transport Strategy*.

Policy E2 Green infrastructure

Applications to develop sites BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4 and BA10 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan should provide for an appropriate amount and range of publicly accessible green infrastructure which complies with or exceeds North Hertfordshire District Council’s standards (including spaces for children and young people, outdoor sport, allotments and informal recreation). In making this provision the applications should take into account existing needs for green infrastructure within Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall, and should:

- a) create an integrated network of open spaces and semi-natural areas that provides net benefits for both people and nature, reflects the wider landscape character of the area, and connects with existing green corridors and public rights of way within and beyond the sites;
- b) ensure that sustainable drainage features such as attenuation basins and swales are designed as an integral part of the overall landscaping scheme, are safe and attractive, and have clear management arrangements agreed prior to permission being granted;
- c) incorporate street trees to enhance the environmental quality of the developments and provide shade;
- d) take a strategic approach to locating land for sport and informal recreation, so that the most appropriate sites for each purpose are used (taking into account the allocations as a whole, as well as neighbouring land within the applicant’s control where this would accord with other policies in the development plan);
- e) reflect the most up-to-date evidence available about local needs for pitches and other formal sports provision, including any off-site contributions that may be appropriate¹⁸;
- f) design new school sports facilities to allow for appropriate community use, supported by community use agreements;

- g) ensure that new areas for play and recreation are overlooked where this will promote the safety of children and other users, and that any external lighting avoids glare to surrounding properties; and
- h) demonstrate how new green infrastructure will be delivered and managed during both the development phase and beyond, including appropriate arrangements for involving the local community in the design and operation of new facilities.

Reason for this policy

Suitably located and designed green spaces and recreational facilities play a vital role in creating places that are attractive, healthy and which benefit the environment. It is important to supplement the general policies for securing green infrastructure in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, so that Baldock’s expansion is guided by specific requirements that reflect the scale of the development, local needs and appropriate advice.

The most recent assessment of green infrastructure within Baldock shows an existing deficiency in ‘amenity’ green space compared to North Hertfordshire’s standards¹⁹, while the proposed growth of the town will generate a substantial additional requirement for outdoor spaces of different types. Although the Local Plan proposes development on a number of different sites at the edge of Baldock, these need to be considered together so that the best sites are chosen for different types of green infrastructure – an approach which is made possible by the fact that all the sites (and some neighbouring land) are owned by Hertfordshire County Council. A strategic approach is particularly important for outdoor sports provision, due to the specific requirements that exist in terms of the size/layout of spaces and need for supporting facilities.

¹⁸ For example, at the time of producing this plan, Sport England had suggested that provision across the sites – and neighbouring land where appropriate – should include a multi-pitch playing field for community use; an artificial grass pitch and multi-use games area (for tennis and netball) as part of the new secondary school facilities; with off-site contributions towards

enhanced provision for rugby and hockey (*Sport England comments on planning applications for Baldock North and Baldock South East, 2018*).

¹⁹ NHDC (2016) *Open Space Review & Standards*.

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that opportunities for environmental 'net gains' should be sought through the planning system. The combined scale of the proposed urban extensions to Baldock provides an opportunity to put this principle into practice: it should be possible to create a network of multifunctional green infrastructure that offers an enhanced range of recreational facilities for the town and neighbouring villages, as well as enriching and diversifying habitats for wildlife. Particular care will be required in designing sustainable drainage systems as part of this network so that these benefits are realised, taking into account the SuDS Design Guidance for Hertfordshire and industry best practice²⁰.

New and expanded school provision can help to meet some of the additional sports requirements generated by the proposed developments, but should not be relied upon to meet all of those requirements, given the limited hours during which school facilities can be made available for wider community use, and the need to avoid over-use of school pitches. In addition, Sport England has recommended that financial contributions towards enhancing off-site provision are likely to be the most appropriate way of meeting additional demand for certain sports, where this can improve existing facilities that serve Baldock and/or the additional population could not sustain a new facility within the town.

In applying this policy, it will be appropriate to take into account North Hertfordshire District Council's standards for open space²¹; the Green Infrastructure Plan for North Hertfordshire²², which provides specific advice on green infrastructure opportunities in and around Baldock (as well as more general principles that may be relevant); and North Hertfordshire's Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan²³.



Hartsfield School

²⁰ Hertfordshire County Council (2015) *SuDS Design Guidance for Hertfordshire* and CIRIA (2015) *The SuDS Manual*.

²¹ NHDC (2016) *North Hertfordshire Open Space Review & Standards 2016*.

²² Land Use Consultants for NHDC (2009) *North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan*.

²³ KKP for NHDC (2016) *North Hertfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan 2015-2025*.

Policy E3 Creating well-designed places

Applications to develop sites BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4, BA6, BA10 and BA11 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan should demonstrate a high standard of design that relates sensitively to both its immediate context and the wider character of Baldock, and establishes a strong sense of place. In doing so, applications for these sites should accord with the Design Guidelines set out in the annex to this plan.

Applications for the proposed urban extensions (sites BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4 and BA10) should be subject to an independent design review process, procured by the applicant, and demonstrate how the recommendations of this process have been taken into account.

Reason for this policy

The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that locally-produced design standards should be used to set clear expectations for the sort of development that will be acceptable in each area. This is particularly important for Baldock, given the scale of development proposed in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. This requires completely new places to be designed – not just individual buildings and streets – and it is vital that this is done in a way that creates attractive places to live and work, and which will continue to look good and function well in the future.

The existing community has expressed strong support for designs that reflect the existing character of Baldock. The relationship between existing and new development will require particularly careful consideration where new development abuts existing residential areas, such as around Salisbury Road, Larkins Close and parts of Clothall Common, to achieve an appropriate visual transition and minimise impacts on existing residents.

²⁴ Land at Icknield Way (site BA6) and Deans Yard, South Road (BA11). The Local Plan also proposes redeveloping the land around Raban Court on Station Road (BA8-9), but this has already been carried out.



Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge (image © Grosvenor Ltd.)

In response to this challenge a set of Design Guidelines for the proposed urban extensions is set out in an annex to this plan. The Design Guidelines also cover the two previously developed sites that are proposed for regeneration in the Local Plan²⁴, as these are particularly prominent and, in the case of the site at Icknield Way, affects the setting of Baldock conservation area.

The National Planning Policy Framework also encourages the use of appropriate processes for assessing and improving the design of development, such as design review panels that provide an independent, expert, assessment of emerging proposals. Given their size and potential impact on the overall character of Baldock, policy E3 requires that design review is used for the proposed urban extensions to the town, for example through the Hertfordshire Design Review Service²⁵. A phased approach to design review is likely to be appropriate, so that its focus is tailored to the stage that each site has reached.

²⁵ <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/building-futures/design-review-panel/hertfordshire-design-review-service.aspx>

Policy E4 Managing construction impacts

Applications to develop sites BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4 and BA10 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan should ensure that the impact of construction activity on Baldock, Lower and Upper Bygrave and local roads is minimised through:

- a) the use of vehicle routes to take construction activity away from existing residential areas (making use of the proposed link roads associated with these sites so far as possible);
- b) suitable measures to monitor and manage noise, vibration and dust for the duration of the works (including limiting the hours of operation), and to limit off-site construction waste disposal; and
- c) the early implementation of landscaping measures where these will provide appropriate screening.

Reason for this policy

Construction work on the sites proposed in the Local Plan is expected to take many years – especially on those at the edge of Baldock where new infrastructure such as roads will need to be put in place. To minimise the impact of this work on the existing communities, it is important that suitable mitigation measures are considered and agreed at an early stage. Conditions are expected to be attached to permissions on these sites to ensure that the measures needed are implemented at appropriate points during the construction phase.



Policy E5 Building strong communities

Applications to develop sites BA1, BA2, BA3 and BA4 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan should demonstrate that they have been informed by a process of active engagement with local people, and should include measures to encourage and support the creation of strong and inclusive communities by:

- a) involving both existing and new residents in pre-application discussions about the design of each phase;
- b) providing new community facilities that are required as early as possible in the development process – including the use of temporary facilities where these can provide an interim service before more permanent provision can be made; and
- c) making arrangements for new residents to be involved in the continuing management and evolution of their community.

Reason for this policy

Development on the scale proposed in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan will mean changes in Baldock's size, facilities and feel over a period of many years. It is important that local people have opportunities to influence this process, so that local ideas and preferences can be reflected as much as possible, and the expanded town retains and builds on Baldock's strong sense of community. Involving new residents and businesses will be just as important for this as engaging fully with the existing community.

The early availability of facilities proposed to serve the new developments at the edge of Baldock is a particular concern highlighted during initial consultations to produce this plan. This is important not just to avoid placing additional pressure on existing services, but also because of the vital role that accessible local services play in creating new neighbourhoods (through the opportunities they provide for meeting day to day needs, as well as being places to meet).



Baldock Street Fair

Successful large-scale developments tend to be characterised by active community involvement in their long-term management²⁶. Some aspects of this can be provided for at the application stage, such as the arrangements proposed to manage new recreational facilities and sustainable drainage features. However, some developers have realised the benefits of going further, and invest proactively in building new communities (e.g. by initiating and supporting community events). This is particularly valuable where schemes will take some years to realise, meaning the developer needs to build and maintain a long-term relationship with a community as it evolves. Efforts to support the social development of Baldock will, therefore, be encouraged alongside specific measures that may be agreed as part of any planning approvals.

²⁶ For example, see Berkeley Group (2013) *Creating Successful Places: A Toolkit*.

Policy E6 Development north of the railway

The development of allocation BA1 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan should:

- a) maintain a clear visual and physical gap (of at least 250m) between the expanded built edge of Baldock and Lower Bygrave, reinforced by planting at the periphery of the new development (using a suitable variety of native species, with the mix and density of planting being varied to create a natural appearance);
- b) minimise any adverse visual impacts on longer-distance views from within and towards Baldock, including those from Upper and Lower Bygrave, by giving careful consideration to the positioning and height of development, as well as to appropriate screening;
- c) retain and incorporate existing landscape and built features that contribute to the site's history and character, including Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road, the existing cottages on Bygrave Road, trees and hedgerows (while safeguarding the habitat value of the Bygrave Road local wildlife site);
- d) make provision for improved pedestrian and cycle access between Bygrave and Baldock, through a new footpath and cycleway using the route of Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road;
- e) minimise the potential for increased traffic flows through lower and upper Bygrave, by providing for an appropriate package of measures such as: suitable access arrangements (including restrictions on heavy goods vehicles); physical features such as gateways and appropriate road surfaces; speed limits and signage); and
- f) make provision within the site for a community hall suitable for meetings of Bygrave Parish Council and other local groups, and for additional indoor recreation facilities to serve the expanded town.

Reason for this policy

Site BA1 is contained largely within Bygrave parish, and will have a significant impact on the relationship between Baldock and Bygrave, as well as on the character and function of Baldock itself. Policy E6 builds on Local Plan policy SP14 to provide additional safeguards, so that Bygrave village retains its separate identity, that necessary new facilities are secured, and the character of the site and the neighbouring edge of Baldock are taken fully into account.

Bygrave village will remain in the Green Belt, and it is important that a meaningful gap between Lower Bygrave and Baldock is retained to prevent coalescence. A gap of at least 250m would maintain separation, while keeping new development below the ridgeline that crosses the Ashwell Road immediately to the south of Lower Bygrave²⁷ (and so helping to lessen the visual impact of development in views from the south). Appropriate screening of site BA1 will also help to maintain a sense of separation, and additional guidance on a suitable approach to planting is set out in North Hertfordshire's Green Infrastructure Plan²⁸.

Views of the countryside from within and towards Baldock are an important future of the town, and are a benefit of both its compact size and the rolling nature of the surrounding landscape. It will be important to conserve these longer-distance views so far as possible as the town expands, and to mitigate any adverse impacts through appropriate planting to soften and screen new development. Local Plan policy SP14 already requires built development to be contained to the south/south-west of the ridgeline that runs east from the A507 towards Bygrave, and planting to integrate it into the wider landscape. However, the arrangement and height of development within the site will also affect long-distance views, and should be taken into account in the detailed design of the scheme.

Much of site BA1 comprises an open field system with a relative lack of visible historic features²⁹, but those features which are present are important to retain and incorporate sensitively within the development, in view of their historic or

²⁷ See Land Use Consultants for NHDC (2013) *Land North of Baldock: Landscape Sensitivity Study*.

²⁸ Land Use Consultants for NHDC (2009) *North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan*.

²⁹ Land Use Consultants for NHDC (2013) *Land north of Baldock: Landscape Sensitivity Study*. The site also includes several areas of archaeological interest, which the Local Plan requires are taken into account in the layout of the development.



Bygrave Road, with part of site BA1

environmental importance. The Green Infrastructure Plan notes the importance of Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road as a green corridor, with part of the road being a designated local wildlife site. Some 90% of responses to the Neighbourhood Plan survey thought it was important or very important that such features are kept as part of the new development.

In view of its impact on both Bygrave and Baldock, the development of site BA1 should make some additional contributions towards improving facilities (over and above those specified in the Local Plan), to help make the development acceptable in planning terms. Bygrave has no community hall, but its population will expand

³⁰ KKP for NHDC (2015) *North Hertfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report*; and KKP for NHDC (2016) *North Hertfordshire Indoor Sports Facilities Study Assessment Report*.

considerably once the development gets under way. Therefore, it is appropriate for the development to make provision for a suitable meeting space on-site, which could form part of a multi-use community hall available to local groups as well as the Parish Council. The proximity of the development to Bygrave village is also likely to generate more pedestrian or cycle trips from the village into Baldock, so a suitable footpath/cycleway between the two – via the new development – should also be provided.

The Local Plan requires a range of facilities to be provided on site BA1 so that many of the needs of its residents can be met, including new schools, a GP surgery, shops and a community hall (which could provide the meeting space required by this policy, if suitably specified). However, it does not require new recreational facilities to be provided, despite evidence that both outdoor and indoor facilities serving Baldock are either lacking or already at capacity³⁰. New green infrastructure – including land for outdoor sport – is addressed through policy E2 in this plan. In addition, site BA1 should as a minimum provide additional sports hall facilities that are suitable for community use, which could be through multi-use of the proposed schools facilities. Fitness suite/activity studio facilities could also form part of this provision.

There is concern within Bygrave about the potential for site BA1 to generate many more traffic movements through the village, which could have a significant impact on its character and tranquillity³¹. While access to Ashwell from Baldock and Bygrave will need to be retained, every effort should be made to minimise the number and speed of vehicle movements through Bygrave as site BA1 is developed. Consequently, contributions will be required towards a suitable package of traffic management measures. These should be appropriate to the rural character of the village, by avoiding features that would have an urbanising effect and keeping signage to a minimum.

³¹ Other developments proposed in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan could also contribute to increased traffic through the village, albeit to a much lesser degree; particularly site AS1 at Ashwell, where 33 homes are planned.

Policy E7 Royston Road

The development of allocations BA3, BA4 and BA10 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan should:

- a) create a high quality and distinctive entrance to the town along Royston Road, using well-designed buildings and a consistent approach to landscaping and lighting;
- b) relate sensitively to the existing houses fronting onto Royston Road through the scale, massing and landscaping of the new development;
- c) incorporate a landscape buffer between the new commercial units on site BA10 and the railway line, and use building materials and colours that will help to soften the visual impact of the development in both near and long-distance views (which could include the use of green roofs); and
- d) make provision for an improved footpath and cycleway along Royston Road.

Any applications for the redevelopment of existing commercial units on employment site BE2 should also reflect this policy.

A landscaping strategy for Royston Road should be agreed with North Hertfordshire District Council before relevant applications for reserved matters consent on sites BA3, BA4 and BA10 are approved.

Reason for this policy

The developments proposed in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan will have a significant effect on the character and appearance of Royston Road. It is important to ensure that these schemes are implemented in a way that enhances Royston Road’s appearance, as this is one of the main routes into the town, and currently there is a fragmented pattern of development and barriers to movement between Clothall Common and other parts of the town. The relationship between commercial and residential uses will also require particularly careful treatment to ensure satisfactory living conditions for existing and future occupiers.

This requires a coordinated approach to the proposed developments, which will allow opportunities to enhance the appearance and accessibility of this corridor to be reflected in the design of the buildings, landscaping and other infrastructure.



Royston Road

Establishing an appropriate landscape framework for Royston Road at an early stage will help to ensure that this coordinated approach is realised, and is made more practical to deliver by the fact that the sites are in single ownership (Hertfordshire County Council).

The Landscape Sensitivity Study for land to the north of Baldock, and the North Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan, highlight the potential prominence of development in this part of Baldock, and suggest appropriate mitigation measures through appropriate landscaping and building design. They also highlight the scope to enhance the ecological value of the railway corridor by creating a green buffer alongside it.

There is scope to improve the appearance of the Ashville Trading Estate (employment site BE2 in the Local Plan) over time, as proposals to redevelop existing units come forward³². Applying policy E6 to such proposals will help to ensure that they contribute to the wider opportunities for improving the appearance of Royston Road.

³² This plan has also identified the potential to use a small part of this site as additional parking for Baldock station – see policy G1.

Policy E8 Cambrai Farm and south of Clothall Common

The development of allocations BA2 and BA3 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan should:

- a) incorporate a landscape buffer between the edge of the developments and the Baldock bypass, using an appropriate mix of native species, to provide visual screening, an enhanced green corridor and noise attenuation;
- b) avoid new buildings on that part of BA3 that lies immediately to the east of the existing properties on Aleyn Way and Merchants Walk, and on the higher ground immediately south of Royston Road, which should be retained and enhanced as space for informal outdoor recreation; and
- c) reinforce the planting between Hillside Park mobile home site and new residential development on site BA2, to provide a stronger green margin and additional screening, using an appropriate mix of native species.

Proposals to provide additional indoor and outdoor community facilities, suitable for use by children and young people, in association with these developments will be supported.

Reasons for this policy

Sites BA2 (Cambrai Farm) and BA3 (south of Clothall Common) both occupy prominent positions at the eastern edge of Baldock, within Clothall parish. Development on both sites will affect views from a number of locations within Baldock, and the Green Infrastructure Plan³³ has identified the need for careful treatment of the site boundaries to limit their visual impact. Policy E7 supplements the measures proposed in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, in particular to ensure that other sensitive boundaries to these sites incorporate appropriate landscaping and screening.

³³ Land Use Consultants for NHDC (2009) *North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan*.



Site BA2 to the left, part of BA3 at mid-right, and BA1 in the distance

Development bordering the Baldock bypass could be particularly intrusive, both from the road itself and adjoining public rights of way, and so it is particularly important that a soft edge is provided in these locations. This should be implemented in a way that supports necessary levels of noise reduction for new properties, as well as achieving visual screening.

The more elevated, northern parts of site BA3 serve an important purpose as a large area of informal open space, and this use is expected to increase once sites BA3 and BA4 are developed. Development on this part of the site would not be appropriate³⁴, in view of the potential visual impact as well as its recreational value. In addition, the raised parts of the site are potentially unsuitable for building due to instability (this

³⁴ Except, on the lowest parts, the work necessary to accommodate a new southern link road as provided for in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan

area having been formed by spoil deposited during the construction of the Baldock bypass). Currently the visual quality of this land is relatively poor, and could be enhanced through measures such as additional planting.

While the Local Plan and policy E6 in this document require a new community hall to be provided as part of site BA1, this is unlikely to be built for some years (if, as expected, site BA1 is developed after the other major sites proposed in the Local Plan). The Local Plan does not propose any new community facilities in association with the other allocations for residential development, even though they are likely to put increased pressure on existing facilities.

This is a particular issue for community spaces: while there may be some scope to make more intensive use of the halls that currently exist, there is a shortage of facilities that provide suitable indoor and outdoor space for groups such as after-school clubs and scouts/guides. There is an opportunity to provide such a facility as part of the development of sites BA2 and BA3, potentially making some use of the 'urban open land' between these sites identified in the Local Plan for any outdoor recreation element.



Imagery © 2019 Google

Policy V1 Bygrave village

Development within or immediately adjoining Upper or Lower Bygrave should:

- a) be limited to those forms of development identified as not inappropriate in the Green Belt in the National Planning Policy Framework, including limited affordable housing on a rural exception site to meet an identified need in the local community;
- b) preserve the physical and visual separation between the two parts of the village;
- c) maintain the distinctive characters and physical form of Upper and Lower Bygrave (scattered, low density development around St Margaret’s Church; modestly-scaled houses set back from the road along Ashwell Road in upper Bygrave; and the linear arrangement of detached houses set in large plots along Ashwell Road and Wedon Way in Lower Bygrave); and
- d) not introduce additional lighting that would harm Bygrave’s rural character.

Reason for this policy

The village of Bygrave is classed as a category c settlement in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, and is ‘washed over’ by the Green Belt. As a result, opportunities for development within or immediately adjoining Bygrave are very limited. National policy does however allow for replacement buildings and modest extensions, limited affordable housing on a ‘rural exception site’ to meet an identified local need (where provided for in local planning policies³⁵) and facilities for agriculture, outdoor sport and recreation³⁶.

Any rural exception site proposed for Bygrave would need to be small in size, address a specific identified need for affordable housing in the local community, and ensure that the affordable homes provided remain affordable in perpetuity. Further policy on rural exception sites is set out in policy CGB2a in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

³⁵ See policies SP2 and CGB2a in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

³⁶ For a complete list see Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) *National Planning Policy Framework*. The Framework requires ‘very special circumstances’ to be demonstrated if development which is inappropriate in the Green Belt is to be approved.



Upper Bygrave (Ashwell Road)

The different architectural characters, arrangements of buildings and physical separation of Upper and Lower Bygrave are distinctive features of the village, and it is important that any development recognises and reflects this. Another important characteristic is Bygrave’s rural feel, and in particular the relative absence of light pollution, so new development should also avoid introducing lighting that would be intrusive.

While the Framework does allow limited ‘infilling’ in villages within the Green Belt, Bygrave is not classed as a ‘village’ in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, so this provision does not apply.

Policy V2 Clothall and Luffenhall

Development within or immediately adjoining Clothall or Luffenhall should:

- a) in the case of Clothall, be limited to those forms of development identified as not inappropriate in the Green Belt in national planning policy, including limited affordable housing on a rural exception site to meet an identified need in the local community;
- b) in the case of Luffenhall, be limited to those forms of development allowed by policies CGB1 and CGB4 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (excluding new housing, other than where it involves the conversion or replacement of an existing building); and
- c) maintain the rural appearance and physical form of these villages, with narrow lanes bordered with trees and hedgerows, a lack of continuous urban frontages, most houses set well back from the road and an absence of footpaths and street lighting.

Reason for this policy

The village of Clothall is, like Bygrave, classed as a category c settlement in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, and ‘washed over’ by the Green Belt. This means that opportunities for development within or immediately adjoining Clothall are very limited, in the same way as they are in Bygrave. National policy does however allow for replacement buildings and modest extensions, limited affordable housing on a ‘rural exception site’ to meet an identified local need (where provided for in local planning policies³⁷) and facilities for agriculture, outdoor sport and recreation³⁸.

Any rural exception site proposed for Clothall village would need to be small in size, address a specific identified need for affordable housing in the local community, and ensure that the affordable homes provided remain affordable in perpetuity. Further



Clothall village

policy on rural exception sites is set out in policy CGB2a in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

Slightly different considerations apply in Luffenhall, which because of its small size is not recognised as a settlement in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. It lies in the rural area outside the Green Belt, where the Local Plan applies a general policy of restraint (policy SP5). The Local Plan does allow a limited range of development in this area under policies CGB1 and CGB4, similar to the uses that may be permitted in the Green Belt. It includes development relating to an existing building, modest proposals for rural economic development and facilities for agriculture, outdoor sport and recreation. Policy CGB1 also allows development that would meet a proven local need for rural affordable housing or community facilities in the rural area beyond the Green Belt, but only in ‘appropriate locations’. Because of its very

While the Framework does allow limited ‘infilling’ in villages within the Green Belt, Clothall is not classed as a ‘village’ in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, so this provision does not apply.

³⁷ See policies SP2 and CGB2a in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

³⁸ For a complete list see Department for Communities and Local Government (2019) *National Planning Policy Framework*. The Framework requires ‘very special circumstances’ to be demonstrated if development which is inappropriate in the Green Belt is to be approved.

small size and dispersed form, Luffenhall is not considered to be an appropriate location for new housing, other than where it involves the conversion or replacement of an existing building.

Clothall and Luffenhall share a very rural character and appearance. Their narrow roads, and preponderance of substantial hedgerows and trees, mean that vegetation rather than buildings tends to dominate, and creates a strong sense of enclosure. Their position away from through roads, and relative absence of urban features, add to this rural character, and it is important that this quality is retained where any development does take place. This means that particular care should be taken with the siting and scale of proposals, and with the planting and materials used, especially around site boundaries.

Annexes

The views of the local community were central to the decision to produce a neighbourhood plan, and have been a critical input during its preparation. They have shaped its core purpose - to get a better deal for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall if the councils’ proposals for growth go ahead - as well as the subjects that the Neighbourhood Plan focuses on.

The preparation of all neighbourhood plans needs to follow a number of steps, starting with early community discussions about local concerns and priorities. This took place in a number of ways - through open community meetings, street stalls during the annual Baldock Festival, community walks around the edges of Baldock, discussions with representatives of different organisations, project work by students at Knights Templar School and a community survey. Further details are contained in the evidence report published alongside this plan.

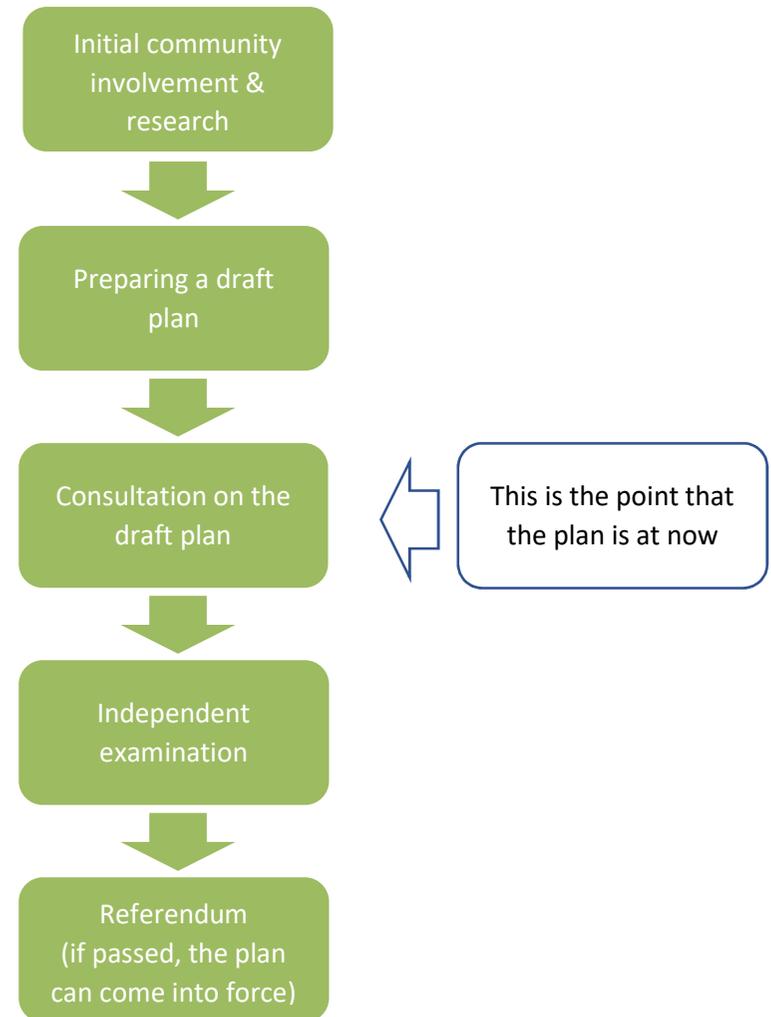
These discussions helped to identify the objectives that the plan should pursue and the policies that might be needed. However, two other things had to be studied before any policies could be written.

The first is the evidence that exists about the area, and about the potential impacts of new development. A substantial amount of evidence has been produced or commissioned by North Hertfordshire District Council to inform its Local Plan, which was studied alongside other relevant technical reports (including those commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council to support its planning applications for development around Baldock). Where necessary site visits and the community survey carried out in January 2018 were used to fill gaps in the evidence available.

From this material a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) was carried out for five areas that the neighbourhood plan was likely to focus on:

- Community facilities
- Transport
- The environment
- Open space and recreation
- Design and heritage

Key stages in producing a neighbourhood pan



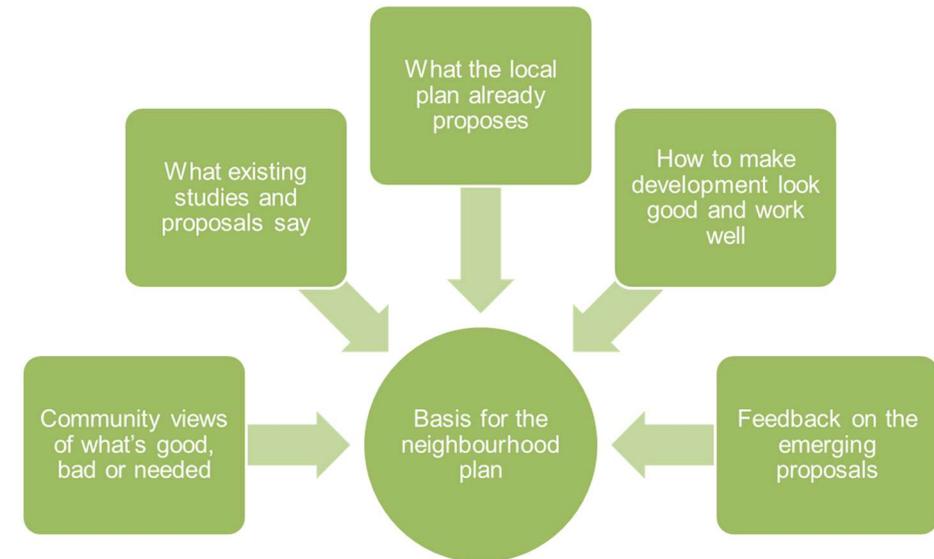
This analysis, and a list of the key documents reviewed in preparing the neighbourhood plan, are contained in the separate evidence report.

The other thing that was studied at an early stage was the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan, to assess the extent to which its policies already address the issues raised by the community or highlighted by the evidence base. From this, a 'gap analysis' was produced of issues that might be addressed more fully through the Neighbourhood Plan. The results of this analysis are also summarised in the evidence report. Possible changes to the North Hertfordshire Local Plan that emerged during and after its examination were kept under review, in case they had implications for the Neighbourhood Plan.

These reviews of the evidence base and the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan allowed an initial set of policies to be drafted, which were discussed informally with the neighbourhood planning group, local councillors, officers and consultants working for North Hertfordshire District Council and Hertfordshire County Council and relevant agencies such as Historic England. This initial feedback was taken into consideration in finalising the draft Neighbourhood Plan to be published for consultation.

Alongside this work, the Neighbourhood Planning Group was successful in making a bid to the Government's support programme for neighbourhood planning, so that specialist help with design could be provided. How new development might look was one of the community concerns identified in the early discussions about producing the neighbourhood plan. Through the support programme, AECOM (a firm of professional consultants) worked with the neighbourhood planning group to identify additional guidance on design that could be provided. Further information on how this was prepared is contained in the Design Guidelines that accompany this plan.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan, including the Design Guidelines, was consulted on in... *[further details of the consultation process and how this has been taken into account will be added once the consultation process is complete].*



Before neighbourhood plans can come into force, it has to be shown that they meet a number of 'basic conditions' set out in law, as well as passing a local referendum.

In broad terms, these basic conditions are that the plan:

- Is appropriate, having regard to national planning policies and guidance;
- Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Generally conforms with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area (which, in this case, means the strategic policies in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan);
- Is compatible with relevant EU obligations (which relate to assessing the environmental impacts of policies, and protecting habitats and species of international importance); and
- Complies with or meets various prescribed conditions and matters.

Details of how the Neighbourhood Plan complies with these requirements will be set out in a 'basic conditions statement' that will be submitted to North Hertfordshire

District Council ahead of the plan's examination (a draft of which is included in the accompanying evidence report). However, it is useful to summarise the key points here:

The preparation of the plan has taken into account the policies in the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan, as well as those in the revised National Planning Policy Framework first published in July 2018 (and its associated guidance). As the introduction to this plan explained, its purpose is to get the best outcome for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall from whatever development is proposed following the adoption of the new Local Plan.

There are no habitats of international importance within the neighbourhood area (or outside the area which are likely to be affected by the proposals in this plan)³⁹. Neighbourhood plans may require a 'strategic environmental assessment' under European and domestic law if they could have significant effects on the environment. This is a systematic process of considering the potential environmental effects of a plan, and in this country often forms part of a broader 'sustainability appraisal' that allows potential social and economic effects to be assessed at the same time (and which is required for all local plans).

The Neighbourhood Plan builds on the proposals in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, which has already been subject to strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal. The additional policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are not considered to have the potential for significant environmental effects in their own right, such as to require a strategic environmental assessment to be carried out⁴⁰.

However, to help demonstrate how it contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, a sustainability check of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to accompany the consultation on the draft plan (and which has been taken into account in refining the plan prior to consultation). The results of this check are set out in the separate evidence report.

³⁹ See NHDC (2018) *North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Habitats Regulation Assessment: Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment*.

⁴⁰ See the screening determination prepared by North Hertfordshire District Council, which is available on our web site www.bbplan.co.uk.

List of policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan

G1	Improving access and parking
G2	Strategic green space
G3	Sustainable design
G4	Baldock conservation area
G5	Local heritage assets
E1	Transport and air quality
E2	Green infrastructure
E3	Creating well-designed places
E4	Managing construction impacts
E5	Building strong communities
E6	Development north of the railway
E7	Royston Road
E8	Cambrai Farm and south of Clothall Common
V1	Bygrave village
V2	Clothall and Luffenhall

List of relevant policies contained in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan

This list is for information only. Policies that are not relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan area are omitted. It will be updated once the Local Plan is adopted.

Strategic policies	
SP1	Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire
SP2	Settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution
SP3	Employment
SP4	Town centres, local centres and community shops
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
SP6	Sustainable transport
SP7	Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions
SP8	Housing
SP9	Design and sustainability
SP10	Healthy communities
SP11	Natural resources and sustainability
SP12	Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity
SP13	Historic environment
SP14	Site BA1 – North of Baldock

Development management policies	
ETC1	Appropriate uses in employment areas
ETC2	Employment development outside employment areas and employment allocations BA10 and RY9
ETC3	New retail, leisure and other main town centre development
ETC5	Secondary shopping frontages
ETC6	Local centres
ETC7	Local community shops and services in towns and villages
ETC8	Tourism
CGB1	Rural areas beyond the Green Belt
CGB2a	Exception sites for affordable housing in the Green Belt
CGB2b	Community facilities, services and affordable housing in the rural area beyond the Green Belt
CGB3	Rural workers' dwellings
CGB4	Existing buildings in the rural area beyond the Green Belt
CGB5	Urban open land

T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
HS1	Local housing allocations
HS2	Affordable housing
HS3	Housing mix
HS4	Supported, sheltered and older persons housing
HS5	Accessible and adaptable housing
HS6	Relatives' and dependents' accommodation
HS7	Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople
D1	Sustainable design
D2	House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings
D3	Protecting living conditions
D4	Air quality
HC1	Community facilities
NEx	Strategic green infrastructure
NE1	Landscape
NEx	Biodiversity and geological sites
NE4	Protecting open space
NEx	New and improved open space
NE7	Reducing flood risk
NE8	Sustainable drainage systems
NE9	Water quality and environment
NE10	Water conservation and wastewater infrastructure
NE11	Contaminated land
NE12	Renewable and low carbon energy development
HE1	Designated heritage assets
HE2	Heritage at risk
HE3	Non-designated heritage assets
HE4	Archaeology

Communities policies	
BA2	Land south-west of Clothall Road
BA3	Land south of Clothall Common
BA4	Land east of Clothall Common
BA5	Land off Yeomanry Drive
BA6	Land at Icknield Way

BA7	Land rear of Clare Crescent
BA11	Deans Yard, South Road
BA10	Royston Road (<i>employment allocation</i>)
BE1	Bondor Business Centre (<i>designated employment area</i>)
BE2	Royston Road (<i>designated employment area</i>)

This annex provides a summary of the register of buildings of local importance in Baldock, produced by North Hertfordshire District Council. It lists the buildings that are included and the reasons for their special value. Further detail about the process and the buildings themselves is contained in the register⁴¹.

Timber framed building to rear of Butlers Yard

- Building of particular local architectural interest, important for its timber framed construction.
- Building of local historic interest: important to the local industrial history of Baldock.

Chapel, Church Street

- Building of particular local architectural interest for its architectural design and as an important building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the religious history of Baldock.

Aircraft Hangar at Tapps Garden Centre, Clothall Road

- Building of particular local architectural interest for its construction and as an important building type.

The Town Hall, High Street

- Local architectural interest: special architectural design and important local building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the local social history of Baldock.
- Acts as an important focal point and landmark within the town.
- Makes a particularly valuable contribution to the architectural, historic and visual quality of the conservation area.

Numbers 2 and 4, High Street

- Local historic interest: important to the historic development of Baldock.
- Make a particularly valuable contribution to the architectural, historic and visual quality of the Conservation Area.

Number 29, High Street

- Local Architectural Interest: special architectural design and decoration.
- Makes a particularly valuable contribution to the architectural, historic and visual quality of the conservation area.

28 & 30 Walkers Court (Roes Almshouses), adjacent to Pepper Alley

- Local Historic Interest: illustrates important aspects of the local social history of Baldock.

The Lodge, 56 High Street

- Local architectural interest: special architectural design and important local building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the local history and development of Baldock.
- Makes a particularly valuable contribution to the architectural, historic and visual quality of the conservation area.

Numbers 45-55 (odd) and 59 to 63 (odd), High Street

- Local architectural interest: architectural design and traditional craftsmanship.
- Local historic interest: Important to the historic development of Baldock.
- Makes a particularly valuable contribution to the architectural, historic and visual quality of the Conservation Area.

Tesco Building, High Street

- Local architectural interest: special architectural design and traditional craftsmanship.
- Local historic interest: important to the local industrial history of Baldock.
- Acts as an important focal point and landmark within the town.

Drapers Court, rear of 39 High Street

- Local architectural interest: important local building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the local industrial history of Baldock.

⁴¹ NHDC (2003) *Register of Buildings of Local Importance in Baldock*.

Maltings Court and 46a, Fish and Chips Shop, High Street

- Local architectural interest: important local building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the local industrial history of Baldock.

Maltings buildings to the rear of 31a Hitchin Street

- Local architectural interest: important local building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the local industrial history of Baldock.

Hillcrest, London Road

- Local architectural interest: special architectural design and decoration.

Buildings to the rear of 42 Church Street, lining Meeting House Lane

- Local architectural interest: Important local building type.
- Local historic interest: Important to the local industrial history of Baldock.

Outbuilding, The Barn, 18 Park Street.

- Local architectural interest: important local building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the local industrial history of Baldock.

53, South Road

- Acts as an important focal point with 74 South Road within Baldock.

74, South Road [now demolished]

- Acts as an important focal point with 53 South Road within the town.

1, Whitehorse Street

- Acts as an important focal point within the town.
- Makes a particularly valuable contribution to the architectural, historic and visual quality of the conservation area.

11, Whitehorse Street

- Acts as an important focal point within the town.
- Makes a particularly valuable contribution to the architectural, historic and visual quality of the conservation area.

15, Whitehorse Street

- Close historical association with the Methodist Chapel, a grade II listed building.

United Reform Church, Whitehorse Street.

- Building of particular local architectural interest for its architectural design and as an important building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the religious history of Baldock.

New Farm and Farmhouse, Weston Way.

- Local architectural interest: important local building type.
- Local historic interest: important to the local industrial and agricultural history of Baldock.

These maps show extracts from the adopted policies map that forms part of the development plan for the area, with designated heritage assets overlaid.

