



Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan

Evidence report: May 2019

Incorporating a draft 'Basic Conditions Statement'



This document provides additional evidence in support of the draft Neighbourhood Plan for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall. It records the key evidence that has been drawn upon in producing the plan, including feedback from the local community, and incorporates a draft of the 'Basic Conditions Statement' which is required to show how the plan complies with certain conditions set out in law.

The matters covered by the Basic Conditions Statement have also helped to shape the plan (for example, how it relates to sustainable development considerations, and the policies in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan). As a result, the Basic Conditions Statement is included within this Evidence Report, but those sections that make up the Basic Conditions Statement are indicated clearly.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan 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.

Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan 2018-31

Evidence report

Incorporating a draft 'Basic Conditions Statement'

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The evidence base for the plan

A substantial amount of evidence was drawn upon in preparing the draft Neighbourhood Plan. This includes existing studies, community views (including a community survey) and site visits.

Because its overall purpose is to add to the policies contained in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, the evidence that had informed the Local Plan was used extensively, as well as other studies concerning the nature of the area and the potential impacts of new development (in particular, the technical studies commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council in support of its planning applications for development around Baldock, and the representations made in response to those proposals).

This material formed the basis of a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) for five areas that the neighbourhood plan was intended to focus on:

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

The results of this exercise are presented in the following pages. Key documents that informed the SWOT analysis are listed at the start of each topic (where applicable, North Hertfordshire District Council is abbreviated to 'NHDC'). In a small number of cases these documents were supplemented with information from local organisations or direct observation. The reports listed do not comprise all the documents that were reviewed in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, and nor does the SWOT analysis form the basis of every policy in the plan. The purpose of this exercise was, rather, to build a broad understanding of issues that the Neighbourhood Plan might be able to address.

Documents and other evidence that support particular policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are cited in the footnotes to those policies.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Key documents reviewed

Hertfordshire County Council (undated) *Meeting the Demand for School Places: Summer 2016/17*

NHDC (2011): *Communities Halls Strategy for North Hertfordshire*

RS Regeneration for NHDC (2016; updated 2018) *Infrastructure Delivery Plan*

Strengths: key features or facilities that are an asset

Baldock has an active community centre, as well as an Arts and Heritage Centre which came into community use in 2013.

The town hosts two successful festivals each year: the Baldock Festival in May, and the Balstock music festival in September. These make extensive use of community venues and pubs, as do a number of other events.

Weaknesses: things that detract from the area or are weaknesses in provision

Baldock’s community centre is of average condition and needs significant investment to bring it up to a good standard (est. £152,000 in 2011).

Baldock has a relatively small number of ‘other’ community halls (such as facilities for scouts and guides) compared to other towns in North Hertfordshire, and these offer relatively few facilities.

After-school provision in the town is over-subscribed, and there is also pressure on the facilities available for scouting.

Baldock library is relatively small compared to other towns in North Hertfordshire, and while it meets current needs it has limited space to expand on site.

The closure of both Lloyds and Barclays banks in 2017 has left the town without a full range of banking facilities.

While Clothall has a recently built community hall, Bygrave has no such provision – and is one of the most remote places from a community hall in the District.

Opportunities: to improve the area or address impacts from new development

A new community centre could be provided as part of an urban extension to the north of Baldock.

May be opportunities to use some of the ‘other’ community halls within Baldock more fully, as on average these are not used at capacity.

Likely need for a new children’s centre as part of any major development north of Baldock, and scope for children’s play facilities to be included in new community buildings.

Proposed level of growth will require additional school places: up to three primary schools and additional secondary provision – based on the HCC standard of 1 form entry / 500 homes for each type of schooling.

Astonia House surgery has some spare capacity currently, but additional or expanded premises will be needed to cater for growth. The best form of providing this needs to be established.

Likely need for a new Safer Policing Team as part of any major expansion development to the north of Baldock, including office space and secure parking.

Opportunities for improved cycle and footpath connections within the town, and for new bus services in association with any major development.

Threats: to the function or character of the area that may need to be addressed

Lack of adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy limits the contributions that can be secured from development for enhanced community facilities in Baldock and the villages.

TRANSPORT

Key documents reviewed

AECOM for NHDC (2016) Technical Note: Preferred Local Plan Model Testing Including Baldock Link Roads

Hertfordshire County Council (2007) Report to Highways and Transport Panel, 15 November: Baldock Bypass: One Year On

Hertfordshire County Council (2018) Local Transport Plan 2018 – 2031 ('LTP4')

Hertfordshire County Council (2018) Report to Highways and Environment Cabinet Panel, 14 September: A507 Hertfordshire Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) Project Plan

Markides Associates for NHDC (2017) North Hertfordshire Transport Strategy

Markides Associates for NHDC (2017) North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Strategy Review – Phase 1 Report

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

Odyssey Markides for NHDC (2016) Technical Note: Local Plan Transport Technical Review

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

WYG for Hertfordshire County Council (2017) Baldock South East: Transport Assessment.

Strengths: key features or facilities that are an asset

By-passing of the town by the A1(M) (1963) and A505 (2006) removed much through traffic and lowered congestion overall.

Town centre enhancement (2008) improved the pedestrian environment and parking arrangements.

The previous (2012) Urban Transport Plan actions for Baldock have been delivered, including amendments to Traffic Regulation Orders.

Substantial spare town centre parking capacity exists at the Tesco car park.

Weaknesses: things that detract from the area or are weaknesses in provision

The Whitehorse Street/Station Road crossroads is operating at or above capacity at present, and experiences regular delays. The scope for improvements is limited by the proximity of existing properties, including two listed buildings.

The car park for Baldock station is fairly small (44 spaces) and tends to be full by 11.00 on a weekday (although cycle parking at the station has spare capacity).

There is poor access to Baldock station for pedestrians and cyclists, including a lack of lift access to the platforms.

Icknield Way/Station Road junction is a difficult interchange for pedestrians to use.

Railway crossing points in Baldock are narrow (at Station Road, Norton Road and a pedestrian tunnel off Icknield Way). The low railway bridge on Station Road is a particular pinch-point, with narrow footways and no space for cycle lanes.

Commuter/long-stay parking pressures affect residential streets that are not within the controlled parking zone.

On-street parking and the one small council car park in the town centre (The Twitchell) tend to be fully utilised during the week (and, in the case of on-street parking, on Saturday).

There can be conflicts between resident and visitor use of on-street parking in the town centre (and because on-street parking is free, visitors have no incentive to use off-street parking unless on-street spaces are full).

The relatively small size of North Hertfordshire's market towns – including Baldock – limits the scope for comprehensive, high frequency urban bus services within them.

Despite its rural character, the A507 experiences many HGV movements as a result of through traffic and farm and industrial operations along its route.

Opportunities: to improve the area or address impacts from new development

The A505/B656 corridor between Baldock and Hitchin could offer better opportunities for walking, cycling and bus provision (viewing the towns as a single 'travel market'). More and better crossings for pedestrians/cyclists could be provided, as they could cross the railway line.

A new link road between the A507 and A505 could help to mitigate the impact of the proposed major development to the north of Baldock, but poses a challenge in terms of the balance to be struck between serving the needs of new residents, its potential use as a through route and securing a high quality environment.

More non-car travel to Baldock station could potentially be encouraged.

Reducing long-stay parking at trip destinations like the railway station, town centre and employment areas can help encourage more non-car travel within the town, but is likely to be less effective in relation to trips from outlying villages.

Scope for better use of some parking bays in Baldock town centre.

Threats: to the function or character of the area that may need to be addressed

Car traffic in North Hertfordshire is predicted to grow by 17% between 2015 and 2031 (including that arising from the Local Plan proposals).

There is limited 'environmental capacity' to accommodate more traffic within Baldock (making it important to avoid significant future increases in through-traffic).

The scale of development proposed for Baldock could increase delays at the Whitehorse/Station Road crossroads even with the mitigation measures being considered (signal optimisation); although this depends in part on the degree of modal shift that can be secured.

Capacity at the Clothall Road/Wallington Road/South Road junction could also be exceeded, even with mitigation (although the effects will depend on the route chosen for a southern link road).

Demand for parking in Baldock town centre is likely to increase by 20% by 2031, and demand to park at the railway station is likely to grow by more than 80% over the

same period (taking into account historic trends, improvements to rail services and proposed residential growth).

Parts of site BA1 in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan are relatively remote from the town centre: i.e. more than a 20 minute walk or 10 minute cycle ride (which could generate demand for car trips unless good public transport is available).

THE ENVIRONMENT

Key documents reviewed

BSG Ecology for NHDC (2016) *Blackhorse Farm, Baldock – Guidance Note: Corn Bunting*

BSG Ecology for NHDC (2016) *Ecological Advice Note – Ivel Springs*

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

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

NHDC (2016) *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update*

NHDC (2017) *Baldock Air Quality Paper*

NHDC (2018) *Air Quality Planning Guidance Document*

RS Regeneration for NHDC (2016; updated 2018) *Infrastructure Delivery Plan*

WYG for Hertfordshire County Council (2017) *Land at Baldock North: Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy*

WYG for Hertfordshire County Council (2017) *Land at Baldock South East: Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy*

Strengths: key features or facilities that are an asset

Current nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels within Baldock are below the recognised Air Quality Objective of 40mg/m³, and have fallen since 2010.

Baldock's setting within a rolling chalk landscape makes a positive contribution to its distinctive character, affording long-distance views from within the town to the surrounding landscape.

The neighbourhood area contains two local nature reserves – at Ivel Springs immediately to the north-west of Baldock (which contains seasonal chalk springs) and Weston Hills to the south of the town – together with a number of local wildlife sites in Bygrave and Clothall parishes.

Weaknesses: things that detract from the area or are weaknesses in provision

Baldock sits in a shallow 'bowl' – with higher ground especially to the north and south – which influences the natural dispersal of pollutants.

The A505 through Baldock is associated with air pollution approaching – but not exceeding – a national Air Quality Objective, and is characterised by residential properties lying close to the road.

There has been no monitoring of particulate matter in Baldock, nor are there any specific measures in train to address it.

Although Baldock does not suffer from fluvial flood risk, several parts of the town are at risk of surface water flooding, with a 1 in 30 year event being possible in the vicinity of Icknield Way, Pond Lane, Weston Way, Whitehorse Street and the eastern edge of Clothall Common (although the risk to the latter is likely to have been alleviated by the construction of the Baldock bypass).

Opportunities: to improve the area or address impacts from new development

There are opportunities to strengthen planting at the edge of Baldock to help maintain the character of the town's setting, in ways which respect the nature of the surrounding landscape. Care will be needed to maintain long-distance views from within Baldock to the surrounding chalk landscape, given their importance for Baldock's character and setting.

Scope exists to enhance the management of the wetland area within Ivel Springs local nature reserve.

The narrow lanes and tracks to the north of Baldock, including Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road, could be maintained and enhanced as 'green corridors'.

There is potential to take a connected approach to managing surface water flood risk across the sites allocated in the Local Plan (and related parts of the town).

Ground conditions underlying most of the allocations proposed in the Local Plan are likely to allow drainage through infiltration, and therefore limit off-site risks from additional surface water flows.

Opportunities exist to incorporate renewable energy projects within new development.

Threats: to the function or character of the area that may need to be addressed

Without mitigation, air quality is expected to decline by 2031 due to increased congestion at the Whitehorse Street/Station Road crossroads – both around the crossroads itself and potentially at other locations; although levels at building facades may remain within Air Quality Objective levels.

The proposed link roads are expected to offset this impact through a net reduction in congestion by 2031 – although this relies heavily on assumed levels of trip redistribution away from the crossroads.

Major development north of Baldock could lead to an increase in uncontrolled recreation use and environmental impacts on the Ivel Springs local nature reserve.

Surface water drainage from major development north of Baldock needs to be managed to avoid any adverse impact on Ivel Springs local nature reserve.

Most proposed allocations for development in Baldock have some level of surface water flood risk. Development of these sites will need to ensure that no additional flood risk is created.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Key documents reviewed

BSG Ecology for NHDC (2016) *Ecological Advice Note – Ivel Springs*

Knight Kavanagh & Page for NHDC (2015) *North Hertfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report*

Knight Kavanagh & Page for NHDC (2016) *North Hertfordshire Indoor Sports Facilities Study Assessment Report*

Knight Kavanagh & Page for NHDC (2018) *North Hertfordshire Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy & Action Plan 2015-2025: Final Draft*

Knight Kavanagh & Page for NHDC (2018) *North Hertfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan 2015-2025: Final Draft*

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

NHDC (2016) *North Hertfordshire Open Space Review and Standards*

Strengths: key features or facilities that are an asset

Baldock has more natural and semi-natural greenspace per person than other towns in North Hertfordshire – and the NHDC figures underestimate the actual level of provision as they exclude the Weston Hills and open land adjoining Clothall Common.

Baldock has the highest level of allotment provision (0.37ha/1,000 people) of the North Hertfordshire towns.

The town has two local nature reserves at its edge – Ivel Springs and the Weston Hills, which provide important and contrasting informal recreation spaces.

Existing amounts of greenspace of different types – including pitches – generally meet or exceed Fields in Trust indicative standards, and NHDC's new standards.

There are two full sized artificial grass pitches available for community use (at Knights Templar School and The Arena), although both are operating at full capacity.

Baldock has one of the most active bowls clubs in North Hertfordshire, and while operating at near capacity, is thought to have sufficient facilities to cater for anticipated future demand.

Weaknesses: things that detract from the area or are weaknesses in provision

The amount of 'amenity' greenspace within Baldock is low compared to other towns in North Hertfordshire, and slightly below Fields in Trust recommended standards; although this excludes amenity land adjoining Clothall Common.

Baldock relies on clubs in Letchworth, Hitchin and Royston for several sports (e.g. tennis, hockey, rugby, badminton and squash).

Bakers Close playing field is overplayed and of poor quality.

The North Hertfordshire Arena is not of sufficient standard for Baldock Town FC to use for Spartan South Midlands league matches (as a result of which the club ground-shares with Arlesey Town FC).

Baldock has no skate park or BMX facility.

There is limited cemetery capacity with Baldock.

Opportunities: to improve the area or address impacts from new development

Major development to the north of Baldock would provide the opportunity for significant new greenspace to be provided; while the development proposals more generally create opportunities for new or enhanced green corridors to be created (including improvements to the rights of way network).

Scope for new community green space to be provided at Walls Field in the centre of Baldock, which would help to conserve the scheduled monument and create new opportunities for communicating Baldock's rich history.

Potential for additional allotment provision on Hertfordshire County Council land adjoining North Road.

Scope to provide fitness trails around sports pitches and areas of open space.

The anticipated increase in North Hertfordshire's population is likely to generate demand for additional football pitches and swimming pool capacity.

A big increase in the elderly population is expected over the plan period, generating a particular need for suitable recreation opportunities.

In Baldock specifically, the proposed growth of the town is likely to generate capacity for new clubs to be formed – including for sports not currently represented in the town – and lead to an associated demand for new facilities.

There will be a need for additional sports hall provision, as demand in North Hertfordshire already exceeds capacity, and the hall at Knights Templar School is fully utilised.

Threats: to the function or character of the area that may need to be addressed

The proposed scale of growth for Baldock could place an unacceptable level of pressure on existing areas of open space and recreational facilities, unless a sufficient amount and range of new provision is made available in line with that growth.

DESIGN AND HERITAGE

Key documents reviewed

Amec Foster Wheeler for NHDC (2016) *Heritage Assessment of Baldock*

BDP (2009) *Baldock Town Centre: The Transformation of a Market Town*

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

Historic England (2018) *Heritage at Risk: East of England Register 2018*

NHDC (2003) *Character Statement for Baldock Conservation Area*

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

Thompson, I. for Hertfordshire County Council (2002) *Baldock: Extensive Urban Survey Project Report*

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

Urban Practitioners for NHDC (2007) *Urban Design Assessment workshop slides*

Strengths: key features or facilities that are an asset

The neighbourhood area contains important collections of listed buildings in Baldock town centre, and to a lesser degree in Luffenhall, Clothall and Upper Bygrave. A number of other buildings in Baldock have been identified as being of particular local value for their historic or architectural interest, or contribution to local character.

The area is very rich in archaeological remains, with extensive areas designated as being of archaeological importance. There are six scheduled monuments, and the remains of an important historic garden at Quickwood Farm.

Baldock town centre has a clear historic street pattern with prominent, attractive, features (e.g. wide market place, historic buildings throughout the centre, trees

lining the southern end of the High Street and views of St Mary's Church and Weston Hills).

Consistency of building types and materials, together with the limited range of building heights, give the town centre a strong, distinctive character, with features that reflect its history (e.g. linear building plots, continuous building frontages onto streets, carriage arches).

The town centre improvements of 2008-9 have created attractive paved and grassed areas and given it a cohesive feel.

Residential areas to the south of Baldock have a distinctive 'semi-rural' character of their own, with wide streets and verges, consistent house types and large gardens.

Walls Field scheduled monument has been protected from development and provides part of an important 'green lung' within Baldock.

Attractive views of Baldock from surrounding hills (with St Mary's Church spire providing a strong focal point).

Weaknesses: things that detract from the area or are weaknesses in provision

Some poor 'gateways' into Baldock along the main roads.

Two significant barriers to movement between different parts of the town: the railway line and the barrier between Sale Drive and Royston Road.

Poor physical connection between Tesco and the rest of the town centre.

Poor street scene and lack of character in some areas of more recent development (e.g. buildings that don't front onto streets, or form a strong building line, or echo local materials and details).

Walls Field scheduled monument is on the 'at risk' register due to the impact of ploughing on its archaeological interest, while St Mary's Church is also on the register due to some parts of the building remaining in poor condition.

Opportunities: to improve the area or address impacts from new development

Scope for improved entrances to the town, especially along Royston Road (coupled with improved connections between Sale Drive/Yeomanry Drive and Royston Road).

The architectural heritage of the town provides strong design cues that can be reflected in new development.

Potential to improve connections between Tesco and the rest of the town centre.

Threats: to the function or character of the area that may need to be addressed

Baldock's topography – relatively flat but surrounded by areas of higher ground – means that important views of the town and within the town could be harmed by tall buildings or large-scale development.

Increased traffic flows, especially through the Whitehorse Street/Station Road junction, would harm the character of the conservation area.

Development to the north of Baldock could alter the setting of the scheduled ancient monument at Blackhorse Farm (a crop mark complex) and two adjoining listed buildings, depending on the detailed site boundary design.

Introduction

Throughout the preparation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, the group has sought to inform the local community about the process, gather as many opinions as possible and reflect these in the way the plan has been put together:

Website: A website was set up at an early stage to provide background to the work of the group, advertise forthcoming events and record the activities being undertaken.

Members’ newsletters: During the initial meetings to establish the group, and through the promotion of subsequent activities, local residents and businesses have been invited to register as supporters. This has enabled newsletters to be distributed, informing them of progress and providing a further means of publicising events.

Advertising: Events were publicised in local magazines, namely the Baldock Mail and On Our Doorstep (which is distributed monthly to all households in the area). Posters were also put up on community notice boards and promoted using social media.

Community Events: As well as becoming members of the group, local residents and businesses have been encouraged to make contributions through a number of events:

Baldock Street Fair May 2017	Stall inviting comments about aspects of the town’s potential growth that are liked, disliked or of concern.
Public workshop June 2017	Follow-up to the street fair to identify issues that the Neighbourhood Plan could influence.
Organised walks July and September 2017	Two walks around the main areas that the district and county councils have proposed for new development, led by the committee.

Public workshop October 2017	Organised to update the community about progress and explore topics to include in a community survey.
Community survey January/February 2018	Community-wide survey distributed to households and businesses through an insert in ‘On Our Doorstep’ magazine. The survey was also promoted on social media and local notice boards. Responses were collected online and via various collection boxes set up around Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall.
Knights Templar School community event March 2018	Presentations of school pupils’ project work on the future of Baldock, and summarising the outcome of the community survey, together with discussion groups on topics being considered for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.
Baldock Street Fair May 2018	Stall organised by AECOM to collect views on different aspects of design.
Design workshop October 2018	Led by AECOM, exploring in more detail the issues raised by the street fair, with discussions on how these might be addressed in the Design Guidelines to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan.

The following pages summarise the outcomes from the Street Fair (May 2017), the Community Survey (January 2018) and the community event at Knights Templar School (March 2018). Feedback from the events run by AECOM is summarised in the Design Guidelines that form part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES RECORDED AT THE BALDOCK STREET FAIR, MAY 2017**Things about the area that people like:**

- Friendliness
- History
- Convenience
- Travel links
- Countryside
- Community
- Markets & events
- Schools & kids areas
- Local businesses

Concerns about Baldock's potential growth:

- Schools full
- GPs full
- Loss of Green Belt
- Traffic
- Trains full
- Pollution
- Sewers?
- Housing affordable?
- Damage to historic Baldock
- Loss of farms
- Loss of community
- Jobs

Ideas for improving the area and managing growth:

- Cycle Lanes
- Library open more
- Cinema
- Youth & leisure facilities
- Accessibility
- Better public transport
- Businesses & shops
- Police
- Increase GPs
- Parking & traffic
- Volunteers
- Sustainability & renewables
- Good design
- Garden village
- Green spaces

Particular issues or concerns relating to Bygrave:

- Light pollution
- Community hall
- Playground
- Traffic calming
- Footpaths
- Green space

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SURVEY AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SURVEY



You may have heard of the plans to build thousands of homes around Baldock. We have a chance to influence what happens.

Complete the survey online at:
www.bbplan.co.uk
 by 14th February 2018

YOUR OPINION COUNTS!

Or fill in and return the survey on pages 3 and 4 of this section to one of our collection points: • Baldock Community Centre • WH Smith, Whitehorse Street • Clothall Common Food & Wine • Weston Way Post Office • Bygrave Church • Clothall Church

The survey is open to anyone living or working in Baldock and the parishes of Bygrave and Clothall. Each person in a household can respond. Extra copies of the form can be downloaded from www.bbplan.co.uk, or scan the QR code.



Baldock could almost double in size over the next 20 to 30 years, if plans put forward by our local councils get approved. We'll know for sure some time in 2018, when the outcome of the examination into North Hertfordshire's Local Plan is made public.

To get the best outcome for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall if it goes ahead, we are producing a neighbourhood plan.

A neighbourhood plan can't stop the developments happening. But it can influence how it takes place, and protect the things that local people value most about the town.

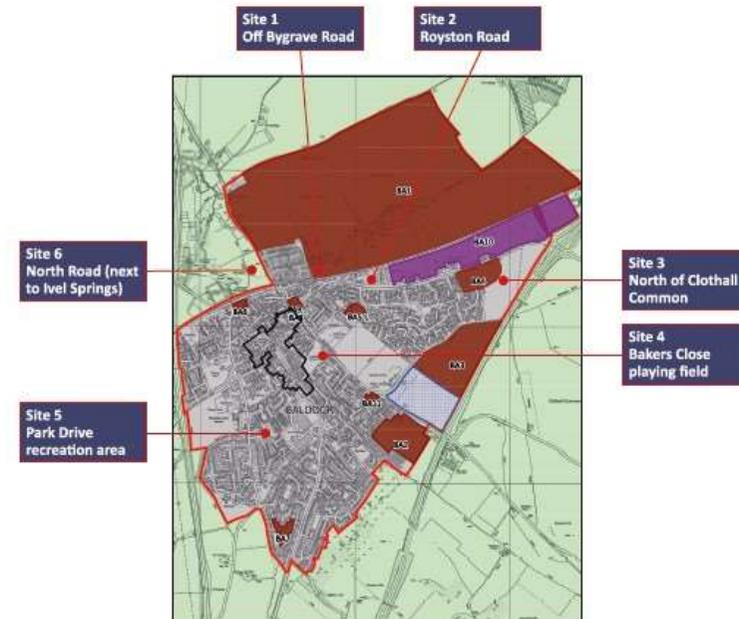
To help produce the plan we need to know what you think about some important issues. The survey is short so it's easy to complete, but there is space at the end to add any extra comments.

The neighbourhood plan will cover the whole of Baldock, as well as Bygrave and Clothall parishes (as some of the new development would be in these areas).

Once complete, the neighbourhood plan will have force in law as something the district council needs to consider when deciding any planning applications.

The neighbourhood plan is being produced by a small number of volunteers drawn from community organisations in Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall, supported by a wider group of local residents and business representatives. We are independent of the district and county councils. Further information is available on our website www.bbplan.co.uk, where you can also find out more about what the plan can and can't influence. If you'd like to join the group or think you could help with the work, please email us at info@bbplan.co.uk

The map shows the location of sites that are mentioned in the questionnaire. The areas shaded brown or purple are the areas being proposed for development in North Hertfordshire's local plan (brown is residential, purple is employment, purple grid is open space).



Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SURVEY

Please could you respond to this survey online at www.bbplan.co.uk, or else tear off and return this form to one of the collection points listed on the front page. Please reply by 14th February 2018.

How should Baldock grow?

The neighbourhood plan can help ensure new developments have the right facilities and feel part of Baldock. To do this, we need to know what you think about the way the town should grow.

Q1 If Baldock's expansion goes ahead, how important do you think each of the following things will be?

please tick one box for each issue	Very important	Important	Not important
Good footpath, cycle and road connections between existing parts of the town and the new developments			
New homes and facilities that meet the needs of people already living and working in Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall			
Keeping a gap between Baldock and Bygrave, so that Bygrave stays a separate village with its own rural character			
Ensuring historic features like hedges and Bygrave Road are kept as part of the new development			
Designing the new buildings and streets to reflect Baldock's existing character			

Housing

To help make sure the new developments provide the sort of homes that local people need, it would be useful to know what types of housing you think should be the priority.

Q2 If more homes are built here, how important are each of the following?

please tick one box for each type of home	Very important	Important	Not important
1-2 bed houses			
3-4 bed houses			
5+ bed houses			
Flats			
Retirement properties			
Custom or self-built homes			

Recreation

The district and county councils are proposing new facilities like schools, shops and a GP surgery if development goes ahead. But more information is needed about the recreation facilities that should be provided, so we need your views about this.

Q3 If Baldock expands significantly, how important will it be to provide each of the following?

please tick one box for each type of facility	Very important	Important	Not important
Pitches for football, rugby or cricket			
Fitness trail			
Tennis courts			
Indoor sports hall			
Additional venues to hire (for clubs etc.)			
Other recreation facilities (please specify)			

Station parking

Parking at Baldock station is limited, and cars are often parked some distance away, adding to congestion on local roads. However, more station parking might just encourage more people to drive into the town. We'd like to know what you think about this.

Q4 Do you think that more parking should be available at Baldock station?

Yes Not sure No

Q5 If more station parking is provided, where do you think it should be?

see map on page 2 for site locations -- please tick if you support one or more of these sites, which could be accessed by new footpaths between them and the station

Site 1: Off Bygrave Road	
Site 2: Royston Road (relocate existing commercial use further along the road)	
Somewhere else (please specify)	

Open space

The neighbourhood plan can give more protection to areas of open space that local people value, especially where there is public access to them. To do this, we need to know how much some areas are used. We have excluded Avenue Park and the nature reserves at Ivel Springs and Weston Hills, which are relatively well protected already.

Q6 How often do you use the following areas of open space?

see map on page 2 for site locations

	Most days	Most weeks	Sometimes	Never
Site 3: North of Clothall Common				
Site 4: Bakers Close playing field				
Site 5: Park Drive recreation area				
Site 6: North Road (next to Ivel Springs)				

Q7 Are there other things that you think the neighbourhood plan should consider?

We know that many people are concerned about things like traffic and affordable housing if the developments go ahead. We have not asked about these here, as they are not things that the neighbourhood plan can control, but we and other groups are continuing to raise these issues with the district and county councils.

About you

We'd be grateful if you could provide a few details about yourself to help us assess the responses. We have kept these to a minimum, and none of the questions will identify you individually.

Q8 What age group are you in?

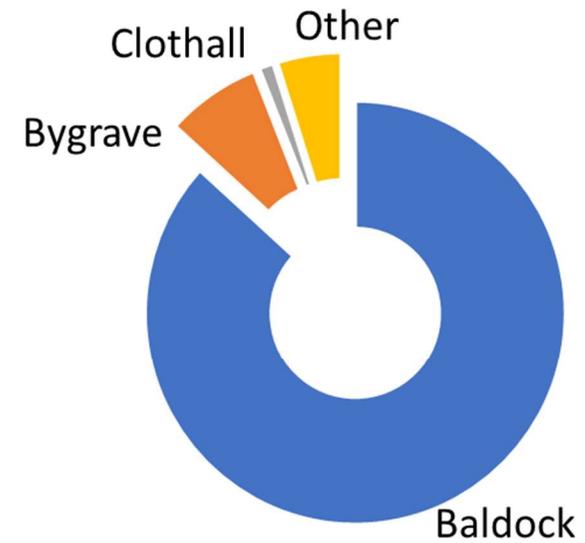
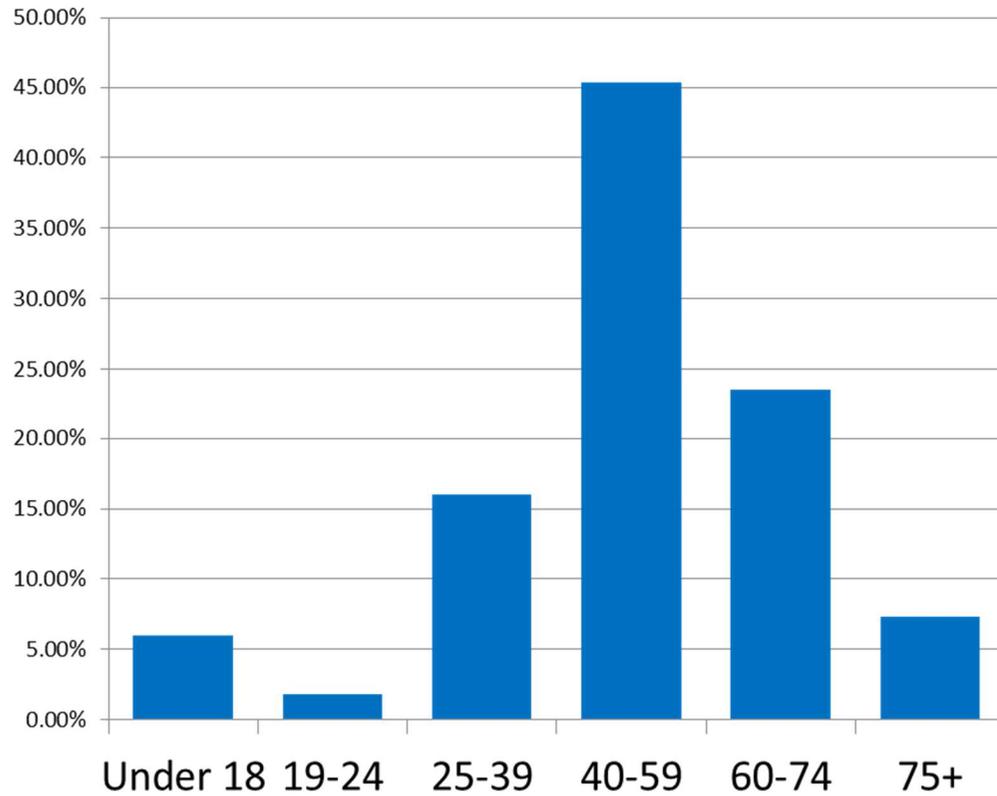
Under 18 19-24 25-39 40-59 60-74 75+

Q9 Where do you live?

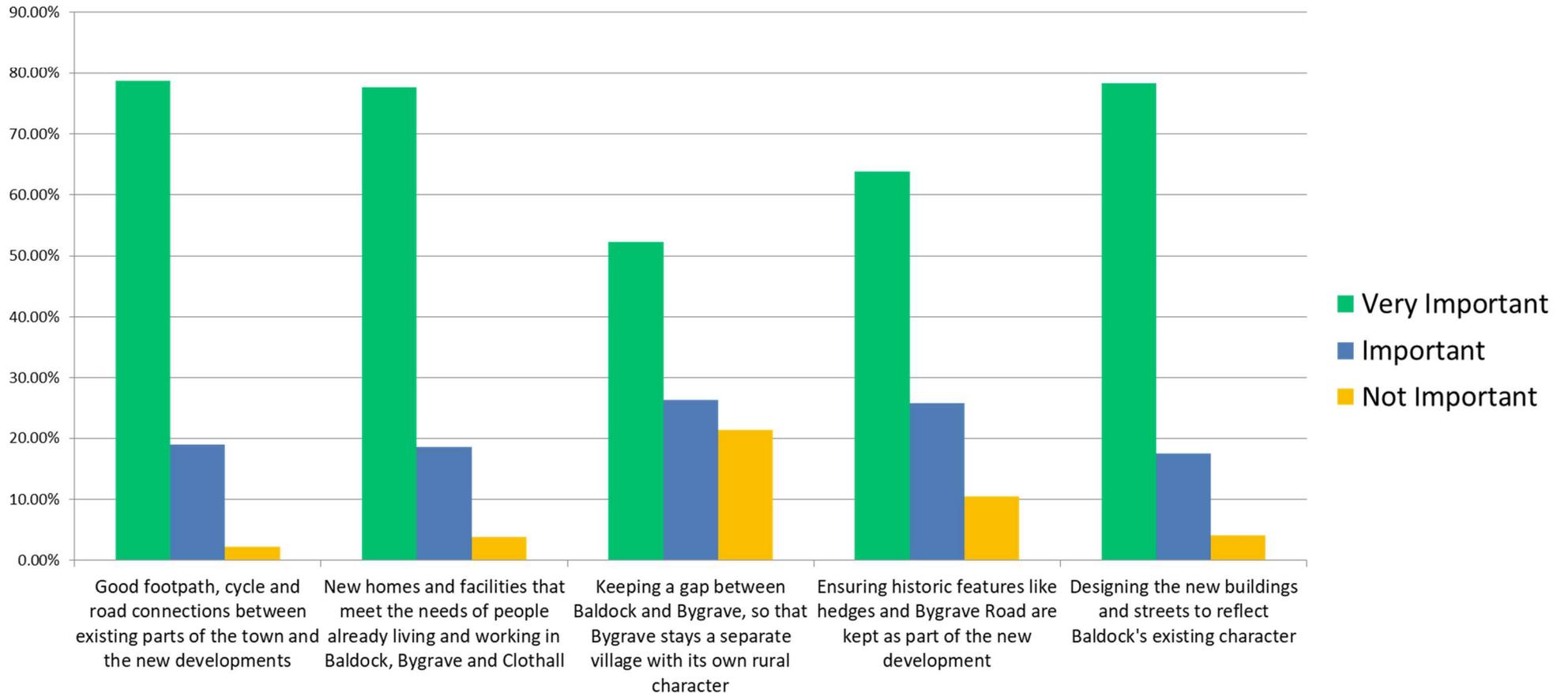
Baldock Bygrave Clothall Village Other (please specify)

Thank you for taking the time to help us to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall.

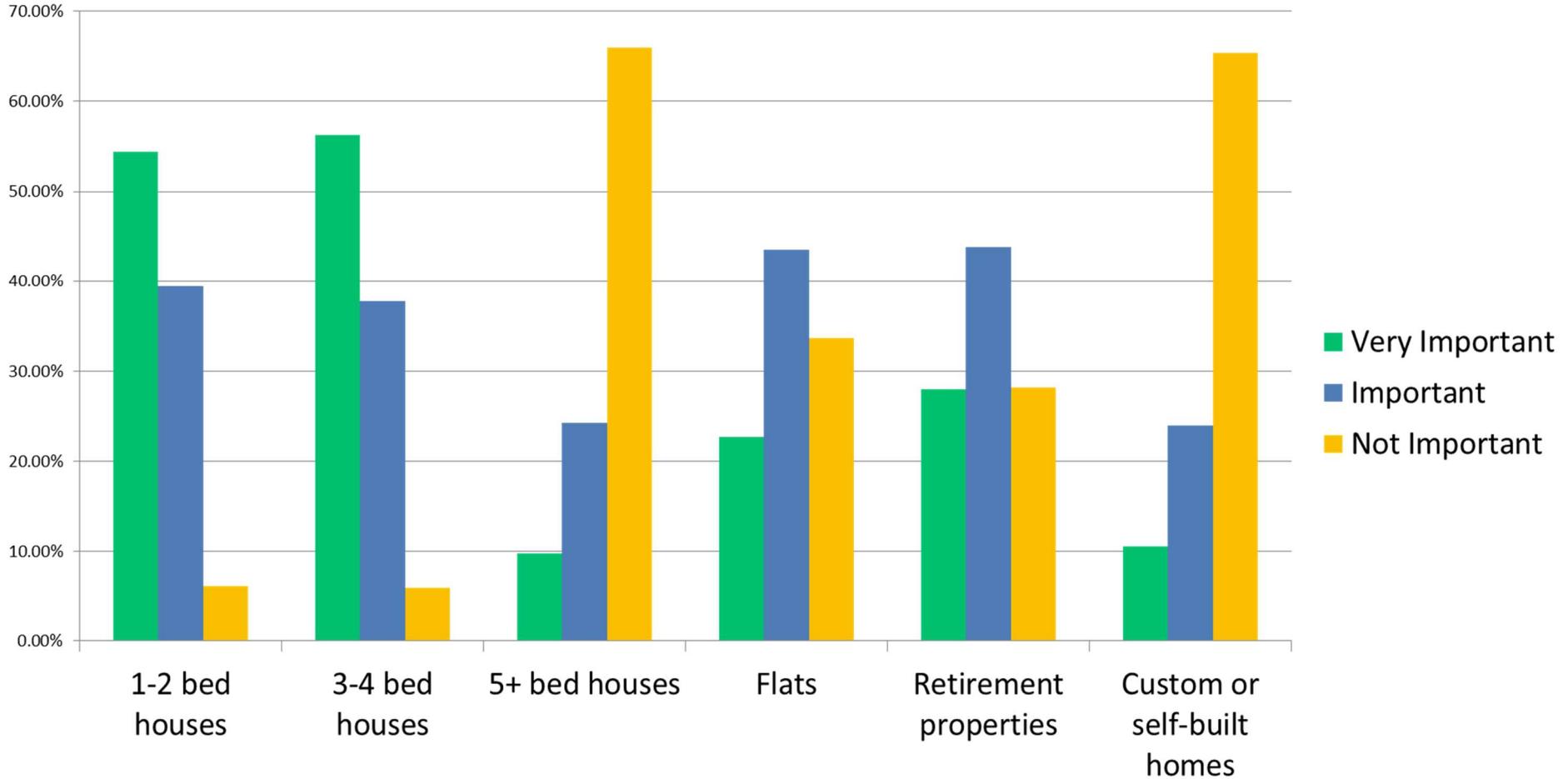
There were 581 responses to the community survey, from these age groups and areas:



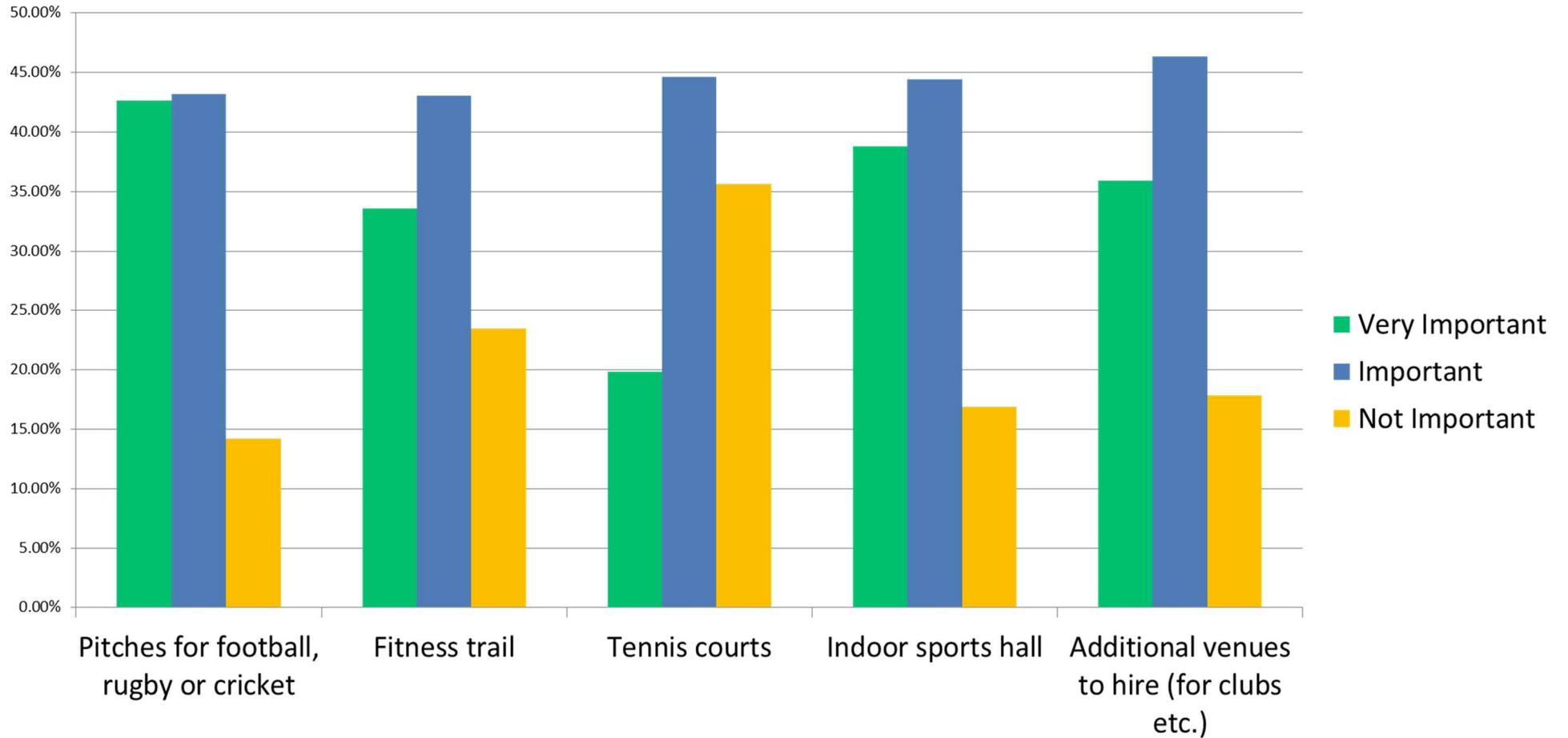
If Baldock's expansion goes ahead, how important do you think each of the following things will be?



If more homes are built here, how important are each of the following?



If Baldock expands significantly, how important are each of the following?

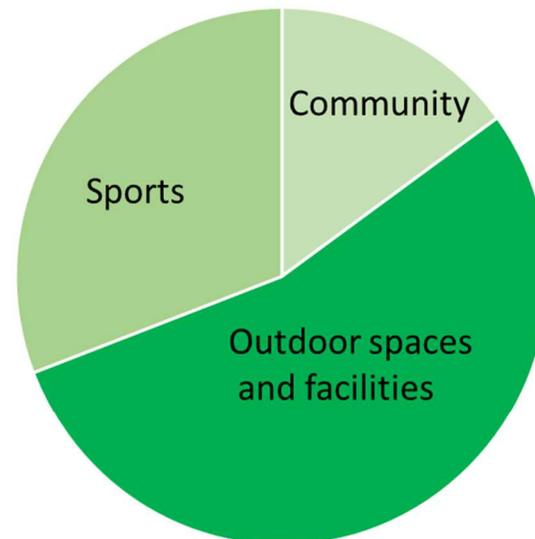


A wide range of other recreation facilities was also mentioned:

Number of mentions

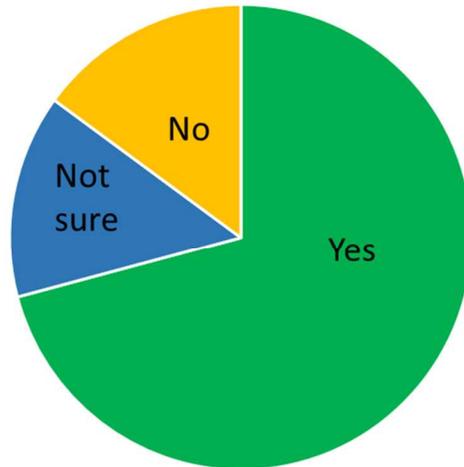
Swimming Pool	41
Gym	15
Skate Park	12
Outdoor exercise equipment	11
All weather pitches	4
improved football ground	3
Hockey and Netball pitches	2
Golf club	2
indoor bowling	2
Bowling alley	2
Basketball courts	2
Ice rink	2
Gym for over 65s	1
Speedway track	1
Wheelchair accessible sports	1
Putting/Crazy golf	1
Indoor tennis courts	1

Youth Club	9
Cinema	8
Childrens Activity Centre / Scouts	5
Local community Centres	5
Churches	3
Theatre	3
Schools	3
Bygrave Village Hall	3
Shops	3
Communal seating areas / social areas	2
Pubs / Nightclub	2
Library / facilities for ART/music/drama	2
Cemetery	2

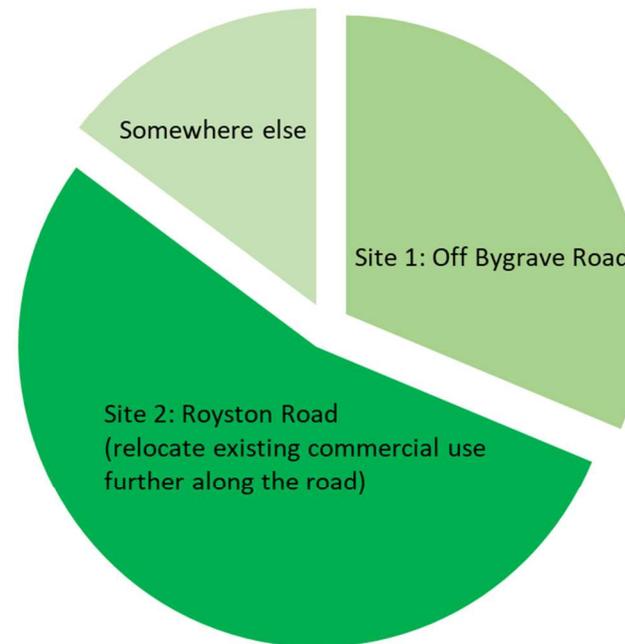


Natural wildlife/Lakes/places to sit/flowers and trees	65
Playground/ Swings etc / dog free / ball games	46
Cycle Paths / Greenway extension/child friendly routes	27
Maintain Footpaths / Bridleways	14
Dog walking areas	12
Cycle track/ running track	12
Allotments	3
Ivel Springs nature reserve visitor centre	2

Do you think that more parking should be available at Baldock station?



If more station parking is provided, where do you think it should be?



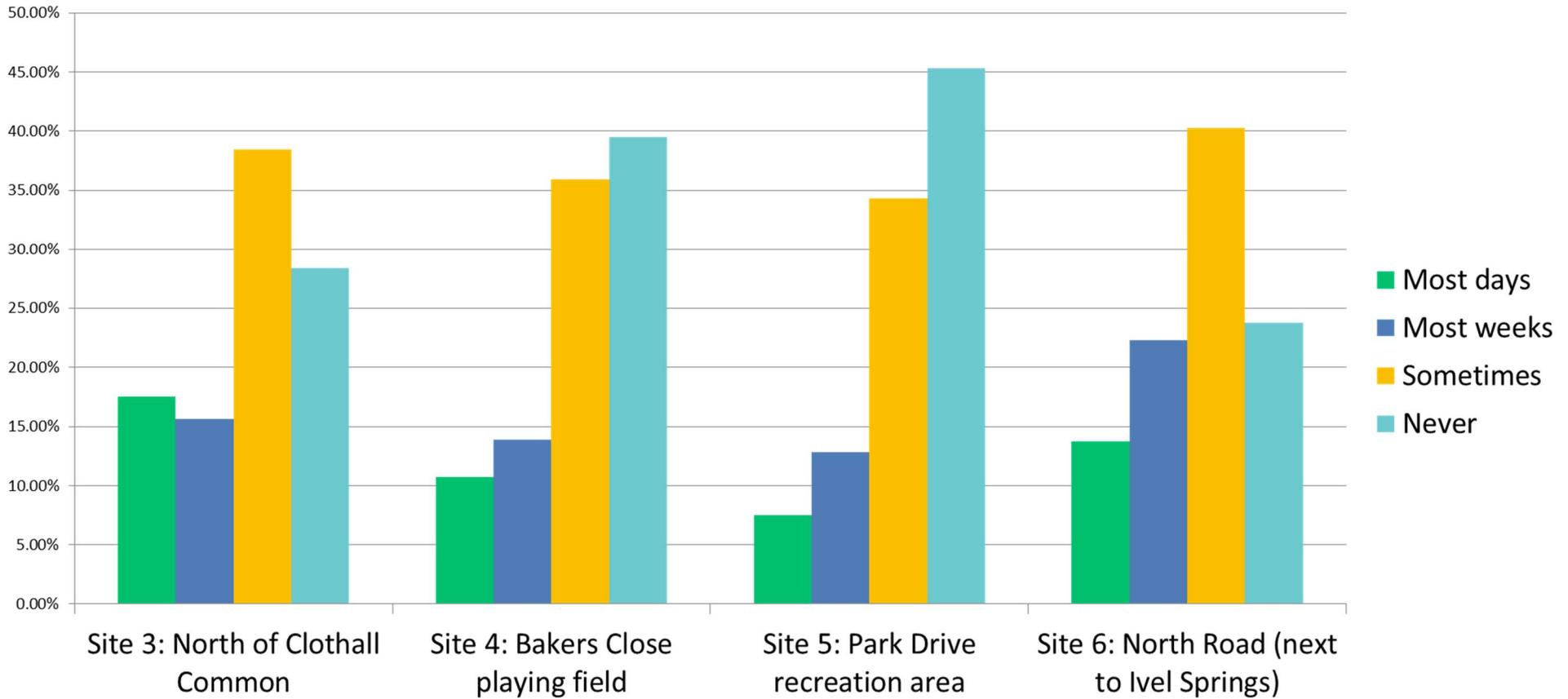
Somewhere else :-

- Multistorey on current carpark North Road
- Park and Ride (Baldock services)
- Not on local roads
- Relocate Station
- Engine Pub site
- Tesco/Clothall common park
- Icknield Way - disused factory site

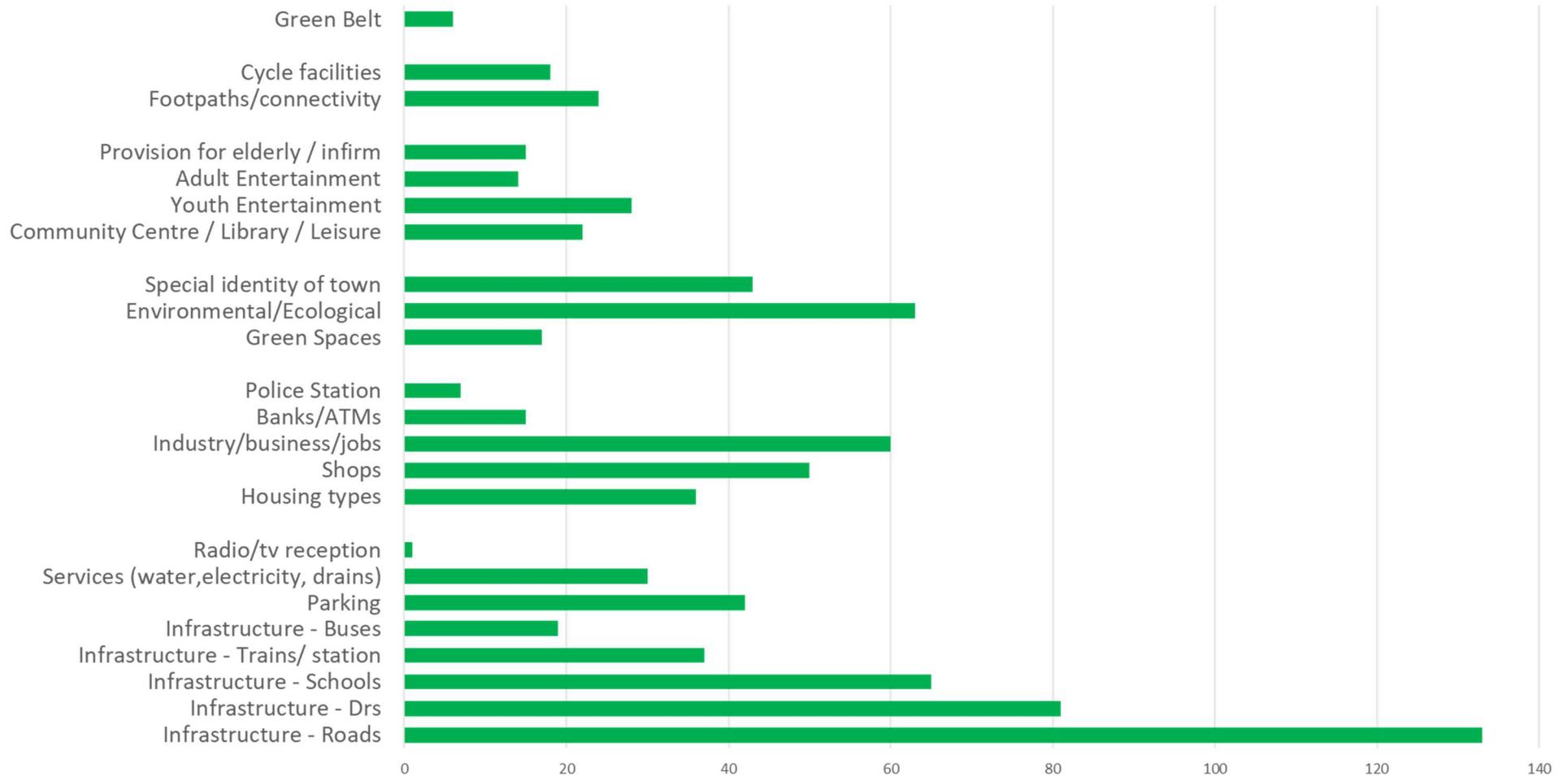
Consider:

- wheelchair access
- cost of parking
- better parking restrictions

How often do you use the following areas of open space?



Other issues for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider



SUMMARY OF ISSUES DISCUSSED AT THE COMMUNITY EVENT IN MARCH 2018

Table-based discussion groups focused on the following topics:

1. Preserving the special identity of Baldock and Bygrave
2. Integration of new and old Baldock
3. New features for 'old' Baldock to encourage integration
4. Leisure facilities for all
5. Open spaces/ ecology/ environment
6. Cycle tracks/ footpaths/ bridleways

The key points raised are summarised below:

- Community centres needed early on during building to act as a focus for coordination and information.
 - Architecture sympathetic to that of 'old' Baldock.
 - New groups (Guiding etc.) to be set up early, may attract some people from 'old' town. Youth Club.
 - Teaching/ sharing Baldock's history – naming streets/ parks etc. after the area's historic events. History trail?
 - Retain or copy the medieval street layout in some areas (shopping or leisure areas?) – gateways/ courtyards – in the new development.
 - Information boards to explain the history of the local area.
 - Use Garden City guidelines?
 - Excavated feature to demonstrate local history of the area?
-
- Importance of timing and integration of developments.
 - Public competitions – consult locals on house design (similar to Wilbury Rd, Letchworth? Garden City Cottages competition?).
 - Competition to design a sculpture for a public position / square.
 - Integration could be difficult due to distances, parking etc.
 - Integration by town events and social media, leafleting etc.
 - Encourage a New Residents Committee to hold new events
 - A Town Council to cover the whole area?
 - Encourage integration through children's events.
-
- More support for Arts & Heritage Centre to hold more community events.
 - A small cinema in the Arts & Heritage Centre.
 - A new events venue with flexible use and good capacity.
 - Leisure facilities for sports and other events.
 - Swimming pool indoor/ outdoor.
 - Better shopping opportunities in 'old' Baldock.
 - Space for extra buildings will be at a premium.
-
- Open air swimming pool linked to outdoor leisure park and skate boarding park, tennis and badminton courts, cricket pitch.
 - No-car zones to aid social and family interaction.
 - Public toilets with wheelchair access/ disabled facilities.
 - Outdoor exercise equipment – fitness trail, walking trail.
-
- Community gardens, meeting places, areas to walk and cycle.
 - Wildlife area, children's farm, maybe near nursery or lake.
 - Hedgehog highways throughout development.
 - No bypass or large HGVs through development.
 - Proper green space between BA1 development and Bygrave.
 - Preserve hedges/ trees and plant new ones.
 - New nature reserve (+pond) to protect rare and endangered species.
 - Permeable driveways etc. to allow rain to drain through. Protect Ivel Springs.
-
- Linked-up footpaths and cycle tracks leading to key destinations in Baldock, Letchworth and other places. May need tunnels under roads for bikes/ walkers.
 - Link to Letchworth Greenway.
 - Safe areas for children to cycle and scoot etc.
 - Secure lock-ups for electric bikes at station and in town to encourage them and to reduce the need for more car parking.
 - Secure bike sheds between roads on new estates for communal use.

Draft Basic Conditions Statement

This basic conditions statement has been prepared by the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Planning Group, to accompany the submission of the draft Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan to North Hertfordshire District Council under regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted by Bygrave Parish Council, which is the qualifying body authorised to act in relation to the neighbourhood area under section 61E(6) of the Town and County Planning Act 1990, as amended (“the 1990 Act”). The neighbourhood area comprises the parishes of Bygrave and Clothall and the unparished area of Baldock. The neighbourhood area was designated by North Hertfordshire District Council on 25 July 2017.

The draft plan relates to planning matters (the use and development of land) in the designated neighbourhood area and covers the period from 2018 to 2031. It does not contain policies relating to excluded development as set out in section 61K of the 1990 Act.

The remainder of this statement address each of the other relevant basic conditions set out at paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan
- the making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- the making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the local planning authority (or any part of that area)
- the making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations

Approach to considering national policy and guidance

Neighbourhood plans should be appropriate having regard to national planning policy and guidance. The principal point of reference for this is the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF)¹, as the purpose of the online planning guidance suite is to provide advice on how this Framework should be applied.

The NPPF provides a broad framework for producing plans at the local level, and so there is scope for neighbourhood plans to contain policies and proposals that are not expressly covered by the NPPF. However, policies that contradict the NPPF are much less likely to satisfy the basic condition of being ‘appropriate’, unless the departure from national policy can be fully justified.

The Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with careful regard to the NPPF and its associated guidance. To illustrate this, and help demonstrate why it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan, Table 1 summarises how its constituent policies reflect the most relevant paragraphs in the NPPF.

More generally, the Neighbourhood Plan as a whole is intended to support the delivery of the strategic policies contained in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (as required by NPPF paragraphs 13 and 29), with its policies providing additional safeguards to those in the Local Plan. In doing so, the Neighbourhood Plan aims to:

- contribute to sustainable development;
- provide a positive framework for the future, which has been shaped by early discussion with a wide range of interests;
- avoid unnecessary duplication of the policies in the Local Plan; and
- contain policies that are clear and unambiguous.

(NPPF paragraph 16)

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) *National Planning Policy Framework*.

² Dixon Searle Partnership for NHDC (2016) *Local Plan Viability Assessment – Update*, page 5.

Viability

Consideration has also been given to whether the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan could undermine the viability of the proposals in the Local Plan (NPPF paragraph 34). This is unlikely, for a number of reasons:

At a broad level, the policies in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (including the site-specific proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area) have already been assessed for their viability, concluding that values in North Hertfordshire “typically support a good level of development viability”². The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose additional or alternative allocations, change the amount of development provided for or require significant new infrastructure to support the allocated sites.

Instead, the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Contains a number of policies that apply good planning principles to the circumstances of the neighbourhood area (such as responding to the important characteristics of the conservation area in new development, promoting good design that reflects the distinctive nature of the area and engaging communities in the development process). Because these are characteristics of good development, and supported by national policy, they should already be factored-in to development costs.
- Sets out limited additional safeguards to ensure that the development proposed in the Local Plan is sustainable, in relation to the specific impacts of particular sites and the cumulative effect on the neighbourhood area. For example, some improved footpath and cycle connections, strengthened landscape buffers and air quality monitoring in a limited number of locations. Given the scale of the sites and their potential impacts, these requirements should not be entirely unexpected, and their cost is likely to be very modest compared to the overall package of infrastructure needed for the sites’ delivery³.
- Supports a small number of improvements that could be taken forward if circumstances allow, including limited additional station parking and the

³ For example, existing estimates of the overall cost of the green infrastructure needed to support the North Hertfordshire Local Plan are very small compared to the contributions required for other service areas: see RS Regeneration for NHDC (2016; updated 2018) *Infrastructure Delivery Plan*.

potential use of land between Hartsfield School and the A505 for recreation. These are not set out as requirements, and are only likely to be delivered if they are viable.

Land acquisition forms a significant element of the costs incurred in many developments, but all the sites allocated for development at the edge of Baldock have been in Hertfordshire County Council's long-term ownership. In addition, North Hertfordshire District Council has not implemented the Community Infrastructure Levy, which removes another potential cost that could otherwise be incurred. A draft of the Neighbourhood Plan was shared with the County Council at an early stage, so that its potential policies could be considered in developing proposals for the sites in its ownership.

National planning guidance makes clear that plans should take a proportionate approach to considering viability. In view of the considerations outlined above, it is not considered that detailed viability testing of the Neighbourhood Plan's proposals is necessary⁴.

⁴ Planning practice guidance: Viability, paragraph 10-001-20180724

Table 1: Relationship between policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and those in the National Planning Policy Framework

Neighbourhood plan policies		Key paragraphs in the NPPF to which the Neighbourhood Plan policies relate
G1	Improving access and parking	No specific policies (but does not contradict the NPPF)
G2	Strategic green space	96 access to open space; 170a protecting and enhancing valued landscapes; 185 strategies for conserving and enhancing heritage assets
G3	Sustainable design	148-150 planning for a low carbon future and mitigating and adapting to climate change
G4	Baldock conservation area	184 conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; 185 strategies for conserving and enhancing heritage assets; 200 development affecting Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites
G5	Local heritage assets	184 conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; 189-90 assess the significance of heritage assets affected by development; 197 development affecting non-designated heritage assets
E1	Transport and air quality	104d provide for high quality walking and cycling networks; 109 preventing severe impacts on the road network; 110a prioritising pedestrian, cycle and then public transport movements; 110c places that are safe, secure and attractive; 181 compliance with air quality objectives and mitigating impacts
E2	Green infrastructure	91c facilities to enable and support healthy lifestyles; 96 access to open space; 98 protect and enhance public rights of way; 127e optimise site potential; 127f safe, inclusive and accessible places which promote health and well-being
E3	Creating well-designed places	124 importance of good design; 125-126 setting clear design expectations using appropriate tools; 127 design expectations; 129 tools and processes to assess design quality
E4	Managing construction impacts	170e preventing unacceptable pollution and improving local environmental conditions; 181 compliance with air quality objectives and mitigating impacts
E5	Building strong communities	39-40 pre-application engagement; 91 achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places; 92a plan positively for community facilities; 128 early engagement on design matters
E6	Development north of the railway	92a plan positively for community facilities; 104d provide for high quality walking and cycling networks; 110c places that are safe, secure and attractive; 127b visual attractiveness (including appropriate and effective landscaping); 127c sympathetic to local character and history; 141 Green Belt enhancement; 170a protecting and enhancing valued landscapes

E7	Royston Road	104d provide for high quality walking and cycling networks; 110c places that are safe, secure and attractive; 127b visual attractiveness (including appropriate and effective landscaping); 127c sympathetic to local character and history; 127d establish or maintain a strong sense of place;
E8	Cambrai Farm and south of Clothall Common	92a plan positively for community facilities; 97 safeguarding existing open space; 127b visual attractiveness (including appropriate and effective landscaping); 127c sympathetic to local character and history; 170e preventing unacceptable pollution and improving local environmental conditions; 178a site suitability (including ground conditions);
V1	Bygrave village	127c sympathetic to local character and history; 127d establish or maintain a strong sense of place; 145-146 development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt; 180c limit impact of light pollution
V2	Clothall and Luffenhall	78 location of rural housing; 127c sympathetic to local character and history; 127d establish or maintain a strong sense of place; 145-146 development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt; 180c limit impact of light pollution

Approach to considering sustainable development

Neighbourhood plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development is a broad concept, which at a very high level can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs⁵.

This means that the planning system as a whole should pursue three overarching (and interdependent) objectives⁶:

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities
- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

National policy expects these objectives to be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans, although there is no requirement for individual neighbourhood plans to address all of them (as the decision about whether to produce a neighbourhood plan, and its scope, is up to the local community).

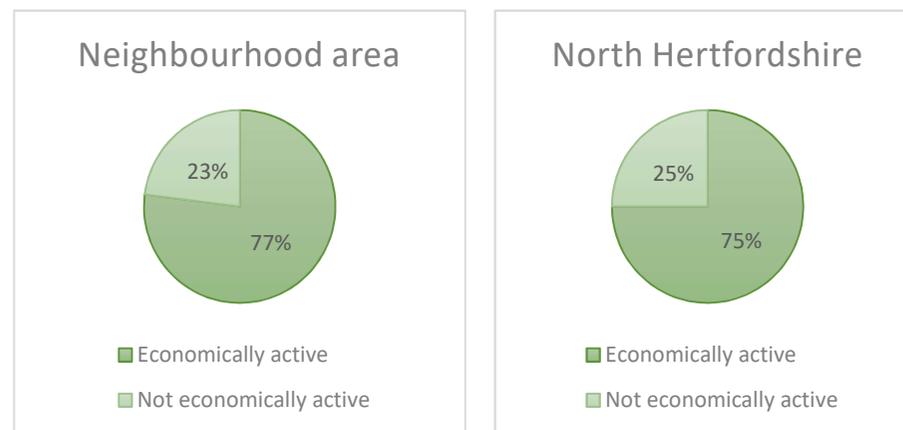
The Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan builds on relevant proposals in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, which have already been subject to a thorough process of strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal (which are legal or policy requirements for such documents). 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 out⁷.

However, to help demonstrate how the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, a sustainability check of its policies has been prepared (and which has been taken into account in refining the plan prior to consultation).

The sustainability check

To carry out the sustainability check, the draft policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have been assessed against a number of sustainable development objectives and questions. These are the same as those used to assess the policies in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. They cover the three high-level objectives set out in national planning policy (i.e. economic, social and environmental), but in more detail, and in a way which relates to the particular circumstances of North Hertfordshire. This appraisal framework is set out in Table 2.

It was considered appropriate to use this framework as the neighbourhood area is broadly similar to the district as a whole, comprising a market town and a rural hinterland containing a number of villages, and bisected by strategic transport routes. In socio-economic terms, the neighbourhood area and wider district are also very similar. For example, economic activity rates at the time of the last Census were almost the same:



Source: 2011 Census (usual residents aged 16 to 74)

⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) *National Planning Policy Framework*.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ See the screening determination prepared by North Hertfordshire District Council, which is available on our web site www.bbplan.co.uk.

Similarly, the Census showed instances of deprivation across the two areas as being almost identical: 30% of households in the neighbourhood area, and 31% in North Hertfordshire as a whole, were recorded as being deprived on one of the nationally-reported dimensions⁸; while 52% of households in the neighbourhood area and 51% in North Hertfordshire were not recorded against any of the dimensions.

In addition, none of the evidence reviewed or collected as part of the Neighbourhood Plan's preparation has suggested that any aspect of the appraisal framework used for the North Hertfordshire Local Plan is inappropriate in relation to the neighbourhood area, even though the Neighbourhood Plan itself is not seeking to address every aspect of sustainable development.

To carry out the check, each policy in the draft Neighbourhood Plan was assessed against the different objectives in the sustainability appraisal framework. A scoring system which is the same as that used for aspects of the Local Plan's sustainability appraisal was also used, to help ensure a consistent approach:

Positive compatibility with the sustainability objective	✓
Conflict with the sustainability objective	×
Uncertain impact on the sustainability objective	?
Neutral (policy not relevant to the sustainability objective)	0

Results of the sustainability check

The outcome of applying this framework to the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan is shown in Table 3. All of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies provide positive support for one or more of the sustainability objectives, and no conflicts with those objectives have been identified. A minority of the sustainability objectives are not supported by any of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies, but this is unsurprising given

that the plan does not attempt to deal comprehensively with all the planning issues facing the area.

Where uncertain impacts on the sustainability objectives have been identified, these relate mainly to whether positive benefits will be realised, as opposed to uncertainty about potential conflicts with those objectives.

The exception is policy G1 (improving access and parking), due to its uncertain impact on vehicle use and associated pollution. However, the improvements proposed by the policy are very modest, and are unlikely to have a significant impact on trip generation, especially in comparison to the potential movements generated by the allocations in the Local Plan. In addition, it is important that people living in the neighbourhood area – and especially outside Baldock itself – are able to make use of the railway station, as the alternative could be longer car-borne trips if they choose to drive for journeys to other centres rather than use the train. Additional measures to address the impact of commuter parking in Baldock and encourage sustainable journeys may be needed during the plan period (e.g. changes to on-street parking arrangements)⁹, but these are beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan itself.

Overall, therefore, it is concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the area.

⁸ These relate to aspects of employment, education, health and housing.

⁹ Markides Associates for NHDC (2018) *North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Strategy Review – Phase 2 Report – Draft*.

Table 2: Sustainability appraisal framework¹⁰

Sustainability objectives	Will the policy or proposal help to...
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	
1 Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain a diversified economy, with increased resilience to external shocks? • encourage new business to start-up and thrive in the District? • support and encourage the rural economy and diversification? • support and promote sustainable tourism in towns and rural areas? • improve the quality of local jobs available to people in the District? • increase the skills base? • make the cost of housing more affordable to those employed in the District?
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS	
2(a) Minimise the development of greenfield land and other land with high environmental and amenity value?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the use of brownfield sites and if brownfield sites are not available, land of low environmental and amenity value? • maximise reuse of vacant buildings and derelict land? • minimise the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land? • reduce quantity of unremediated contaminated land?
2(b) Provide access to green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide/improve access for all residents of the District to green spaces? • provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wildlife and wild places? • maintain/improve the public right of way network?
2(c) Deliver more sustainable location patterns and reduce the use of motor vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locate development so as to reduce the need to travel? • reduce car reliance, encourage walking, cycle, bus, and train use? • reduce road freight movements? • avoid exacerbating local traffic congestion? • provide affordable, accessible public transport in towns and in rural areas?
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	
3(a) Protect and enhance biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect habitats and species, especially those designated as being of importance, and provide opportunities for creation of new habitats? • support and maintain extent of wetland habitat and river habitats?
3(b) Protect and enhance landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect and enhance landscapes, especially those of historic, recreational or amenity value, and within the Chilterns AONB?

¹⁰ CAG Consultants for NHDC (2018) *Sustainability Appraisal of the North Herts Submission Local Plan: Modifications Following Public Examination – SA Report Addendum*

Sustainability objectives	Will the policy or proposal help to...
3(c) Conserve and where appropriate, enhance the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve and enhance the historic built character of the District's town's and villages? • protect sites of archaeological and historic importance, whether designated or not?
3(d) Reduce pollution from any source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the water quality of rivers and groundwater supplies? • achieve good air quality? • reduce ambient noise, especially from traffic? • reduce light pollution in the District? • protect soil quality?
CLIMATE CHANGE	
4(a) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimise energy consumption by transport and in buildings? • increase proportion of energy generated by renewable sources? • encourage use of local suppliers and the consumption of local produce?
4(b) Improve the District's ability to adapt to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce vulnerability to climate change, exploit any benefits? • avoid development in areas at risk from flooding?
A JUST SOCIETY	
5(a) Share benefits of prosperity fairly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce disparities in income levels? • contribute to regeneration of deprived areas (estates in Letchworth and Hitchin)? • provide employment and other opportunities for unemployed, especially long term unemployed and the disabled? • encourage entrepreneurial activity in deprived areas?
5(b) Provide access to services and facilities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide access to services and facilities without need to use a car? • retain rural services, especially shops, post offices, schools, health centres and bus services? • recognise the needs of specific groups such as minority ethnic groups, the young, the elderly and the disabled?
5(c) Promote community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support development of voluntary sector? • encourage development of community run business? • encourage people's feelings of belonging, for example by providing community meeting places? • recognise and value cultural and ethnic diversity?
5(d) Increase access to decent and affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help improve the quality of the housing stock and reduce the number of unfit homes? • increase access to affordable housing, particularly for the young, the disabled and key workers?
5(e) Reduce crime rates and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage crime reduction, particularly through the appropriate design of new development? • help reduce the fear of crime?
5(f) Improve conditions and services that engender good health and reduce health inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help promote healthy lifestyles? • improve access to health services by means other than private cars? • reduce ambient noise near residential and amenity areas?

Sustainability objectives	Will the policy or proposal help to...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce road accidents? • reduce accidents and damage from fires?
5(g) Increase participation in education and life-long learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve access to skills learning by young people? • improve access to skills learning by adults?
5(h) Maintain and improve culture, leisure and recreational activities that are available to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase access to culture, leisure and recreational activities?
RESOURCE USE AND WASTE	
6(a) Use natural resources efficiently; reuse, use recycled where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimise the demand for raw materials? • encourage sustainable design, use of sustainable building materials and minimise wastage caused by construction methods? • limit water consumption to levels supportable by natural process and storage systems? • protect groundwater resources? • promote sustainable drainage systems? • reduce minerals extracted and imported?
6(b) Reduce waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce, reuse or recycle waste generated?
TOWN CENTRES	
7 Promote sustainable urban living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage wider range of shops and services in town centres? • encourage more people to live in town centres? • encourage mixed use developments in town centres? • improve transport connections in, and to, town centres? • encourage synergy in land uses, which supports the continued and enhanced viability of a wide range of shops and services? • protect or improve the quality of the public realm in towns?

Table 3: Assessment of Neighbourhood Plan policies against sustainability objectives

GENERAL POLICIES

Sustainability objectives	Predicted effect of each policy on the sustainability objectives					Comments
	G1 Improving access and parking	G2 Strategic green space	G3 Sustainable design	G4 Baldock conservation area	G5 Local heritage assets	
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY						
1 Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS						
2(a) Minimise the development of greenfield land and other land with high environmental and amenity value?	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
2(b) Provide access to green spaces	0	✓	0	0	0	Policy G2's proposals for Walls Field create new green space and recreational opportunities.
2(c) Deliver more sustainable location patterns and reduce the use of motor vehicles	?	0	0	0	0	The effect of Policy G1 on car travel is uncertain, but any impact is unlikely to be significant.
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION						
3(a) Protect and enhance biodiversity	0	?	0	0	0	Policy G2's proposals for Walls Field could deliver net gains for biodiversity, depending on the uses and habitats provided for.
3(b) Protect and enhance landscapes	0	✓	0	0	0	Policy G2 seeks to protect and enhance an important landscape feature (the strategic green corridor within and beyond the town).
3(c) Conserve and where appropriate, enhance the historic environment	0	✓	0	✓	✓	Policies G2, G3 and G4 all provide additional policy support for identified heritage assets.
3(d) Reduce pollution from any source	?	0	0	0	0	The effect of Policy G1 on car travel (and associated pollution) is uncertain, but any impact is unlikely to be significant.
CLIMATE CHANGE						
4(a) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	0	0	✓	0	0	This objective is addressed directly by policy G3.
4(b) Improve the District's ability to adapt to climate change	0	0	✓	0	0	This objective is addressed directly by policy G3.
A JUST SOCIETY						

Sustainability objectives	Predicted effect of each policy on the sustainability objectives					Comments
	G1 Improving access and parking	G2 Strategic green space	G3 Sustainable design	G4 Baldock conservation area	G5 Local heritage assets	
5(a) Share benefits of prosperity fairly	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
5(b) Provide access to services and facilities for all	✓	0	0	0	0	Policy G1 seeks to improve access to certain key services.
5(c) Promote community cohesion	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
5(d) Increase access to decent and affordable housing	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
5(e) Reduce crime rates and fear of crime	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
5(f) Improve conditions and services that engender good health and reduce health inequalities	0	?	0	0	0	Policy G2 could have an indirect benefit through the provision of improved recreation opportunities.
5(g) Increase participation in education and life-long learning	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
5(h) Maintain and improve culture, leisure and recreational activities that are available to all	0	✓	0	0	0	Policy G2 supports the provision of new recreation opportunities.
RESOURCE USE AND WASTE						
6(a) Use natural resources efficiently; reuse, use recycled where possible	0	0	✓	0	0	Policy G3 will help to encourage efficient use of natural resources.
6(b) Reduce waste	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
TOWN CENTRES						
7 Promote sustainable urban living	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.

POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC SITES

Sustainability objectives	Predicted effect of each policy on the sustainability objectives								Comments
	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	
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY									
1 Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS									
2(a) Minimise the development of greenfield land and other land with high environmental and amenity value?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
2(b) Provide access to green spaces	0	✓	0	0	0	0	0	✓	This is addressed directly by policies E2 and E8 (the latter protecting an important area of existing open space).
2(c) Deliver more sustainable location patterns and reduce the use of motor vehicles	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	Policies E1, E6 and E7 contain measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport, while E5 encourages the early provision of services.
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION									
3(a) Protect and enhance biodiversity	0	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	Policies E2, E6, E7 and E8 all contain proposals that will help to protect or enhance biodiversity.
3(b) Protect and enhance landscapes	0	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	Policies E2, E6, E7 and E8 all contain proposals that will help

Sustainability objectives	Predicted effect of each policy on the sustainability objectives								Comments
	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	
									to protect or enhance landscapes.
3(c) Conserve and where appropriate, enhance the historic environment	0	0	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	The policy and design principles associated with policy E3, and specific safeguards in E6, all support this objective.
3(d) Reduce pollution from any source	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	0	✓	Policies E1, E4 and E8 all contain measures to help reduce certain types of pollution.
CLIMATE CHANGE									
4(a) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
4(b) Improve the District's ability to adapt to climate change	0	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	Policy E2, and the design principles linked to policy E3, contain measures that support this objective.
A JUST SOCIETY									
5(a) Share benefits of prosperity fairly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
5(b) Provide access to services and facilities for all	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	0	0	Policies E1, E5 and E6 should improve access to services, either through their early provision or by supporting new walking, cycling or public transport routes.
5(c) Promote community cohesion	0	0	0	0	✓	0	0	0	Policy E5 contains specific requirements to help build strong communities.

Sustainability objectives	Predicted effect of each policy on the sustainability objectives								Comments
	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	
5(d) Increase access to decent and affordable housing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
5(e) Reduce crime rates and fear of crime	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	Some of the design principles linked to policy E3 could help to create environments that deter crime.
5(f) Improve conditions and services that engender good health and reduce health inequalities	0	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	0	The support for recreational opportunities in policy E2, and for the early provision of community facilities in policy E5, both support this objective.
5(g) Increase participation in education and life-long learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
5(h) Maintain and improve culture, leisure and recreational activities that are available to all	0	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	✓	Aspects of policies E2, E5 and E8 provide support for this objective.
RESOURCE USE AND WASTE									
6(a) Use natural resources efficiently; reuse, use recycled where possible	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
6(b) Reduce waste	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
TOWN CENTRES									
7 Promote sustainable urban living	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	Some of the design principles linked to policy E3 provide indirect support for this objective.

POLICIES FOR THE VILLAGES

Sustainability objectives	Predicted effect of each policy on the sustainability objectives		Comments
	V1 Bygrave village	V2 Clothall and Luffenhall	
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY			
1 Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS			
2(a) Minimise the development of greenfield land and other land with high environmental and amenity value?	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
2(b) Provide access to green spaces	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
2(c) Deliver more sustainable location patterns and reduce the use of motor vehicles	✓	✓	These policies limit development in places where growth would be likely to encourage increased car travel.
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION			
3(a) Protect and enhance biodiversity	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
3(b) Protect and enhance landscapes	✓	0	Policy V1 preserves the gap between Upper and Lower Bygrave, which is an important aspect of their landscape setting.
3(c) Conserve and where appropriate, enhance the historic environment	✓	✓	Both policies seek to maintain the distinctive characters of the villages, much of which derives from their historic development pattern and heritage assets.
3(d) Reduce pollution from any source	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
CLIMATE CHANGE			
4(a) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
4(b) Improve the District’s ability to adapt to climate change	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
A JUST SOCIETY			
5(a) Share benefits of prosperity fairly	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
5(b) Provide access to services and facilities for all	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
5(c) Promote community cohesion	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
5(d) Increase access to decent and affordable housing	?	?	Both policies make clear that limited affordable housing on exception sites may be appropriate, but this will depend on local needs and whether suitable sites exist.
5(e) Reduce crime rates and fear of crime	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.

5(f) Improve conditions and services that engender good health and reduce health inequalities	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
5(g) Increase participation in education and life-long learning	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
5(h) Maintain and improve culture, leisure and recreational activities that are available to all	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
RESOURCE USE AND WASTE			
6(a) Use natural resources efficiently; reuse, use recycled where possible	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.
6(b) Reduce waste	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that the plan seeks to influence.
TOWN CENTRES			
7 Promote sustainable urban living	0	0	This is not an aspect of sustainable development that these policies seek to influence.

Approach to considering conformity with the development plan

Neighbourhood plans should be in ‘general conformity’ with any pre-existing strategic policies that form part of the development plan for the area. In this case, this means the new North Hertfordshire Local Plan, which contains a set of 19 strategic policies (see Annex C of the Neighbourhood Plan for a full list of those which are relevant to the neighbourhood area)¹¹. ‘General conformity’ is a broad test: it does not mean, or require, that neighbourhood plan policies replicate those strategic policies. It is more a question of the extent to which a neighbourhood plan upholds the general principles in those strategic policies (and can justify any departure from them).

The Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in parallel with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, and the aim from the outset has been to add additional safeguards to those in the Local Plan, rather than provide an alternative strategy (which would be unlikely to comply with the ‘general conformity’ test). It is designed to be consistent with both the strategic policies and the other policies in the Local Plan, but in a way that provides additional detail to help maintain the character of the neighbourhood area and ensure that new development is as sustainable as possible.

The basis for each policy in the Neighbourhood Plan, including its relationship with relevant Local Plan policies, is explained in the supporting text in the Neighbourhood Plan itself. Discussions with officers at North Hertfordshire District Council took place at regular intervals during the preparation of both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan to help ensure that the policies are aligned.

The Local Plan gap analysis

As well as maintaining general conformity, a key consideration in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan was the extent to which it could usefully add to the policies in

the Local Plan, and in doing so help to address issues that were of concern to the local community.

To assess this in a structured way, a ‘gap analysis’ of the policies in the emerging Local Plan was carried out, and forms part of the evidence that supports the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The results of this analysis are summarised in Table 4 overleaf.

¹¹ At the time this draft Basic Conditions Statement was prepared, the new North Hertfordshire Local Plan had not been adopted. It had, however, reached an advanced stage (the examination having concluded, and main modifications consulted on). It is therefore considered to be the appropriate framework to consider general conformity against, especially as the saved policies that remain

from the previous *District Local Plan No.2 With Alterations* (1996) are dated and limited in scope. To the extent that these saved policies remain relevant, they are not considered to raise any issues in relation to the general conformity of this neighbourhood plan with the existing statutory development plan.

Table 4: Gap analysis of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan

Issues	Opportunities
<p>Vision and objectives: The Local Plan contains a broad vision and objectives for North Hertfordshire, but does not provide a distinctive vision for Baldock, despite the scale of change proposed. Similarly, it provides only very brief factual descriptions of Bygrave and Clothall villages (and nothing on Luffenhall).</p>	<p>a) To provide a vision for Baldock’s future, and associated principles for new development (e.g. measures to help keep Baldock ‘one town’ rather than two communities north/south of the railway).</p> <p>b) To provide a more detailed policy framework for the villages within the neighbourhood area, which recognises their distinctive characters.</p>
<p>Major developments: The Local Plan sets out various requirements that site BA1 (North of Baldock) should meet, including infrastructure. It also sets out some policies for the other major proposals at Baldock but does not consider how they will work together.</p>	<p>To provide a more cohesive framework for the other development sites which addresses their cumulative impacts and opportunities (such as improved gateways and corridors into the town, and links between the sites and neighbouring areas of development).</p>
<p>Design: The Local Plan policies are very broad, rather than setting out specific principles to guide the form of development in a way that reflects the character of each place. The supporting Supplementary Planning Document on design is out of date and does not provide visual or place-specific guidance.</p>	<p>To set out key design principles for the major developments proposed in the Local Plan (e.g. street types, building heights, materials), and for the neighbourhood area more generally.</p>
<p>Heritage: The Local Plan contains general policies to safeguard listed buildings and conservation areas, buildings of local interest and archaeological sites; but these assets are not shown on the proposals map, and the policies on conservation areas and buildings of local interest could be more comprehensive.</p>	<p>a) To illustrate the location of nationally and locally designated heritage assets.</p> <p>b) To set out additional principles for safeguarding buildings of local interest.</p>
<p>Green space: The Local Plan deals inconsistently with areas of green space within Baldock, with one area (opposite Tapps) designated as ‘urban open land’ and others incorporated within development allocations or left as ‘white land’, albeit subject to a general policy of protection. Specific areas of new green space – for sport, informal recreation or allotments – are not proposed as part of the site allocations (and no provision is made for indoor sport).</p>	<p>a) To provide clearer, more specific, protection for important areas of green space.</p> <p>b) To set out requirements for new green space and recreational facilities in association with the major development proposed in the Local Plan.</p>
<p>Environmental impacts: The Local Plan contains general policies designed to avoid or mitigate the impact that new development could have on air quality, flood risk, water courses and protected species; but does not deal in specific terms with all the potential issues that are particular to the neighbourhood area and the sites proposed for development.</p>	<p>To set out more specific safeguards that new development should comply with.</p>

Issues	Opportunities
<p>Community impacts: The Local Plan contains proposals to secure improved community facilities in association with new development, but does not address some of the wider issues such as engaging the community in the growth of the town, and mitigating adverse impacts while construction takes place.</p>	<p>To set out policies that address the potential wider impacts of major development on the local community.</p>
<p>Village and rural development: Upper and Lower Bygrave and Clothall villages are ‘washed over’ by the Green Belt, while Luffenhall does not form part of the settlement hierarchy and lies in the rural area beyond the Green Belt. The Local Plan does not provide a particularly clear framework for the future of these places, and nor does it contain policies that deal directly with the potential impact of site BA1 on Upper and Lower Bygrave.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To clarify and provide more specific policies on development in the villages. b) To address the impacts that development north of Baldock could have on Upper and Lower Bygrave.

Approach to considering conformity with EU obligations

There are three EU Directives that are most relevant in considering the Neighbourhood Plan's compliance, which are summarised in Table 5. As the final column of the table demonstrates, the plan does not pose any issues of non-conformity with these obligations. No other EU Directives that could pose conformity issues have been identified, taking into consideration the proposals in the plan.

Table 5: Conformity with relevant EU Directives

Directives	Purpose	Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan
Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (often referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive)	Seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment, by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing certain plans or programmes that could have significant environmental effects.	The Neighbourhood Plan builds on the proposals in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, which has already been subject to strategic environmental assessment. 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 out. A screening determination has been provided by North Hertfordshire District Council to this effect, a copy of which is submitted alongside this basic conditions statement.
Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (often referred to as the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives respectively)	These aim to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species. Their requirements (and subsequent amendments) are reflected in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.	There are no sites within the neighbourhood area which are of international importance for habitats or species (or outside the area which are likely to be affected by the proposals in the plan), which is demonstrated by the screening assessment of the Local Plan ¹² .

¹² See NHDC (2018) *North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Habitats Regulation Assessment: Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment*.

