

STANDON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

WORKING DRAFT (Version 1)

PREFACE

A Neighbourly Parish

Standon is a neighbourly Parish, and its Parishioners believe that the obligation on neighbours to behave in a neighbourly manner, in their mutual interests, also extends equally and still mutually, to those who come proposing development.

The physical presence of those individuals and companies, as neighbours, may be transitory, but the changes they introduce in and around the neighbourhood area, and the ramification of those changes, can have a lasting effect on the quality of life of many local residents.

The Parish therefore (welcomes and) responds positively to developers who share this approach.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Standon Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been produced under the auspices of the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012. It has been prepared by Standon Parish Council, which is the “qualifying body” for the completion of the document. Essentially the Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development and growth of the parish of Standon. It has been compiled on behalf of the Parish Council by a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which was set up on 20th November 2014 for the purpose of managing the process and preparing the document for the Council’s approval. The Plan has been prepared having regard to the emerging policies of the East Herts District Plan, as well as the “saved” policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007. The Plan consists of a written statement and a proposals map, which is depicted on an Ordnance Survey base.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has also been checked against government planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and the on-line Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Within the national and local frameworks, the Plan is concerned with the development and use of land in the Parish of Standon in the period to 2031 and beyond. In accordance with national policy, the Plan seeks to promote sustainable development and embraces a range of social, economic, and environmental issues. It sets out a vision for the Parish, coupled to a range of planning objectives, policies, and proposals.

1.3 A wide range of topics are covered in the Plan, including the environment, local character, housing, employment, transport, and infrastructure. The choice of issues was very much influenced by the community in consultation, and reflects the concerns which are important for the Parish and its residents. Specific planning proposals include the allocation of land for various types of development, as well as highlighting those sites and areas of the Parish which should be protected and enhanced. Where appropriate, the policies and proposals are shown on the Proposals Map, which is cross-referenced to this Written Statement. It is important to stress, however, that this document is concerned primarily with the development and use of land in the Parish. Wider community aspirations have been considered in the various rounds of public consultation, but not all these can be accommodated with land use policies. For this reason, non-land use matters are clearly identified and dealt with in Annex 1 to this Written Statement.

1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan is based on proactive involvement with the local community at all stages of its formulation. As a result of this process of active engagement, the Plan captures the essence of life in the Parish and its community. It seeks to ensure that the vitality of life in the Parish continues into the future, whilst not inhibiting local enterprise, innovation and technical and social developments.

1.5 Once the Plan has been formally “made” by East Herts Council, it will form part of the statutory development plan for the area, together with the East Herts District Plan when it has been adopted, and any other development plan documents, as well as Hertfordshire County Council Local Plans for Minerals and Waste. The Neighbourhood Plan, together with the East Herts District, will be the starting point for the consideration of all planning applications in the Parish and the basis by which East Herts Council will determine planning applications on behalf of the community.

1.6 Before formally submitting the Plan to East Herts Council for examination, Standon Parish Council will be required to publicise the document and invite representations. Under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, the “qualifying body” must bring the draft Plan to the attention of people who live, work, or carry on business in the neighbourhood plan area.

1.7 Details of the process of public consultation and involvement will be set out in a formal Statement of Consultation, which will be published on

submission of the Plan. Copies of this document and future drafts will be posted on the dedicated web-site and can be obtained on request from the Steering Group. Hard copies will be available for inspection at local libraries and District Council offices in Hertford and Bishop's Stortford. Summary copies of the Plan will be distributed to all households and businesses in the Parish, together with a response form for comments.

- 1.8 Following pre-submission consultation, the Written Statement and the Proposals Map will be revised in the light of comments received by the Steering Group. The Plan will be formally submitted by the Parish Council to East Herts Council, who will undertake further public consultation and invite representations. The District Council will also appoint an independent examiner, who will check that the Plan has met the basic conditions enshrined in legislation. Subject to a successful examination, the Plan will then go forward to a referendum. If the majority of the people voting are in favour of the Plan, it will then be "made" by East Herts Council as part of the statutory development plan for the area.

2. The Parish of Standon

2.1 The Parish of Standon is located in the District of East Hertfordshire in an extensive rural area to the north of Hertford and Ware. It is the largest Parish in the District and covers an area of 2379 hectares. According to the 2011 Census, the resident population of the Parish was 4,335. As can be seen from the map, the Parish incorporates the villages of Standon (population 1,557) and Puckeridge (population 1,978), as well as the hamlets of Barwick, Colliers End, Old Hall Green, Latchford, Bromley, and Wellpond Green.

2.2 Standon, Latchford, and Barwick grew up alongside the River Rib, which bisects the Parish and runs southwards to join the River Lee at Hertford. Puckeridge and Colliers End developed alongside Ermine Street, the old Roman road which connected London to Lincoln and York. This road became a busy coaching route in the 18th Century, especially serving London and Cambridge, and formed the basis of the A10 trunk road in modern times. A second Roman highway, Stane Street, connected Colchester with St. Albans – this crossed Ermine Street at a Roman town to the north of Puckeridge at Wickham Hill. The town was close to the present northern parish boundary with Braughing Parish, a boundary that is largely defined by the former route of Stane Street.

Standon

2.3 Standon has Saxon origins and was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The centre of the village, a Conservation Area, lies immediately to the south of the A120 along the High Street, with a choice of shops and public houses. The street is wide, a reminder that it had been the regular venue for markets from the 13th century onwards. Dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, the church of St. Mary's is listed as Grade 1, and contains imposing memorials to Sir Ralph Sadleir (1507 – 1587) and his son Thomas. Sir Ralph was a senior statesman, who served both King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I. The family home was at Standon Lordship, which is situated to the south of the village.

2.4 The A120 road crosses the River Rib at the northern end of the village by an iron bridge, which dates from 1858. The railways arrived later, with the opening of the St. Margaret's – Buntingford branch line on 3rd July 1863. Standon station was to the north of the A120, close to Standon Flour Mill. Road traffic descending into village on the A120 was often halted by a level crossing. The line was closed to passengers on 14th November 1964 and to freight on 17th September 1965, after which the barrier was removed.

2.5 The construction of the railway was said to have struck the death blow to the trade of Standon, which after the lapse of the local market, depended on road communication with the neighbouring market towns. Some industries developed as a result of the railway. Close by the station there was a large flour mill, built in 1901, which was connected by electric overhead wires to an old water mill on the east bank of the river, where the water power was supplemented by steam. From early in the 19th century, there was also a paper mill to the south of the flour mill – this later became a saw mill. The house and the water wheel still remain, as are the names Paper Mill Lane, Paper Mill House, and Paper Mill Meadow.

Puckeridge

2.6 A map of 1874 shows Puckeridge as a rural settlement completely separated from Standon. Whilst Station Road connecting the two communities existed at that time, the surrounding area was open countryside. In the late 19th century, the village was a thriving community, with a wide range of trades. A later map, dated 1920, shows that development had commenced with the construction of housing and the Century Hall. By this time allotments had been established between High Street and Station Road. Further housing was provided prior to the Second World War and consolidated in the late 20th century, to the extent that Standon and Puckeridge became joined. The Recreation Ground and the Community Centre, to the west of Station Road, are focal points for both communities.

2.7 The centre of the village, around the High Street, is a Conservation Area with a number of listed buildings dating mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries. Since the opening of the A10 bypass, the overall ambience of the centre has been enhanced, although there are still problems with local traffic and vehicle parking.

Colliers End

2.8 Colliers End is a small village which straddles the former London – Cambridge Road. The name of the village was bestowed by Nicholas le Colyere according to the Assize Rolls of 1278, and by 1526 the place was called Colyere's End. Traditionally, the inhabitants gained their living from agriculture and associated crafts and the road traffic which passed though on what was the old North Road. In the 18th century, Colliers End was on the busy coaching route between London and Cambridge, which generated trade at several village inns. The oldest of these, the Lamb and Flag, is the sole survivor, and is also a Thai restaurant.

2.9 Following the opening of the A10 bypass, Colliers End has become a mostly residential community. The site of the former petrol filling station has been redeveloped for housing. To the north of the village, off Dowsett's Lane, there is a former army camp, which has been used for the storage of wood.

Barwick

2.10 In the 14th century Barwick Manor, today known as Great Barwick Manor, was an estate and part of the larger Standon Manor. Great Barwick predates the present hamlet of Barwick on the west bank of the River Rib. The small cluster of dwellings to the north of Great Barwick was formerly known as the Outpost. In 1888, the site was taken over by the Smokeless Powder Company, an explosives manufacturer and Barwick was formed as a "factory hamlet". The site is now occupied by the A10 Timber Company. To the south is Barwick Ford, which lies on the Parish boundary, adjacent to Great Barwick Manor.

Old Hall Green

2.11 To the north of Colliers End is Old Hall Green, which is the home of St. Edmund's College. The original college was founded by Cardinal William Allen in 1568, and is the oldest Catholic School in England. In 1793 an academy, St. Edmund's College, Ware, was established on the current site. It consisted of a school for Catholic boys and a seminary for the training of priests. The establishment continued until 1975, when the seminary was moved to London. At the same time, the junior boys were transferred to a separate house, now the St. Edmund's Preparatory School; girls from the nearby Poles convent were admitted into the sixth form of the College.

2.12 The College is by far the largest employer in the Parish of Standon. Both the College and Preparatory School continue to thrive and expand and occupy a magnificent site of around 200 hectares.

The Rural Hinterland

2.13 In the eastern part of the Parish, there are three other small hamlets – Latchford, Wellpond Green, and Bromley. The continuing significance of agriculture in the history of the Parish is clearly defined by the presence of numerous historic farmhouses, farm buildings, mills and cottages in the villages and the surrounding countryside. These buildings are a significant element of the special character and interest of the Parish.

2.14 The overall pattern of development reflects very much the origins and history of the Parish over many centuries. It is this essential character that the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to conserve and enhance into the future, whilst still facilitating sustainable growth.

3. How the Plan was Prepared: An Inclusive Process

3.1 The Standon Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been assembled in full consultation with the local community. The stages in the preparation of the Plan are summarised in the ensuing paragraphs, as follows;

- Stage 1: Setting Up
- Stage 2: Spring and Summer Consultations
- Stage 3: Parish Survey
- Stage 4: Land Allocations
- Stage 5: Public Meetings
- Stage 6: Drafting the Plan
- Stage 7: Pre-submission

Stage 1: Setting Up

3.2 At a meeting in October 2014, Standon Parish Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Early in the process, on 20th November 2014, a public meeting was held at the Roger de Clare School in Puckeridge, at which a Steering Group was formed to oversee the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. At its initial meetings, the Steering Group agreed a constitution and formulated a project plan. It also discussed the planning issues which the Neighbourhood Plan might need to consider. A number of topic groups were set up to investigate these issues and to develop the evidence base which would be required to underpin the Plan.

3.3 Community engagement and involvement was identified by the Steering Group as a key element of plan preparation. A Communications Group was formed, with the purpose of informing the public and setting up consultation events. To this end, a dedicated web-site and a Face Book page were set up, together with regular news letters about progress.

Stage 2: Spring and Summer Consultations 2015

3.4 On 4th May 2015, the Steering Group had a stall at the annual Standon May Day event, followed by a Public Open Day at the Puckeridge Community Centre on Saturday 16th May. At the latter event, local people were asked to give their opinions on the planning issues which were of most concern to them. In June, two walks around the Parish were organised, in order to view some of the key sites and areas of interest.

3.5 All of these events were of value on raising the profile of the Neighbourhood Plan and the work of the Steering Group. From the Open Day, the Group were able to obtain an initial impression about the range of

planning issues which were most important and which should be addressed by the Plan.

3.6 In subsequent discussions in the Steering Group, it was determined that the feedback from the Open Day, although valuable, was not sufficient to provide a firm evidence base to support the Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, it was resolved to commission a survey.

Stage 3: Survey

3.7 The survey form was distributed to all households in the Parish at the beginning of September 2015. A Summary Report of the survey and its results was posted on the Neighbourhood Plan web-site at spndp.org. By the close of the survey, 754 responses had been received, a return rate of 44%.

3.8 The survey questionnaire was set out as a series of structured questions relating to the main issues which had emerged from the initial consultations in the Parish. These concerned housing and vehicle parking, the local economy and business, the environment (including flooding), amenities, infrastructure (travel and utilities), and health and welfare.

3.9 At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to summarise, in their own words, their issues and priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan. These perhaps provided a clear message to the Steering Group about residents' concerns. The issues most-mentioned were as follows:

- general concerns about keeping Standon and Puckeridge as a village, a village community, quiet, peaceful, rural, retaining the countryside.
- traffic, including congestion, speeding, problems getting onto main roads, junctions, the A120, the need for a bypass.
- parking problems, including access to shops, illegal and inconsiderate parking.
- amenities, particularly the health centre, doctors, shops, schools.
- public transport needs improving.
- specific housing issues, including expression of a need to have affordable housing for local young people.

Stage 4: Land Allocations

- 3.10 A key task for the Steering Group was the provision of housing sites for at least 150 dwellings in line with the emerging East Herts District Plan. These dwellings would be concentrated in and around Standon and Puckeridge, which were categorised in the District Plan as a Category One Settlement. Accordingly, it was decided to set up a Land Allocations Sub-Group, charged with the specific task of finding suitable sites.
- 3.11 A full report of the Land Allocations Group has been produced and is part of the evidence base supporting this Plan. A methodology for the assessment of sites was agreed, derived mainly from a guide published by Herefordshire Council. It was decided that the initial assessment should focus on the list of housing sites produced by East Herts Council as part of its Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) for the District Plan. At Stage 1 of the SLAA in 2011, East Herts Council had considered 35 sites in Standon Parish, the bulk of which were concentrated in Standon and Puckeridge. Most of these sites were outside the defined settlement boundaries, and therefore could not be delivered without a policy change.
- 3.12 At the start of its own assessment, the Land Allocations Group scored each of the 35 SLAA sites against a set of 18 criteria. The scoring for the criteria was not weighted at this early stage, but weighting was applied later to some of the more significant criteria. Some of the sites were discounted, however, because they could be affected by flooding. Sites currently in employment use were also rejected, because of the jobs which they provided within the Parish. For each site, a standard density assumption was made of 29 dwellings per hectare.
- 3.13 Towards the end of this first stage of assessment, an additional criterion was added to the evaluation, with the question “Is this site suitable for houses from a villager’s point of view?” By early October 2015, a preliminary short list of potential housing sites had been produced for the consideration of the Steering Group. These were clustered to the south of Puckeridge, along the Cambridge Road and included not only the SLAA sites but also further sites which had emerged from consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.14 During the autumn, two external events affected the work of the Land Allocations Group. First, outline planning permission was granted on appeal on land known as the Co-op site, to the east of Cambridge Road,

for the development of 24 houses. This had the effect of reducing the Neighbourhood Plan dwelling requirement to 126 units. Second, at the end of October, an outline planning application was submitted to East Herts Council for the development of 205 dwellings at the Café Field, Puckeridge. This proposal was “hybrid” application, Phase 1 for full planning permission for 105 units, and Phase 2 in outline for a further 101 units.

- 3.15 The Café Field application was not unexpected, but aroused considerable discussion in the local community. For the Neighbourhood Plan, it was clear that permission would take the number of dwellings to a level far above the total required by East Herts Council. Both the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group resolved to object to the proposal. The formal objection by the Steering Group was based to a large extent on the work of the Land Allocations Sub-Group, which had evaluated the Café Field against other potential sites.
- 3.16 In view of the changing circumstances, and the response by members of the Steering Group, the Land Allocations Group re-ran the evaluation of potential housing sites. The fresh evaluation embraced twenty sites. It took account of highways issues, particularly access to the A120, and the potential for flooding associated with the Southern Tributaries at Puckeridge. From this process, it was determined that the focus of development should be to the east of Standon, to the north of the A120 at Stortford Hill. Two options were accepted by the Steering Group as a basis for further consultation with the community.

Stage 5: Public Meetings

- 3.17 The development options were presented by the Steering Group to parishioners at two public meetings, held on the 11th and 13th February 2016. The meetings also provided an opportunity for the Steering Group to report on progress on the Neighbourhood Plan, to invite comment on a vision and objectives for the Plan, and to explain the issues concerning the A120 road and options for a future bypass. There was also discussion about the Café Field planning application and the possible impact of the proposed development of housing. Comparisons were made about the relative merits of the clusters of sites to the west of Puckeridge and to the east of Standon.
- 3.18 During the public meetings, many questions were posed about the planning process and the need for a Neighbourhood Plan, but there was clear support for completion of the Plan. At the meeting and in subsequent

responses, there was some support for the development option to the east of Standon, but excluding Burr's Meadow in Standon village. Concern about sewerage and the threat of surface water flooding was expressed. Traffic congestion and vehicle parking issues were also discussed - linked to concerns about the present and future effects of the A120 road through the Parish.

3.19 A full report on the public meetings is included in the background documents accompanying this Plan. The results of the discussions, supplemented by further representations confirmed to the Steering Group the list of issues which were of most concern to local residents. In terms of the options for housing development, there was a clear preference for a focus on the sites to the east of Standon. It was decided that this would option would form the focus of the development strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan to be submitted to the District Council. The final version of the Plan, however, would be subject to further consultation before submission.

Stage 6: Drafting of the Plan

This section will be completed when the final draft is ready.

Stage 7: Pre-Submission

A description of the pre-submission stage will be inserted here.

3.20 Throughout the preparation of the Plan the discussions at the Steering Group and in public consultation have been wide-ranging. Inevitably, many of the suggestions made by local residents have been excluded because they are not appropriate for consideration in a planning document. The next section contains the vision for the Parish; this has emerged from the public views expressed during consultation and from the September 2015 survey. This forms the basis of the objectives and policies which are set out in Sections 4 and 5 of this Plan.

4. Vision and Objectives

4.1 From the results of the public consultation events, the surveys, and background studies, a vision for the Parish was agreed by the Steering Group. This was first outlined to the public at the Open Days held in February 2016. The vision statement is set out in the following paragraph, followed by a set of objectives for the Plan.

4.2 The Vision Statement is as follows:

“Standon will remain an attractive Parish within a beautiful Hertfordshire setting and preserve our distinctive rural character, scale and atmosphere. Each of the settlement areas that make up the Parish have retained their own distinctive character and remain separate with the quality of the landscape spaces between them continuing to define their shared identity.

Our Parish is enriched by its open aspect to the countryside, marked by buildings of character and offers a diverse range of independent shops and services.

By the year 2031 and beyond.....

....there will be growth in housing numbers, through the provision of new homes, purpose-built to meet local needs. These new homes will be provided in small clusters on sites that do not detract from the character of the Parish.

The green, leafy, open parts of the developed Parish will be reflected in any new housing development, with gardens in green surroundings. Making development in historic areas suit its setting, but in new sites allowing the Parish to benefit from the advantages of modern architecture and sustainable building practices.

Our Parish will continue to support local employment, businesses and facilitate new employment opportunities within the Parish for local people.

Our Parish will aim to manage our growth, with infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the local community.

A community where people will “want to live” rather than “have to live”. A community where it is a joy to live for everyone.

4.3 In order to achieve the vision, the key objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan are set out below:

Context

- To deliver sustainable development
- To mitigate, and adapt to, the effects of climate change

Environment

- To protect and enhance the character and qualities of the rural landscape setting
- To offer greater protection to the retention of features important to the visual appearance and character of the Parish, including its built heritage, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, cherished views, green spaces, woodlands, natural habitats, and watercourses
- To protect and manage land that is important for biodiversity and nature conservation
- To protect and manage natural ground water sources and their habitats in order to maintain supporting ecosystems, to prevent water and soil pollution, and to sustain the role of water courses in flood prevention

Housing and Development

- To provide sufficient housing accordance with local-defined needs, with a higher proportion of affordable housing for local residents
- To provide a mix of housing types, including smaller units for the elderly, and starter homes for young people
- To ensure that any new development is built to a high quality of design, high sustainability standard and which reinforces local distinctiveness
- To ensure that the location of new development is resilient to the effects of climate change and flood risk

Employment and Business

- To support the local economy through existing businesses and to encourage the expansion of local employment opportunities
- To ensure the continued provision of local shops and businesses
- To foster home working

Transport

- To develop local transport links to provide the community with better access to employment and leisure opportunities
- To ensure safe vehicular and pedestrian access and promote pedestrian safety
- To provide adequate vehicular parking for the needs of residents and businesses and to ensure that visitor parking is provided on-site
- To locate new developments so that current problems with traffic congestion, car parking, and road safety are not exacerbated, and (if possible) reduced
- To manage the effects of the A120 Little Hadham bypass on Standon and Puckeridge
- To protect the “bands of interest” associated with possible routes of an A120 bypass of Standon and Puckeridge

Facilities and Services

- To protect and improve existing community facilities
- To ensure the continued provision of exceptional health and well-being facilities (Doctors’ surgery and District Nurses)
- To protect and enhance green open spaces used for sport and recreation
- To protect, maintain and improve public rights of way

4.4 These objectives were “mapped” against the strategic objectives and policies of the emerging draft of the East Herts District Plan. The linkages showed a high degree of conformity between the Standon Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan and the District Plan. These relationships will be monitored and reviewed throughout the plan period and the policies of this Plan will be adjusted and amended as and when necessary.

