



Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan

PRE-SUBMISSION SUMMARY

January 2022



Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Area and Policies Map

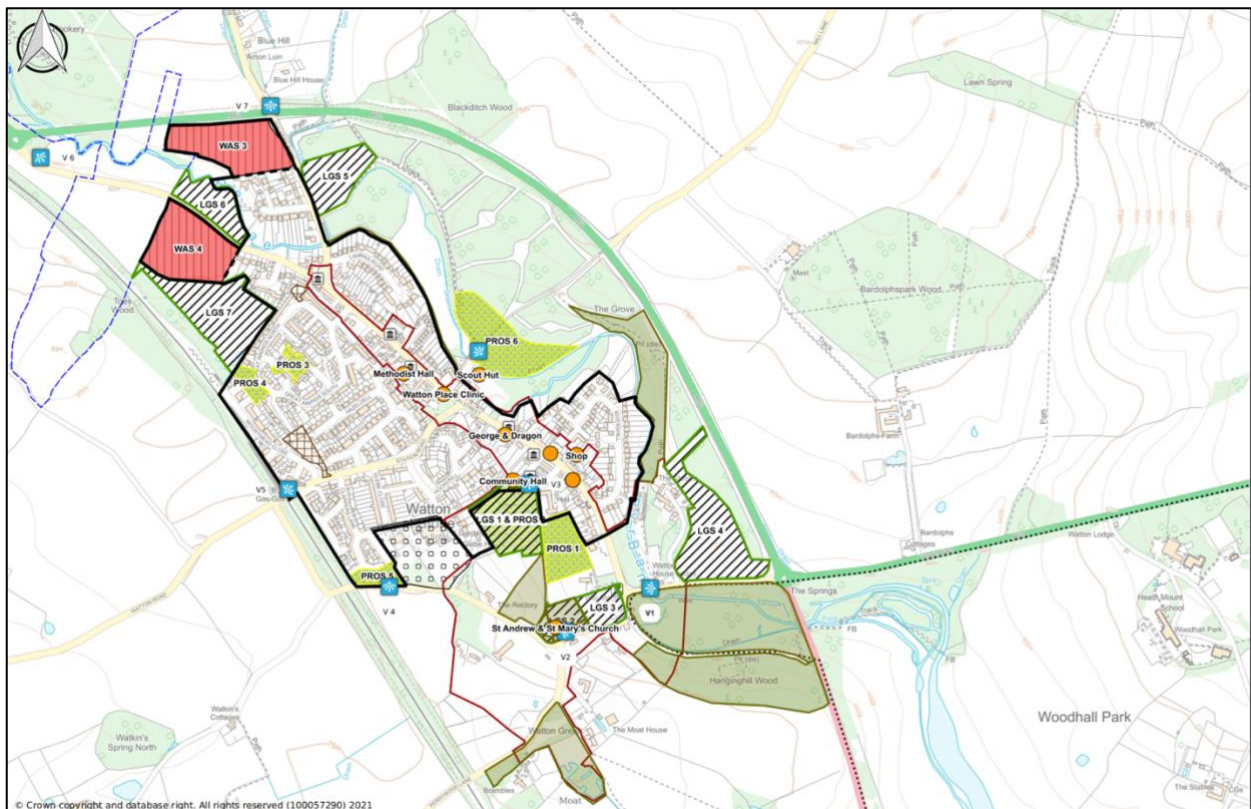


Figure 1 Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map Extract



Figure 2 Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map Key and Neighbourhood Plan Area

Background to Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan

The decision to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Watton-at-Stone was taken at a village meeting in November 2015. In January 2016 a Steering Committee was chosen to lead the development of the plan, on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan area includes the settlement of Watton-at-Stone, which is in the Green Belt (see Map, page 2). The Neighbourhood Plan gives us a much greater say in any development in the parish. It allows us to influence where new development is located and what it might look like.

In spring 2016, the Steering Committee held a consultation to collect evidence and ideas from people living and working in the parish. Following this, the Steering Committee hosted an exhibition in November 2016 to ask for views on the emerging themes and policies.

In June 2017 the Committee commissioned a technical site assessment to evaluate the suitability of various locations in the village for further development. In November 2018, the East Herts District Plan clarified that Watton-at-Stone must allow for at least 92 dwellings to be built before 2033. Due to the lack of sufficient brownfield sites, some will need to be built on what is presently Green Belt, which would be released and designated in the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan.

This is a summary of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan. The full document, with a complete set of photographs and maps, and much more information, is available at <https://watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/>

We are now seeking your views on the Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The consultation is open from 17 January 2022 until midnight on 6 March 2022. Information on how to respond is given on page 18. When the plan has been assessed by an independent examiner, there will be a public referendum. If the Plan is adopted it will have the same legal status as the East Herts District Plan and will influence planning decisions impacting on the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan area between 2022 and 2033.



Figure 3 Facilities and assets (above) Images of Housing Site Allocations (below)



Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

Housing Development Strategy

Objective 1: Deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of WAS to 2033.

Objective 2: Ensure that brownfield sites are prioritised for new housing developments where possible.

Objective 3: Ensure any new housing is in keeping with the surrounding area, presenting favourable vistas, enriching the area, lying low in the Beane Valley and protecting the village's historic character and rural identity.

Objective 4: Promote high-quality design with a mix of house types suitable for the future needs of the village.

Objective 5: Ensure housing density balances the sensitive semi-rural setting with the efficient use of land and preservation of high-quality agricultural land.

Objective 6: Ensure accessibility to bus stops, the school, and village facilities, promoting safe public streets and spaces.

Objective 7: Seek to reduce traffic impacts of development and ensure appropriate parking solutions for it.

Objective 8: Seek on-going improvements to utility infrastructure and digital connectivity including full fibre broadband.

Objective 9: Ensure that development proposals supported in this plan, on the edge of the village, create a new clearly defined Green Belt boundary.

Sustainable, Affordable, Accessible Transport

Objective 10: Encourage the use of, and lobby for better, sustainable transport networks including cycle routes, footways and public footpaths.

Community Facilities and Amenities

Objective 11: Support the village's key community services and facilities.

Objective 12: Ensure adequate provision for Parish children to attend the local school.

Objective 13: Facilitate the development of new football facilities and encourage appropriate use of Green Belt for sensitively designed outdoor leisure.

Natural and Historic Environment

Objective 14: Make the most of Watton-at-Stone's rural aspect and landscape setting, protecting key views.

Objective 15: Maintain and enhance nature conservation, wildlife and biodiversity.

Objective 16: Protect the historic fabric, character, and rural identity of the village and Parish of Watton-at-Stone, including listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets and the Conservation Area and its setting.

Support for Business

Objective 17: Support appropriate development for local businesses and employment opportunities, including home working.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Housing Development Strategy

WAS 1 Sustainable Housing

I. Sites to accommodate at least 92 homes have been identified, within or adjacent to the village development boundary, to enable the delivery of a sustainable housing strategy in accordance with the East Herts District Plan and manage housing growth tailored to the needs and context of the parish. These homes may be built between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2033. The target will be achieved through a combination of the following:

- Completion of 4 dwellings since 1st April 2017 (3/13/1503/FP, 3/15/0719/FUL and 3/16/1227/FUL);
- Construction of 3 dwellings with planning permission:
 - 3/19/2417/FUL 37 Station Road - Erection of 2 dwellings to include, 4 car parking spaces, 2 garden/cycle stores and associated accesses
 - 3/19/2222/FUL Land adjacent to BT exchange, High Street - Erection of 1, 3 bedroomed dwelling with garage and parking;
- Two sites capable of accommodating up to 60 homes each, see the two housing site allocation Policies WAS 3 Walkern Road and WAS 4 Stevenage Road;
- Development of Brownfield Sites within the village boundary (see Policy WAS 5).

II. The two site allocations WAS 3 and WAS 4 provide for a greater number of homes than required in the District Plan given the encouragement in East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1, to accommodate additional development, especially where it contributes to the delivery of community benefits. These benefits will be sought according to Policy WAS 26 Spending Priorities and may be:

- in kind;
- as a consequence of providing additional footfall;
- through Section 106 Agreements or other negotiated benefits.

WAS 2 Amendment to Village Development Boundary/Green Belt Boundary

I. The designated Watton-at-Stone Village Development Boundary separates the village from the Green Belt. East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 allows a Group 1 village preparing a neighbourhood plan to redraw its boundaries to accommodate additional housing development. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF allows neighbourhood plans to make changes to the Green Belt Boundary established in the strategic policies, where needed. The Green Belt Boundary is amended in order to extend the Village Development Boundary to include the two housing site allocations WAS 3 Walkern Road and WAS 4 Stevenage Road and as detailed on the Policies Map.

II. The Village Development Boundary will follow the Green Belt Boundary.

WAS 3 Housing Site Allocation Walkern Road

Development of this site will be supported, provided that it complies with the general design policies, the Watton-at-Stone Design Code, and other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and meets all the following specific criteria:

- (a) Given the site area and the target of 30 units per hectare, this site is suitable for 60 homes.
- (b) The frontage and set-back of the development along Walkern Road should follow the line of existing housing to the south. The space between Walkern Road and the housing must be landscaped and not be dominated by parking.
- (c) At the entrance of the site on Walkern Road, a scheme to reduce traffic speed is essential. A pedestrian/cyclist crossing point, as part of the circular path, to link to the opposite open green space and a new linking footpath along Walkern Road towards the village centre are also required.
- (d) Buildings should not be over 2 storeys in height or 2.5 storeys where this aligns with the Design Code exceptions.
- (e) The view on arrival into the village (Protected View 7, see Policy WAS 18) means that the design must ensure that the new buildings do not break the horizon line of the village and also that the buildings and landscape add interest in the foreground of the view.
- (f) A mix of house types should be included, and consideration given to ensuring positive facades are achieved overlooking public and communal space and that the development as a whole is welcoming with a well-proportioned hierarchy of streets and spaces.
- (g) An efficient, effective and well-maintained SUDs system should be designed and implemented to ensure no polluting run-off flows into the River Beane and to provide a multi-functional recreational space, with high ecological value, overlooked by the new homes.
- (h) The public spaces should have well-designed, implemented and maintained landscaping and tree planting which provide structure, interest and character. Paths and green corridors will connect to existing green areas beyond the development site.
- (i) The development must include a connecting footpath and central communal green space that links from the entrance of the site to a new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Beane, as part of the wider circular path around the village (see Policy WAS 10).
- (j) In accordance with East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 III, the Neighbourhood Plan is accommodating additional development to the policy requirement, which will deliver community benefits. Specifically, this development will provide a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Beane and an adequately lit pedestrian and cycle path that is sensitive to the requirements of nocturnal wildlife, across the field to the Stevenage Road to connect with the pedestrian access to Moorymead Close and the railway station provided through site WAS 4 Stevenage Road (see Policy WAS 10);
- (k) A management plan to ensure the upkeep for the new bridge and pedestrian/cycle path must be put in place before the completion of the development.
- (l) The open space requirement must be located centrally within the development and linked to the new through path.



Figure 4 Walkern Road Site

WAS 4 Housing Site Allocation Stevenage Road

Development of this site will be supported, provided that it complies with the general design policies, the Watton-at-Stone Design Code and other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and meets all the following specific criteria:

- (a) Given the site area and the target of 30 units per hectare, this site is suitable for 60 homes.
- (b) The frontage and set-back of the development along Stevenage Road should follow the line of existing housing to the west. The space between Stevenage Road and the housing must be landscaped and not be dominated by parking.
- (c) At the entrance of the site on Stevenage Road, a scheme to reduce traffic speed is essential. A pedestrian/cyclist crossing point and a linking footpath along Stevenage Road towards the village centre are also required.
- (d) Buildings should not be over two storeys in height and should be built on the flat ground not higher than the 65-metre contour line.
- (e) The view on arrival into the village (Protected View 6 and 7, see Policy WAS 18) means the design must ensure that the new buildings do not break the horizon line of the village and also the buildings and landscape add interest in the foreground of the view.
- (f) The site lies in an area of Archaeological Significance and appropriate mitigation will be required.
- (g) A mix of house types should be included and consideration given to ensuring positive facades are achieved overlooking public and communal space and that the development as a whole is welcoming, with a well-proportioned hierarchy of streets and spaces.
- (h) An efficient, effective and well-maintained SUDs system should be designed and implemented to ensure no polluting run-off flows into the River Beane and to provide a multi-functional recreational space, with high ecological value, overlooked by the new homes.
- (i) The public spaces should have well-designed, implemented and maintained landscaping and tree planting which provide structure, interest and character. Paths and green corridors will connect to existing green areas beyond the development site.
- (j) The development must include a connecting footpath and central communal green space that links from the crossing point on the Stevenage Road (towards the new pedestrian/cycle bridge to be provided under Policy WAS 3), up to the southernmost part linking to Moorymead Close and from the to the train station, as part of the wider circular path around the village (see Policy WAS 10). The path should be adequately lit for pedestrians and cyclists in a manner that is sensitive to the requirements of nocturnal wildlife.
- (k) The open space requirement must be located central to the development and linked to the new through path.
- (l) A new permanent village boundary should be created to form the western edge of the site along the boundary with Aston parish with appropriate planting of native species to soften the edge of the development.
- (m) In accordance with East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 III, the Neighbourhood Plan is accommodating additional development to the policy requirement, which will deliver community benefits. This development will provide land for additional football provision on land on Mill Lane in the same ownership (see Policies WAS 15 and WAS 16).



Figure 5 Stevenage Road Site

WAS 5 Brownfield Sites

I. Development of brownfield sites within the village development boundary will be supported, subject to other policies in this plan, as shown on the Policies Map (Page 2) as follows:

- Station Road, former Hertfordshire County Council Depot, to accommodate up to 15 homes
- Great Innings car park to provide up to two homes and an overflow car park for Great Innings residents. A parking management plan to improve the safety and parking on street in this location will be required in accordance with the Benefits Project Plan. This will be achieved through a legal agreement to improve visibility at the junction, preventing parking through a carefully designed landscape scheme.

II. Two other 'brownfield' sites on previously developed land within the Green Belt have been identified as suitable for development in accordance with paragraph 145(g) of the NPPF, where the redevelopment of buildings (excluding temporary buildings) will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing buildings or not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt where that development would contribute to an identified local affordable housing need. These sites are:

- The Mill, on Mill Lane, for mixed use, including employment, which could include a building of exceptional design in this sensitive location adjacent to The Lammas. This site has been abandoned for some time and a creative response for a prominent building with a potential mix of uses and consideration of the improvement of Mill Lane would be supported.
- Perrywood Lane, former haulage yard, for housing. This site could support up to 2 new homes and offers the potential to be contemporary, sustainable and of architectural value given its location on the edge of the village.



Figure 6 Brownfield Sites

WAS 6 Design Code

The Watton-at-Stone Design Code is relevant to all developments in Watton-at-Stone. The Code forms a statutory part of the Neighbourhood Plan and should be used to prepare applications for planning permission in the Parish (see Section 5 Development Strategy Masterplan and Design Codes of the Neighbourhood Plan).

WAS 7 Housing Mix

I. Housing mix, as regards tenure, types and sizes, should be in accordance with current and future local housing need and housing market assessments. The priority for smaller affordable homes, one and two-bedroomed, should be recognised in the housing mix.

II. Affordable housing for sale or First Homes should be provided in accordance with current government guidance or a local policy position set by East Herts Council.



Figure 7 Examples of Housing in Watton-at-Stone

WAS 8 Rural Affordable Housing

I. For the purposes of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, Local Needs Affordable Housing on rural exception sites will be allocated to persons who:

- (a) have been resident in the Parish of Watton-at-Stone for the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application for the affordable housing unit or who have at any time previously resided in the Parish for at least five years, or;
- (b) have a strong local connection with the Parish of Watton-at-Stone through a close family connection or being employed within the Parish.

II. If no applicant qualifies under the above criteria, those who are resident in, or have a strong local connection with neighbouring rural parishes will be eligible. In the event that there are no nominations from the rural parishes, then nominations from those in greatest need from any location within the District will be acceptable.

Sustainable, Affordable, Accessible Transport

WAS 9 Sustainable Transport Provision

I. Maintaining and developing high-quality bus and community transport services should be integral to all new developments and should complement the provision of safe walking and cycling routes. These include well-designed and well-located stopping places for existing residents and to serve the new housing developments, and better facilities at bus stops such as real time information and raised kerbing.

II. Projects for such developments e.g. extending the provision of bus services to new housing, could be funded through Section 106 contributions or other funding mechanisms.

III. All new dwellings shall have charging points for electric vehicles or appropriate electricity infrastructure to facilitate installation of a charging point, in accordance with the Design Code (Policy WAS 6).



Figure 8 Public Transport in Watton-at-Stone

WAS 10 Proposed New Footpath/Cycle Connections

The following three route connections for pedestrians/cyclists have been identified during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and would improve connectivity throughout the village. Proposals that would facilitate the delivery of these links will be considered favourably, subject to other policies in this plan. The implementation of these connecting routes could be funded through Section 106 contributions or other funding mechanisms:

- Pedestrian/cycle route to/from the railway station connecting Moorymead Close/Great Innings to Stevenage Road crossing LGS 7, through WAS 4, crossing LGS 6, across the river by a bridge, and through WAS 3 connecting to existing rights of way east of Walkern Road
- Route through the Children's Centre car park to provide a permanent link, available at all times, from Gatekeepers Meadow to Rectory Close linking to the existing public footpath to School Lane
- Link from Gatekeepers Meadow to Church Lane.

Provision of Amenities

WAS 11 Valued Community Facilities

I. Existing facilities valued by the community are identified on the Policies Map and listed below:

1. George and Dragon public house
2. Londis supermarket and Post Office
3. Scout hut and land at Mill Lane
4. The Nigel Poulton Community Hall
5. The Memorial Hall (High Street)
6. The Methodist Church
7. Watton Place Clinic
8. The Bull public house
9. St Andrew and St Mary's Church

Each facility and the reason why they are valued is set out in an analysis available on the Neighbourhood Plan website at watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/ and in Appendix C – Valued Community Facilities of the Neighbourhood Plan.

II. Permission for a change of use of these facilities would need to be supported by evidence that the facilities were unused, or that their active use was to be replaced elsewhere and would still benefit village residents, in accordance with East Herts District Plan Policy CFLR8. Alternative provision should be provided within walking or cycling distance of the existing facility.



Figure 9 From left, the George and Dragon, Londis and the Scout Hut

WAS 12 Enhanced Community Facilities

Proposals to improve or enhance community facilities will be supported when they improve the range, quality, suitability and accessibility of facilities for residents, and when the benefits of development outweigh any disadvantages. Contributions towards enhanced youth facilities, football facilities and accessible GP services, collected pursuant to East Herts District Plan Policy CFLR7, will be welcomed to address any shortfall in the existing provision within the Neighbourhood Plan Area which would be exacerbated as a result of the development.

WAS 13 Maintaining and Improving Health Services

The existing doctors' surgery currently operating from Watton Place Clinic, 60 High Street, also provides an enhanced offer which includes a pharmacist and a private dentist. The provision of these health services should be retained or enhanced. Any loss of the existing facility will be strongly resisted unless new facilities are secured before the closure of the existing surgery premises. Proposals for the GP surgery to relocate to alternative premises will be supported, provided it is in a suitable accessible location convenient to the Parish and adequate car parking is provided.

WAS 14 School Site

The school site identified on the Policies Map (Page 2) will be reserved for any required school expansion, for outdoor activities or additional buildings related to the school or dual use school/community facilities.

WAS 15 Sports Facilities

Provision of new or improved facilities for football will be supported in accordance with other policies in this plan. The area of the village where it is proposed these facilities, particularly for young people, should be concentrated in the open space adjacent to Mill Lane. An indicative drawing showing how the site could be arranged is shown below. The land has been allocated as Protected Recreational Open Space (see also Policy WAS 16).



Figure 10 Image of Improved Sports Facilities

WAS 16 Protected Recreational Open Space

I. The following sites, shown on the Policies Map (Page 2) are allocated as Protected Recreational Open Space:

- PROS1: The Allotments (off School Lane)
- PROS2: The Meadow (School Lane)
- PROS3: Great Innings Green Space
- PROS4: Great Innings Recreation Area
- PROS5: Gatekeepers Green Space
- PROS6: Mill Lane

II. Development that would result in the loss of all or part of these spaces will not be permitted unless they are replaced with better facilities which are as accessible to the local community as the current recreational open spaces.



Figure 11 Protected Recreational Open Spaces

Protect and Enhance Natural and Built Environment

WAS 17 Local Green Space

I. Seven areas within the Parish, shown on the Policies Map (Page 2), have been designated as Local Green Space. These are:

- LGS 1 The Meadow (School Lane)
- LGS 2 Churchyard (St Andrew and St Mary)
- LGS 3 Church Baulk (field between churchyard and roundabout)
- LGS 4 Rye Field (north of Ware Road)
- LGS 5 Great Rolls Mead (field in corner between Walkern Road and bypass)
- LGS 6 Rush Meads (north of Stevenage Road/south of the River Beane)
- LGS 7 Malting House Field (south and west of Motts Close)

II. New development will only be allowed in designated Local Green Spaces where it is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and East Herts District Plan Policy CFLR2.



Figure 12 Examples of Local Green Spaces

WAS 18 Protected Views

I. Eight important views and vistas are identified on the Policies Map (Page 2) and listed below:

- V1: From Road Bridge to St Andrew and St Mary Church (south eastern approach)
- V2: From church of St Andrew and St Mary (eastward)
- V3: From Nigel Poulton Community Hall to church of St Andrew and St Mary (southward)
- V4: From Church Lane before the railway bridge (southward)
- V5: From Watton Road railway bridge (north eastward)
- V6: From entrance to village on Stevenage Road (south eastward)
- V7: From far side of Walkern Road bridge (southward)
- V8: From Mill Lane to The Lammas (northward)

II. Development proposals in the Parish that are identified as having an impact on the identified important views should include an assessment of the impact of the development on the key views and vistas, where appropriate.

WAS 19 Wildlife Sites and Habitat Enhancements

I. Development should conserve and enhance biodiversity and seek to deliver net biodiversity gains of a minimum of 10% (as quantified by the most recent Defra Biodiversity Impact Calculator*). Biodiversity mitigation or compensation can be situated onsite or offsite. Offsite compensation should be located within the Neighbourhood Plan Area whenever possible.

Mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures must be definitively stated. All new buildings bordering open space or beneficial habitat should incorporate integrated bat and bird boxes.

(* The current Biodiversity Metric can be found at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5850908674228224>)

II. The nature conservation value of wildlife sites, and other significant habitats including the River Beane, will be protected from any harmful impacts of development, in accordance with their status.

III. In particular, the 36 designated Local Wildlife Sites, will be protected and managed. In addition, the fourteen areas of Ancient Woodland identified in the Hertfordshire Environmental Record Centre (HERC) database, will be protected from any harmful impacts of development.

IV. Other areas of the Parish, coloured green on the Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping, contain habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, as specified in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). Development, which would cause significant harm to these areas, should either be refused, or the mitigation hierarchy applied. If permission is granted for development, conditions or planning obligations that secure appropriate management regimes will be sought. The existing Local Wildlife Sites and habitats listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act within the village envelope are listed at watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/.

V. Developments located in areas coloured purple on the HERC Ecological Network Mapping for the Neighbourhood Plan Area must deliver net biodiversity gains and contribute towards enhancing ecological connectivity. A list of the existing habitats coloured purple within the village envelope is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website at watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/.

VI. Proposals to create new natural areas and wildlife habitats, or to expand or enhance existing provision, will be strongly supported. Proposals to remove unprotected trees during development should be accompanied by a tree survey. Removed trees will be replaced with native species, in suitable locations.

VII. Proposals for a new nature area where biodiversity can be improved, between the River Beane and the High Street/Stevenage Road to the north west of the village (LGS 6) may be funded by Section 106 contributions from housing development in the village.

WAS 20 Green Corridors and the River Beane

I. Green corridors should provide permeability for wildlife and access for people. In accordance with the East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan, the green corridors in the Parish, which provide networks of biodiversity and public access, will be protected from the impact of harmful development, managed and where appropriate, enhanced to create increased public access that is sympathetic to the biodiversity value of the green space.

II. The most significant green corridor is the River Beane corridor. Any development that negatively impacts public access to or ecological value of the river will be refused. Any development scheme adjacent to the River Beane should be designed with a naturalised buffer zone of at least 10 metres from the top of the bank in order to protect and enhance the conservation value of the watercourse and ensure access for flood defence maintenance.

III. Water efficient new developments that comply with water efficiency standards and development management policies are essential to reduce the impact of slow river flows, caused by over-abstraction of the River Beane.



Figure 13 River Beane at Watton-at-Stone

WAS 21 Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area and Heritage Assets

I. In accordance with policies at district level and the guidance in the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2014, the character or appearance of the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area and its setting will be preserved and, where possible, enhanced.

II. Proposals for development which have an impact on designated heritage assets in the Parish, including all listed buildings, should take account of the historic fabric of the asset, its significance and the contribution of its setting to that significance. Proposals should conserve or, where appropriate, enhance the asset or its setting.

III. A statement setting out any adverse impacts on the asset and its setting, along with any proposed mitigation measures will be required.

WAS 22 Non-designated Buildings and Structures

I. Seven non-designated buildings and structures have been identified as having local historic or architectural importance:

- 87/89 High Street (Opposite the George and Dragon)
- 96 High Street (Opposite the Bull)
- Club House, School Lane
- 33, 35, 37 and 39 High Street
- War Memorial at junction of High Street/Church Lane/Ware Road
- Methodist Church and Hall, High Street
- Puddingstone at the front of 1 High Street

II. Development proposals which affect these, and other non-designated heritage assets, including all those unlisted buildings and structures identified as being worthy of protection from demolition, in the Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal 2014 and subsequent updates, will take into account the significance of the heritage asset to enable a balanced judgement to be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

WAS 23 Archaeology

Extensive finds within the village and in the surrounding countryside including the Aston Mirror and the concentration of Roman material near Broomhall Farm indicate a rich archaeological past which should be at least recorded and at best preserved *in situ*. Development proposals which have the potential to impact on heritage assets of archaeological significance or proposals which are located in the areas of known archaeological significance should include an evaluation to determine whether site surveys are necessary.

Support for Business

WAS 24 Preserving Local Employment Opportunities

Proposals to support the retention of existing shops and businesses will be considered favourably provided that they do not conflict with other policies in this plan. Such proposals may include the provision of off-street parking for customers, covered and secure cycle parking facilities for employees and sustainable energy schemes.

WAS 25 Encouraging Home Working

Where planning permission is required, proposals which enable homeworking, such as improved digital connectivity, will be supported subject to there being no unacceptable impact on local or residential amenities.

WAS 26 Spending Priorities

I. In line with East Herts District Plan Policy VILL1 to deliver community benefits especially where the Neighbourhood Plan accommodates additional development, a number of spending priorities have been identified by the community, through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, to improve the lives of people living and working in the Parish. More details of the projects, their relative priorities, and any maintenance requirements are set out in the Benefit Project Plan (see Appendix L – Benefit Project Plan) and available on the Neighbourhood Plan website at watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/

These include:

- Football pitches and facilities
- Wetland meadow (Rush Meads LGS 6)
- Circular walk
- Out-of-hours school building
- Community Hall Car Park extension

II. The Parish Council will request that these priorities are reflected in Section 106 agreements, where appropriate, and will direct funding received from any New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy or other funding streams, towards projects which fall within these priorities.

III. Benefits in kind may also be accrued through negotiation, as a consequence of new development proposals. In particular, community benefits will be sought from the development of housing site allocations WAS 3 and WAS 4 and any future housing development where housing provision exceeds the requirements of the East Herts District Plan.

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Instructions

This consultation is open from 17 January 2022 until midnight on 6 March 2022. You can respond in one of two ways:

1. Downloading the form at watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/ and emailing it to clerk@watton-pc.org.uk
2. Completing the online response form at watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/
3. Completing this double-sided, removable response form below and returning it to:
 - Parish Clerk, Watton-at-Stone Parish Council, 9 Beane Road, Watton-at-Stone SG14 3RG; or
 - Londis, 119 High Street, Watton-at-Stone SG14 3SB.

All responses received by midnight on 6 March 2022 will be considered and may be used to amend the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan. If you require assistance with the response form, please contact the Watton-at-Stone Parish Clerk on 01920 830330 or email clerk@watton-pc.org.uk.

The full Neighbourhood Plan is available at watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/. A hard copy of the Neighbourhood Plan can be made available by contacting the Parish Council Clerk on the number above.

If you have any questions about the Neighbourhood Plan, please attend a virtual Q&A on 6 February 2022, from 3-5 pm. To attend go to bit.ly/3mPZ5UC. If COVID restrictions allow there will also be an in-person Q&A at the Nigel Poulton Community Hall at the same time. Please check watton-pc.org.uk/was-neighbourhood-plan/ before travelling, for up-to-date information.



Acknowledgements

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Inside: All contributors who have provided photographs and illustrations



Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Consultation Form

This section must be completed in full for your response to be counted and considered. Responses will be available for public inspection.	
Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Are you a resident of Watton-at-Stone Parish?	
If you are not a resident, please state the name of your company, organisation or client.	
If you are commenting on a policy, please quote the policy number and title, eg WAS 1 Sustainable Housing. If you are commenting on other aspects of the full Neighbourhood Plan, please quote paragraph, page number or appendix. You may use continuation sheets.	
Policy/Para/Page/Appendix	Comments
