

# Growing Baldock

Environmental Statement Volume 1: Text  
Chapter 13: Socio-Economic and Health



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Urban&Civic

Hertfordshire

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## **13.1 INTRODUCTION**

- 13.1.1 This Chapter has been prepared by David Lock Associates (DLA) to address the potential socio-economic and health impacts of the proposed Growing Baldock development. The description of development is as follows:

*Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for means of highway access into the development from the A505/Royston Road, North Road and Clothall Road for: up to 3,200 homes, up to 16ha of employment, waste and leisure infrastructure, a mixed use local centre, up to 1 secondary school, up to 2 x primary schools, up to 1 SEND school, health hub, green infrastructure (including parks, formal sports provision, play, habitat areas, informal open space and structural planting), internal street network, access junctions and railway crossing, public transport infrastructure, pedestrian/cycle network (including PRow diversions, active travel routes, mobility hubs and crossing of the railway), utilities and drainage infrastructure (including diversions of existing and provision of new infrastructure, pumping stations, sustainable drainage, primary substations, rising main/strategic sewer and renewable energy infrastructure), ground remodelling/earthworks and any necessary demolitions.*

- 13.1.2 Relevant potential impacts are assessed at both construction and completion and include impacts in relation to:

- population;
- housing needs;
- economy, including retail, employment land and job creation;
- education;
- social infrastructure, including open space and sports facilities; and
- health and community facilities.

- 13.1.3 Where relevant, mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse impacts are identified.

- 13.1.4 This Chapter has been prepared by Rainie Mok (Assistant Planner) and Katrina Hordern (Associate Planner) and reviewed by Helen Armes (Project Director) at DLA. DLA is an independent town planning, urban design and master planning consultancy with over 35 years of experience in the development industry and its projects include some of the UK's largest and most complex new settlements and urban extensions. DLA is an accredited member of The Institute of Sustainability & Environmental Professionals (ISEP), which is an organisation established to promote best practice in environmental management, auditing and assessment.

- 13.1.5 This Chapter is structured as follows:

- Relevant Policy;
- Assessment Methodology;

- Baseline Conditions;
- Potential Effects;
- Mitigation Measures;
- Residual Effects; and
- Cumulative Effects.

**13.2 RELEVANT POLICY**

- 13.2.1 This section sets out the relevant planning policy context within which the socio-economic and health impacts of the Proposed Development are considered.

**National Policy*****National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)***

- 13.2.2 The latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024 with further minor amendments in February 2025. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 13.2.3 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF identifies three overarching and interdependent objectives crucial to the achievement of sustainable development:
- Economic objective: ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - Social objective: to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities through a sufficient number and range of homes, well-designed and safe built environment with accessible services and open spaces. housing supply; and
  - Environmental objective: to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, improving biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- 13.2.4 The NPPF places emphasis on the need for a positive approach to sustainable development with a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

***Planning Practice Guidance***

- 13.2.5 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further information regarding the importance of the planning system in delivering well-designed places. It highlights the need to take a proactive and collaborative approach, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of a planning application and the post approval stage.
- 13.2.6 Particularly in respect of the guidance on “Healthy and safe communities”, the design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure, are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system (taking into account the changing needs of the population) (Paragraph: 001, Reference ID:53-001-20190722).

### ***National Design Guide (2021)***

13.2.7 The National Design Guide establishes that well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create their physical character. The ten characteristics introduced in the National Design Guide help to nurture and sustain a sense of community, they work positively to address environmental issues affecting climate, and they all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes of good design set out in the NPPF.

13.2.8 The 10 characteristics are:

- Context – enhances the surroundings;
- Identity – attractive and distinctive;
- Built form – a coherent pattern of development;
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around;
- Nature – enhanced and optimised;
- Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive;
- Uses – mixed and integrated;
- Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable;
- Resources – efficient and resilient; and
- Lifespan – made to last.

### **Local Policy**

#### ***North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031***

13.2.9 The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (referred to as 'the NHLP' or 'the Local Plan' in this Chapter) was adopted on 8 November 2022 and seeks to address the key issues facing North Hertfordshire and set a strategic vision and spatial strategy for the District over the period 2011 to 2031.

#### ***Housing***

13.2.10 Policies SP1 (Sustainable Development) and SP2 (Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution) set out the principles for sustainable development within North Hertfordshire, including the provision of at least 13,000 new homes during the plan period.

13.2.11 Policy SP8 (Housing) sets out that:

- Over the plan period, housing growth will be supported across the District through identified sites, including a total of 7,700 homes in six Strategic Housing Sites, around 5,560 of which are expected to be delivered by 2031. The Strategic Housing Sites include site BA1 - North of Baldock for 2,800 homes (approximately 1,400 to be delivered by 2031), BA2 (200 homes) and BA3 (245 homes);
- 4,000 homes will also be provided through local housing allocations;

- A range of housing tenures, types and sizes measured is supported against targets to provide 33% of all homes as Affordable Housing for local needs with targets to deliver up to 40% Affordable Housing where viable, alongside a broadly even split between smaller (1- and 2-bed) and larger (3+ bed) properties subject to up to date assessments of housing needs; and
- At least 350 bed spaces in suitable, supported accommodation to meet the needs of those who cannot live in their own home.

13.2.12 Policy SP14 (Site BA1 – North of Baldock) sets out the following planning and master planning requirements for the BA1 site:

- a) *A new mixed-use Local Centre/s to provide for a range of day-to-day local needs including additional along with additional neighbourhood-level provision of around 500 m<sup>2</sup> (net) convenience retail provision and 1,400 m<sup>2</sup> (net) of comparison retail and food and beverage floorspace;*
- b) *Structural planting to create a sense of place, integration into surrounding landscape and to reinforce a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary to the north and east;*
- c) *A new link road connecting the A507 North Road to the A505 Baldock bypass including a new bridge across the railway;*
- d) *Sustainable transport measures to include:*
  - i. *a secondary rail crossing for pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of Ashville Way;*
  - ii. *safe access routes to / from, and upgrades to, Baldock station;*
  - iii. *sensitive integration of Bridleway Baldock 034 / Bygrave 002 as a north-south route through the development; and*
  - iii. *the use of Bygrave Road / Ashwell Road from the south-western edge of the allocated site to the link road as a sustainable transport corridor; and*
  - iv. *comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks;*
- e) *At least 28 serviced plots for self-build development;*
- f) *Provision of an appropriate site for a care home for older people in Use Class C2 in accordance with the locational criteria in Policy HS4;*
- g) *A community hall and GP surgery;*
- h) *Up to 6 forms of entry (FE) of additional primary-age education provision;*
- i) *Up to 8 forms of entry (FE) of additional secondary-age education provision. A secondary school larger than 6FE will be supported where:*
  - i. *it is located at the south of the allocation site; and*

- ii. *safe, sustainable and direct routes to school are provided from Clothall Common;*
- j) *Address existing surface water flood risk issues, particularly to the south of Ashwell Road, through SUDs or other appropriate solution;*
- k) *Appropriate mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement of key features of biodiversity as informed by detailed assessments including:*
  - i. *Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve;*
  - ii. *Bygrave Road local wildlife site; and*
  - iii. *identified protected species and priority habitats;*
- l) *Built development contained to the south and south-west of the ridgeline that generally extends eastwards from the A507 south of Blackhorse Farm and southwards from Ashwell Road; and*
- m) *Sensitive treatment of heritage assets and their settings including:*
  - i. *an access solution from the A507 North Road, which satisfactorily addresses potential impacts;*
  - ii. *retaining framed views of St Mary's Church from within and beyond the Site;*
  - iii. *using the location of areas of archaeological significance to inform a site-wide green infrastructure strategy; and*
  - iv. *Ivel Springs Scheduled Ancient Monument.*

13.2.13 Policy BA2 (Land south-west of Clothall Road) is subject to the following policy criteria:

- *Creation of appropriate, defensible Green Belt boundary along the south-eastern perimeter of the Site;*
- *Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with the A505 to potentially include insulation and orientation of living spaces;*
- *Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;*
- *Preliminary Risk Assessment to identify any contamination associated with previous uses including mitigation;*
- *Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon Weston Hills Local Wildlife Site;*
- *Heritage impact assessment (including assessment of significance) and sensitive design to ensure appropriate protection of adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument; and*
- *Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.*

13.2.14 Policy BA3 (Land south of Clothall Common) is subject to the following policy criteria:

- *Deliver a southern link road connecting the B656 Royston Road to Wallington Road or the A507 Clothall Road within the southern bypass;*

- *Provision of suitable vehicle, cycle and pedestrian links to ensure integration with adjoining site BA4;*
- *Consideration of the most appropriate routes and movements for all modes between the allocation site, the existing Clothall Common estate and the wider transport network;*
- *Site layout to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;*
- *Appropriate solution for short- and long-term education requirements having regard to up-to-date assessments of need;*
- *Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with the A505 to include:*
  - *appropriate insulation and orientation of living spaces; and*
  - *maintaining or limited re-profiling of the existing bunding towards the east of the Site with no housing permitted on or beyond its (revised) alignment;*
- *Incorporate alignment of former Wallington Road and Bridleway Clothall 027 as green corridor through the Site;*
- *Incorporate ordinary watercourses (and any appropriate measures) within comprehensive green infrastructure and / or SUDs approach;*
- *Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SUDs or other appropriate solution;*
- *Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;*
- *Heritage impact assessment (including assessment of significance) and sensitive design to ensure appropriate protection of adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument; and*
- *Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development.*

13.2.15 Policy HS2 (Affordable housing) sets out the 40% target of dwellings to be affordable, subject to viability, for sites with 25 or over dwellings. The size, type and tenure of the affordable housing should meet the expectation that 65% of the affordable housing is to be rented and 35% to be other forms of affordable housing.

13.2.16 Policy HS3 (Housing mix) states that planning permission for new homes will be granted with an appropriate range of house types and sizes, which take into account the overall targets of this plan, the findings of the most up-to-date evidence, the location and accessibility of the Site; and recent completions, existing permissions and sites in the five-year supply. The scheme should provide a density, scale and character of development appropriate to its location and surroundings.

13.2.17 Policy HS4 (Supported, Sheltered and Older Persons Housing) supports development of sheltered and supported housing in uses classes C2 and C3 with good access to local services and facilities, public transport, alongside appropriate levels of on-site landscaping, amenity space and car parking (for residents, visitors and staff) in accordance with Policy HS3(b). Residential developments of 100 units or more will be granted when an element of accommodation within Use Class C3 for older persons housing is included under the requirements of Policy HS3(a).

- 13.2.18 Policy HS5 (Accessible and Adaptable Housing) ensures that major residential development that at least 50% of homes can be built to the M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable standard, and 10% of the schemes with 10 or more affordable units can additionally be built to the M4(3) wheelchair user standard.

*Employment and Retail*

- 13.2.19 Policy SP3 (Employment) indicates that 19.6ha of land is allocated for employment use at east of Baldock (Employment site BA10). Policy BA10 (Royston Road) further states that 19.6ha of employment land will be provided with the Site BA10, in compliance with the following criteria:

- *A masterplan to be secured prior to the approval of any detailed matters;*
- *Ensure access arrangements control HGV movements to direct vehicles towards the A505 rather than through Baldock;*
- *Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SUDs or other appropriate solution;*
- *Landscaping to enhance the ecological value of the railway corridor and reinforce a defensible Green Belt boundary to the east;*
- *Undertake Contaminated Land Preliminary Risk Assessment, particularly in relation to current and historic agricultural use;*
- *Provide adequate mitigation measures for noise associated with the railway line and for any potential employment activity in relation to Clothall Common;*
- *Retaining framed views of St Mary's Church from within and beyond the Site;*
- *Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development; and*
- *Use of green roofs on buildings in order to create a less harsh urban-rural transition to the Green Belt on the eastern side of this allocation.*

- 13.2.20 In the context of Baldock, Policy SP4 (Town Centres, Local Centres and Community Shops) promotes, protects and enhances the provision of shops, financial and professional services, cafés or restaurants, pubs or drinking establishments or takeaways according to the retail hierarchy:

1. town centre of Baldock;
2. existing local centres; and
3. new local centres north of Baldock within the strategic housing site identified in the Local Plan.

- 13.2.21 Policy ETC1 (Appropriate Uses in Employment Areas) states that Employment Areas support office, industrial, and storage uses, with exceptions allowed for ancillary or essential operations, or where alternative uses prevent long-term vacancy, provided site-specific and access criteria are met.

- 13.2.22 Policy ETC3 (New Retail, Leisure and Other Main Town Centre Development) ensures that new retail, leisure, and town centre developments are supported if they pass the

sequential test, meet impact thresholds, align with site-specific and area-appropriate criteria, and do not harm town centre vitality or nearby living conditions.

- 13.2.23 Policy ETC6 (Local Centres) indicates that in local centres development is supported for small-scale ground-floor uses like shops, cafes, and community services, provided a mix of day-to-day services is maintained and the total size does not exceed 500 m<sup>2</sup> gross.

*Communities and Health*

- 13.2.24 Policy SP10 (Healthy Communities) commits to fostering inclusive and healthy communities by protecting and enhancing community facilities, ensuring adequate healthcare, education, and recreational infrastructure, and promoting healthy lifestyles through green and physical infrastructure. It emphasises the collaboration with key partners, including the NHS Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and planning for future needs in areas like healthcare and education.
- 13.2.25 Policy HC1 (Community Facilities) supports new community facilities if they suit the area, are accessible, and meet local needs. Loss or redevelopment is allowed only with clear justification or suitable replacement.
- 13.2.26 Policy NE1 (Strategic Green Infrastructure) supports the development that protects, enhances, or appropriately replaces strategic green infrastructure, avoids harm or fragmentation, and includes long-term management plans where new infrastructure is created.
- 13.2.27 Policy NE6 (New and Improved Open Space) requires that development must provide or improve open space to meet local needs, ensure quality, accessibility, and long-term management, and integrate any built features appropriately; financial contributions are only accepted where on-site provision is not feasible.

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***Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan (2021)***

- 13.2.28 The Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan was made on 29 June 2021.
- 13.2.29 Policy G2 (Strategic Green Spaces) requires that any applications should maintain the predominantly open character of the land lying between Hartsfield School and the A505 Baldock Bypass, together with views from this area out to the countryside to the east of the town, to conserve an important 'green lung' at the heart of Baldock. Proposals that would improve the visual or recreational value of this land will be supported, particularly if they form part of a comprehensive strategy for improved public access and the conservation and interpretation of the scheduled area.
- 13.2.30 Policy G3 (Creating Well-Designed Places) states that in the sites allocated for development in the Local Plan, proposals should relate sensitively to both their immediate context and the wider character of Baldock and establish a strong sense of place. Applications for the proposed urban extensions (sites BA1, BA2, BA3 and BA10) should be subject to an independent design review process with community input.
- 13.2.31 Policy E2 (Green Infrastructure and Outdoor Recreation) states that applications to develop strategic sites BA1, BA2, BA3 and BA10 should provide for an appropriate amount and range of publicly accessible green infrastructure in compliance with or exceeding North Herts Council's standards. In making this provision, the applications should take into account existing needs for green infrastructure within Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall.
- 13.2.32 In addition, a number of policies in the Plan also set out the development requirements of the strategic sites in Baldock:
- 13.2.33 Policy E5 (Development North of the Railway) ensures that Strategic Site BA1 is carefully integrated into the surrounding landscape by maintaining a clear gap between Baldock and Lower Bygrave, using native planting for natural screening, and minimising visual impacts from long-distance views. It requires sensitive design near existing homes, preservation of historic and ecological features like Bygrave Road and local wildlife habitats, and improved pedestrian and cycle links that retain rural character. The policy also aims to limit traffic through Bygrave with appropriate road measures and includes provision for new community and recreational facilities to support the expanded population.
- 13.2.34 Policy E6 (Royston Road) requires the allocated sites BA3 and BA10 to create a high-quality, visually appealing entrance to Baldock by emphasising well-designed buildings, consistent landscaping and lighting, and sensitive integration with existing homes. The policy requires a landscape buffer near the railway for site BA10, the use of materials that reduce visual impact (such as green roofs), and improvements to footpaths and cycleways to promote sustainable travel.

- 13.2.35 Policy E7 (Cambrai Farm and South of Clothall Common) sets out that strategic sites BA2 and BA3 should incorporate a landscape buffer along the A505 for screening, green space and noise reduction. New building on raised land in BA3 should be avoided and preserved for informal recreation and reinforced planting provided between Hillside Park and new homes on BA2. The policy also supports the inclusion of new indoor and outdoor community facilities for children and young people.

**Other Relevant Policy, Legislation & Guidance*****Sustainability SPD (September 2024)***

- 13.2.36 This SPD was adopted in September 2024 and sets out the sustainability expectations for different forms of development when applying the Local Plan policies, in the form of three standards of sustainability: bronze (representing baseline, current policy and building regulations compliance), silver and gold.
- 13.2.37 Under one of the nine thematic guidance checklists 'Healthy Placemaking', major residential and non-residential schemes should achieve silver/gold standard in accordance with the Urban Greening Factor (UGF):
- Silver: Ensure schemes include a multifunctional UGF calculation achieving a minimum of 0.4 (residential) or 0.3 (commercial) UGF along with a maintenance and management plan, and ensure the green space attains a Green Flag score of 'Very Good'.
  - Gold: Ensure schemes include a multifunctional UGF calculation achieving a minimum of 0.6 (residential) or 0.5 (commercial) UGF along with a maintenance and management plan, and ensure the green space attains a Green Flag score of 'Outstanding'.

### **13.3 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

#### **Scope**

13.3.1 This assessment first establishes the baseline position in terms of local conditions. It then examines the potential effects of the Proposed Development taking into account any mitigation measures that are embedded within the proposed parameters (e.g. social infrastructure facilities) and assesses the significance of those effects. Opportunities to mitigate any potential adverse effects are then identified, concluding with any residual effects that might remain following mitigation.

13.3.2 The spatial extent of this socio-economic and health impact assessment covers not only the Application Site area, Baldock and relevant wards of Baldock East and Baldock West within which it is located, but also the wider area, including the North Hertfordshire District, the county of Hertfordshire and East of England region, where that is relevant.

#### **Data Sources**

13.3.3 This assessment has drawn upon published government and local authority statistics and documents relating to the area, including 2021 Census data, ONS data and documents published by the local authorities, as referenced in this Chapter.

13.3.4 In addition to the desk-based baseline work, visits to the Site and the wider area were undertaken to collect and verify information on local facilities, and advice was sought from stakeholders including the ICB, medical centre operators, NHC Economic Development and Town Centre Officers, Herts Futures and the HCC Growth and Infrastructure Unit. The assessment also draws upon reports submitted in support of the OPA.

13.3.5 The following topics have been considered in identifying the likely significant socio-economic and health effects of the Proposed Development:

- changes in population and housing;
- changes in employment provision and economic development;
- demands on education provision;
- provision of green space for informal and formal recreation; and
- demands on health and community facility provision.

#### **Assessment Approach**

13.3.6 The assessment of socio-economic and health effects has been as follows:

- Review of policies to provide an outline of the relevant national and local socio-economic and health objectives for the area;
- Review of the existing and potential future social and economic facilities and capacity within recommended/applicable distances of the Site. This is based

primarily on data analysis and mapping of facilities, with consultations to supplement this evidence;

- Undertaking visits to the Site and the wider area to collect and verify information on local facilities;
- drawing upon reports submitted in support of the outline planning application;
- assessing potential effects resulting from the Proposed Development on the basis of a variety of socio-economic and health objectives and the impact of the Proposed Development on the local area; and
- assessing the potential cumulative effects resulting from the Proposed Development and surrounding developments on the basis of a variety of socio-economic and health objectives and the impact on the local and wider area.

### **Significance Criteria**

13.3.7 There are no generally accepted criteria for assessing the significance of socio-economic and health effects, and in some cases, it can be difficult to quantify or measure such effects. The assessment of the significance of impacts is based on the magnitude of the predicted change to the baseline position, as well as the sensitivity of the socio-economic 'receptors'. Where the effect has been difficult to quantify, qualitative professional judgment has been applied, based on experience.

13.3.8 Magnitudes of change are rated as 'large', 'moderate', 'small' and 'negligible' and can be 'direct' or 'indirect' as set out in **Table 13.1** below.

**Table 13.1 - Magnitude of Impacts**

| <b>Magnitude</b> | <b>Nature of Impact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Large            | Considerable impact of more than local significance in relation to relevant legislation, policy and/or standards. This could be a substantial increase or decrease in jobs, homes, green space and improvements to other socio-economic indicators as a direct consequence of the Proposed Development or as an indirect consequence of but not only related to the Proposed Development. |
| Moderate         | Moderate impact of more than local significance in relation to relevant legislation, policy and/or standards. This could be a moderate increase or decrease in job numbers, homes, green space and improvements to other socio-economic indicators as a direct consequence of the Proposed Development or an indirect one due to, but not only related to, the Proposed Development.      |
| Small            | Small impact of more than local significance in relation to relevant legislation, policy and/or standards. This could be a small increase or decrease in jobs, homes, green space and improvements to other socio-economic indicators as a direct or indirect result of the Proposed Development.                                                                                         |
| Negligible       | Negligible No change of more than local significance in relation to relevant legislation, policy and/or standards as a direct or indirect result of the Proposed Development.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

13.3.9 The Proposed Development will affect the Site and its surroundings to varying degrees, depending on the sensitivity of the receptor. The sensitivity of socio-economic and health receptors corresponds to their importance. The sensitivity of receptors to the effects of the Proposed Development is classified as 'high', 'medium', 'low' or 'negligible' as set out in **Table 13.2** below.

13.3.10 The nature of effects arising during the construction phase differs from those arising following the completion of the development. The sensitivity of receptors is therefore categorised differently for each.

**Table 13.2 – Sensitivity Criteria**

| Sensitivity | Description                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receptor is identified as a policy priority</li> <li>Evidence of major socio-economic and health challenges or underperformance</li> </ul> |
| Medium      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receptor is important in policy</li> <li>Evidence of under-performance or vulnerability</li> </ul>                                         |
| Low         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receptor is not a policy priority</li> <li>Evidence that the receptor is resilient and has no particular challenges</li> </ul>             |
| Negligible  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receptor is not a policy priority</li> <li>Good overall performance in the impact area</li> </ul>                                          |

13.3.11 The significance of the socio-economic and health effects of the Proposed Development is determined by the interaction between the magnitude of the change and the sensitivity of the receptor concerned. **Table 13.3** below demonstrates how the significance of effects has been determined.

**Table 13.3 - Significance of Effects**

| Magnitude  | Sensitivity |            |            |            |
|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
|            | High        | Medium     | Low        | Negligible |
| Large      | Major       | Major      | Moderate   | Minor      |
| Moderate   | Major       | Moderate   | Minor      | Negligible |
| Small      | Moderate    | Minor      | Minor      | Negligible |
| Negligible | Minor       | Negligible | Negligible | Negligible |

#### Uncertainties and Limitations

13.3.12 As set out above, there are no generally accepted criteria for assessing the significance of socio-economic and health impacts, and in some cases, it can be difficult to quantify or measure such impacts. This assessment is based on the magnitude of the predicted

change to the baseline position, as well as the sensitivity of the socio-economic and health receptors.

- 13.3.13 Where the effect has been difficult to quantify, qualitative professional judgment has been applied, based on experience. Impacts are identified as beneficial or adverse, while their significance can be classified as either 'major', 'moderate', 'minor' or 'negligible'.
- 13.3.14 Data used to compile this Chapter consists of secondary information from a variety of sources. Data has been sourced from official Government datasets or the most reliable alternative, where appropriate, to maximise accuracy. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that from other secondary sources, is accurate. The most recent Census, with available data, is from 2021.

## **13.4 BASELINE CONDITIONS**

13.4.1 This section describes existing socio-economic and health conditions within the Study Area in terms of the population, housing, economy and employment, education, health, libraries, parks and open space and sports facilities. A projected future baseline will also be reviewed in this section.

13.4.2 Much of the population data presented in this Chapter has been derived from the ONS data, specifically from the Census 2021, unless otherwise stated.

### **The Current Baseline**

#### ***Geographic Context***

13.4.3 The Site is located to the immediate northeast of the town of Baldock in the district of North Hertfordshire, within the electoral ward of Baldock East.

13.4.4 North Herts Council (NHC) is one of the ten district and borough councils within Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), situated in the wider East of England region. The District is approximately 37,500 hectares (375 square kilometres) in size, and as recorded in the Census 2021, has a population of 133,211, equivalent to around 355 people per square kilometre.

13.4.5 To better illustrate the current context in proximity to the Application Site, **Appendix 13.1** provides an overview of the distribution of different types of facilities within 1.5 miles of the Site's edge, including education provision, retail centres, and open space. The current provision of these facilities is further detailed in this section.

#### ***Population***

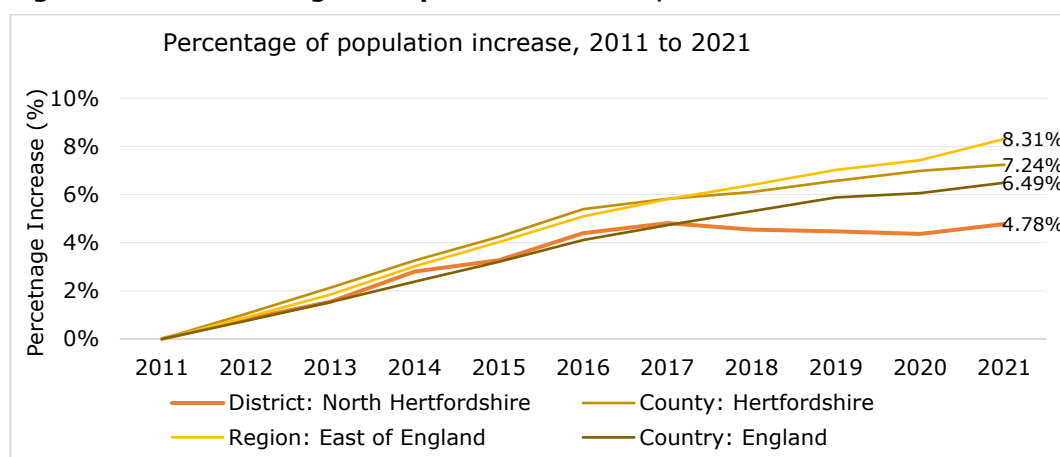
##### ***Overall Population***

13.4.6 North Hertfordshire had a population of 133,211 as of 2021, comprising 11.1% of the county's population (1,198,793) and 2.1% of the regional population (6,334,500).

13.4.7 Baldock had a population of around 7,737 in 2021, occupying around 5.8% of the District's population. The wards of Baldock Town and Baldock East had a total population of 10,625 in 2021, contributing to approximately 8% of the District's population.

13.4.8 As shown in **Figure 13.1**, North Hertfordshire's population grew by around 4.8% from 127,114 in 2011 to 133,211 in 2021. While the national rate of growth was 6.6% in the same period, the East of England region had the highest regional population growth of 8.3% in the country.

**Figure 13.1 - Percentage of Population Increase, 2011-2021**



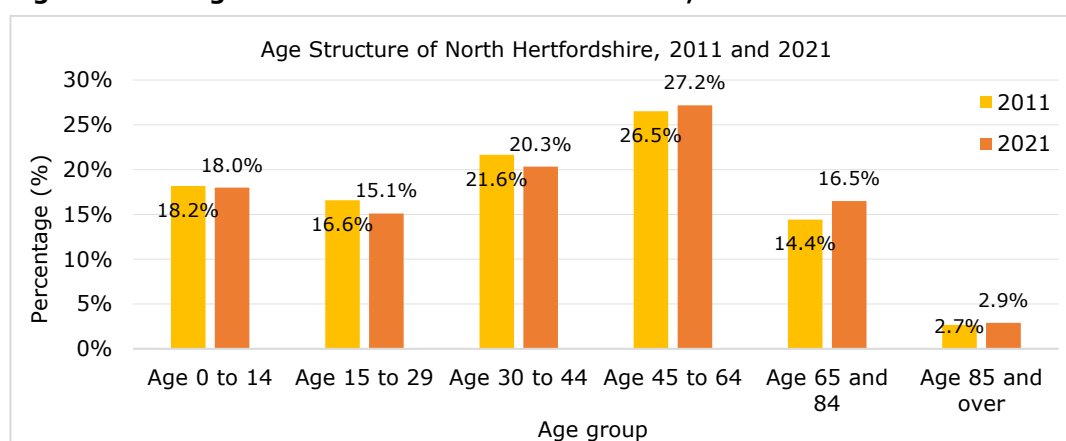
Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

### Age Structure

13.4.9 In terms of the age structure in the District presented within the Census 2021, those aged 0-14 occupied 18% of the total population, people aged 15-29 and 30-44 occupied 15.1% and 20.3% respectively of the District's population. Finally, those aged 45-64 comprised 27.2% of the and those aged 65 and over comprised almost 20% of the total population.

13.4.10 Between 2011 and 2021 as shown in **Figure 13.2**, the proportion of the younger population (those under 44) was lower overall in 2021 compared to 2011, whilst the ratio of people aged 45 or above in the total population was higher than that in 2021, implying that the District consisted of a slightly older population in 2021 and potentially ageing population in the future.

**Figure 13.2 - Age Structure of North Hertfordshire, 2011 and 2021**



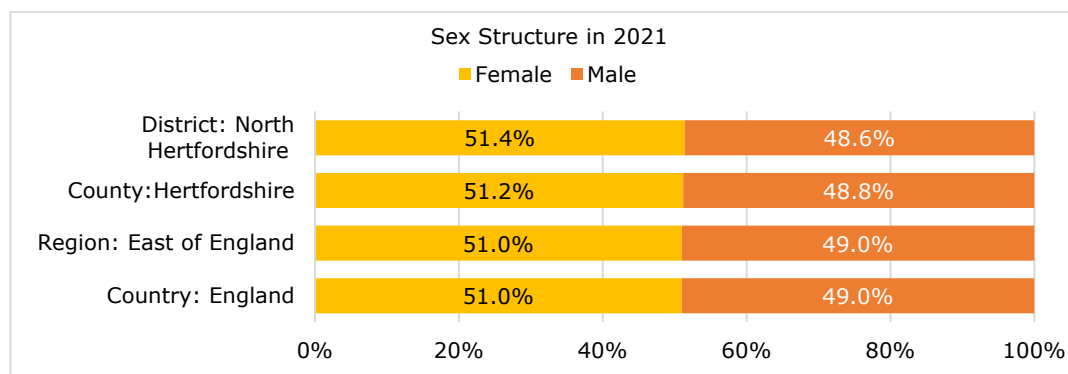
Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

13.4.11 When comparing the age structure of North Hertfordshire with both the wider East of England region and nationally, the overall District had a median age of 40 in 2021, which was the same as England (40 years old) in 2021, and slightly younger than that in the East of England (41 years).

### *Sex and Ethnicity Structure*

- 13.4.12 The sex distribution of the District was consistent with the county, the wider East of England region and England, with the ratio of male and female being around 49:51, as further indicated in **Figure 13.3** below.

**Figure 13.3 – Sex Structure, 2021**



Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

- 13.4.13 In terms of ethnicity distribution, in 2021 the District largely aligned with the average in the county, the East of England and England, with more than 80% of the total population being white, followed by less than 10% of the population as Asian, according to Census 2021.

**Table 13.4 - Ethnic Group Distribution, 2021**

| Ethnic group                                            | District: North Hertfordshire | County: Hertfordshire | Region: East of England | Country: England |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh                     | 5.2%                          | 8.6%                  | 6.4%                    | 9.6%             |
| Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African | 2.4%                          | 3.7%                  | 2.9%                    | 4.2%             |
| Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups                         | 3.7%                          | 3.8%                  | 2.8%                    | 3.0%             |
| White                                                   | 87.5%                         | 81.8%                 | 86.5%                   | 81.0%            |
| Other ethnic groups                                     | 1.1%                          | 2.1%                  | 1.4%                    | 2.2%             |

Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

### *Household Deprivation*

- 13.4.14 In assessing the level of deprivation, four dimensions are used: education, employment, health and housing. **Table 13.5** below lists the definition of when a household is classified as deprived under the respective four measures.

**Table 13.5 - Definitions of the Four Dimensions of Household Deprivation**

| Dimensions of Deprivation | Definitions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Education</b>          | A household is classified as deprived in the education dimension if no one has at least level 2 education and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Employment</b>         | A household is classified as deprived in the employment dimension if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Health</b>             | A household is classified as deprived in the health dimension if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled.<br><br>People who have assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled. This definition of a disabled person meets the harmonised standard for measuring disability and is in line with the Equality Act (2010). |
| <b>Housing</b>            | A household is classified as deprived in the housing dimension if the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

- 13.4.15 North Hertfordshire had 53.6% of households that were not deprived in any of the four dimensions of education, employment, health and housing, improving from 51.3% in 2011. 32.1% of households were deprived in one dimension, 11.6% in two dimensions, 2.6% in three dimensions and 0.2% of the households were deprived in all four dimensions in 2021. Household deprivation on the district scale slightly underperformed compared to the county level in 2021, but was better than regional and national levels in both 2011 and 2021, as shown in **Table 13.6**, in which 49.6% of households in the East of England and 48.4% of households in England were not deprived in any dimensions in 2021.

**Table 13.6 - Household Deprivation, 2011 and 2021**

| Household Deprivation         | District: North Hertfordshire |       | County: Hertfordshire |       | Region: East of England |       | Country: England |       |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                               | 2011                          | 2021  | 2011                  | 2021  | 2011                    | 2021  | 2011             | 2021  |
| Not deprived in any dimension | 51.3%                         | 53.6% | 49.3%                 | 55.1% | 44.8%                   | 49.6% | 42.5%            | 48.4% |
| Deprived in one dimension     | 30.8%                         | 32.1% | 31.7%                 | 31.5% | 33.0%                   | 34.0% | 32.7%            | 33.5% |
| Deprived in two dimensions    | 14.7%                         | 11.6% | 15.4%                 | 11.0% | 17.9%                   | 13.2% | 19.1%            | 14.2% |
| Deprived in three dimensions  | 2.9%                          | 2.6%  | 3.2%                  | 2.2%  | 4.0%                    | 3.0%  | 5.1%             | 3.7%  |
| Deprived in four dimensions   | 0.3%                          | 0.2%  | 0.3%                  | 0.1%  | 0.4%                    | 0.2%  | 0.5%             | 0.2%  |

Source: Census 2011 and Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

## **Housing**

### *Housing Supply*

- 13.4.16 NHLP has established a district target to provide at least 13,000 homes in North Hertfordshire over the plan period. Within this figure, all eight housing allocations in and around Baldock will deliver an estimated 3,360 new homes, with 1,960 delivered within the plan period to 2031.<sup>1</sup>
- 13.4.17 In terms of housing delivery, to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing, NHC will deliver the total housing requirement over the Plan period on a stepped basis as follows:
- 350 dwellings per annum (pa) from 2011 to 31 March 2020 (9 years);
  - 500 dwellings pa from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2024 (4 years); and
  - 1,120 dwellings pa from 1 April 2024 to 2031 (7 years).
- 13.4.18 According to the North Herts Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2023-2024, there were 425 dwelling completions (net) in the monitoring year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which was 85% of the Local Plan's housing requirement alongside the housing target of 500 dwellings in 2023/24. From 2011 to 2024, 4,610 new dwellings (net) have been developed in North Herts against an annualised target of 5,150 dwellings, which was 540 dwellings fewer than the expected completion.
- 13.4.19 As stated in the Local Plan Inspector's Report, the vast majority of new homes are expected to be delivered later in the Plan period, given that the Plan relies significantly on strategic and other larger sites that are currently in the Green Belt and will inevitably take longer to be built. As such, the delivery of the strategic housing allocations will make a significant contribution to meeting the housing target at a later stage of the plan period, including a number of housing allocations in Baldock which are included within the Site.

### *Housing Composition and Average Household Size*

- 13.4.20 **Table 13.7** below provides a breakdown of the household composition according to the Census 2021 for North Hertfordshire, with the majority being single-family households (homes that are occupied by one family unit), occupying 66% of total households. Based on the District's population of 133,211 and a total of 56,731 households, **the average household size in North Hertfordshire was 2.35**, which was lower than England's average of 2.41 persons per household in accordance with Census 2021.

**Table 13.7 - Household Composition in North Hertfordshire, 2021**

| Households Composition  | North Hertfordshire |       |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| One-person household    | 16,903              | 29.8% |
| Single-family household | 37,395              | 65.9% |

<sup>1</sup> Policy IMR1 (Five Year Land Supply) in North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

|                       |               |             |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Other household types | 2,433         | 4.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>56,731</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

- 13.4.21 NHLP Policy SP8 seeks to provide a balanced housing mix with a broadly even split between smaller (1 and 2 bedrooms) and larger (3 to 4 bedrooms) properties. According to the AMR 2023-2024, 68% of gross housing completions were for houses, whilst 30% of gross completions were for flats/apartments, in which 1-bed and 2-bed flats/apartments, as well as 3-bed and 4-bed houses are the most prevalent size and type of housing completions in the monitoring year of 2022/23.

#### *Housing Affordability*

- 13.4.22 Housing tenure is a starting point in understanding housing affordability in the District, and is set out in **Table 13.8** below. It shows that a relatively high proportion of households owned their houses either outright or with a mortgage or loan in North Hertfordshire, with 64.8%, higher than the county (64.6%) and national (61.3%) levels. 18.7% of the households lived in social rented homes in 2021, which was the highest compared to the wider county, regional and national figures. Conversely, a lower proportion of households in North Hertfordshire reside in private rented accommodation compared to the county, regional and national averages.

**Table 13.8 - Housing Tenure, 2021**

| Tenure                               |     | Owned      | Shared ownership | Social rented | Private rented/<br>lives rent-free | Total      |
|--------------------------------------|-----|------------|------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>District: North Hertfordshire</b> | No. | 36,761     | 642              | 10,594        | 8,736                              | 56,733     |
|                                      | %   | 64.8       | 1.1              | 18.7          | 15.4                               | 100        |
| <b>County: Hertfordshire</b>         | No. | 311,882    | 5,116            | 85,236        | 80,659                             | 482,893    |
|                                      | %   | 64.6       | 1.1              | 17.7          | 16.7                               | 100        |
| <b>Region: East of England</b>       | No. | 1,714,628  | 26,174           | 407,152       | 480,828                            | 2,628,782  |
|                                      | %   | 65.2       | 1                | 15.5          | 18.3                               | 100        |
| <b>Country: England</b>              | No. | 14,369,065 | 235,951          | 4,005,663     | 4,825,406                          | 23,436,085 |
|                                      | %   | 61.3       | 1                | 17.1          | 20.6                               | 100        |

Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

- 13.4.23 In terms of house prices, according to UK Housing Price Statistics, the average house price in North Hertfordshire in July 2025 was £402,862, which was 35.5% higher than £297,225 in July 2015, as shown in **Table 13.9** below. Despite the average housing price of the District being higher than the regional and national average overall, it is lower than that in Hertfordshire.

**Table 13.9 – Average House Prices, July 2015 and July 2025**

| Average Housing Price                | July 2015 | July 2025 | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| <b>District: North Hertfordshire</b> | £297,225  | £402,862  | 35.5%    |
| <b>County: Hertfordshire</b>         | £342,971  | £460,235  | 34.2%    |
| <b>Region: East of England</b>       | £239,245  | £337,650  | 41.1%    |
| <b>Country: England</b>              | £201,590  | £291,852  | 44.8%    |

Source: UK House Statistics (landregistry.data.gov.uk)

- 13.4.24 For the private rental market, as reflected in the latest monthly rental prices for the private rental market from the ONS figures from August 2015 to August 2025, the average rental price in North Hertfordshire increased from £835 to £1,360 (62.9% growth). The private market monthly rent in the District has been higher than the regional but lower than the national levels in both 2015 and 2025, as further reflected in **Table 13.10**.

**Table 13.10 - Private Rental Monthly Price, August 2015 and August 2025**

| Monthly Rent                         | August 2015 | August 2025 | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>District: North Hertfordshire</b> | £835        | £1,360      | 62.9%    |
| <b>Region: East of England</b>       | £824        | £1,245      | 51.1%    |
| <b>Country: England</b>              | £971        | £1,403      | 44.5%    |

Source: Price Index of Private Rents, UK: monthly price statistics, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

- 13.4.25 The above statistics regarding housing tenure, housing prices and private rental prices have further informed the median affordability ratio in the District (median house price divided by median gross annual workplace-based earnings) from the ONS figures. Overall, both the district and national median affordability ratios grew between 2014 and 2024, with a bigger increase in North Hertfordshire (30.6%). North Hertfordshire had a higher median affordability ratio (11.1) than the national median record (7.7) in 2024, indicating a slightly higher degree of housing affordability in Hertfordshire.

**Table 13.11 - Median Affordability Ratio, 2014 and 2024**

| Median affordability ratio           | 2014 | 2024 | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|----------|
| <b>District: North Hertfordshire</b> | 8.5  | 11.1 | 30.6%    |
| <b>Country: England</b>              | 7.1  | 7.7  | 8.5%     |

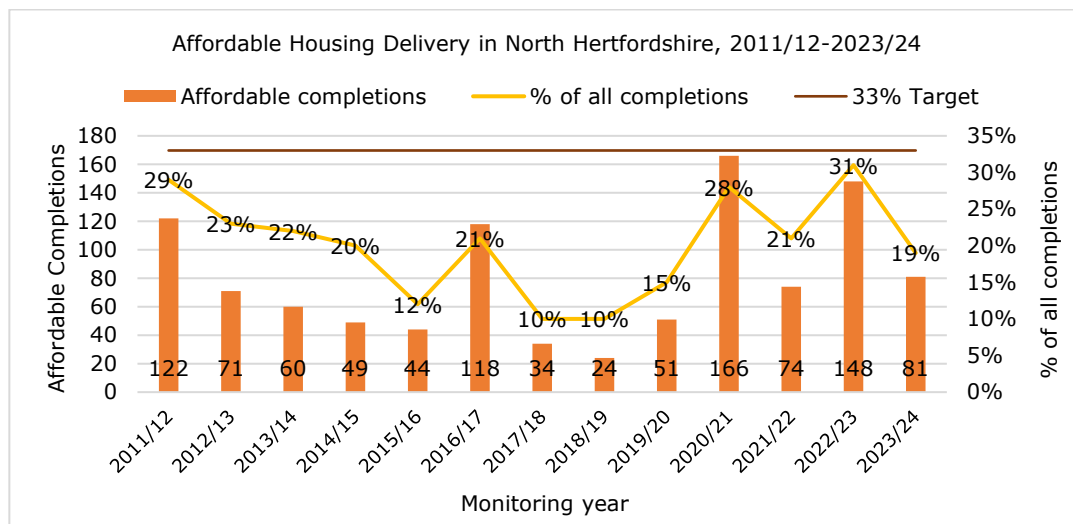
Source: Housing affordability in England and Wales in 2024, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

*Affordable Housing*

- 13.4.26 NHLP Policy HS2 (Affordable Housing) has set out a target of 40% for all new developments with 25 or more dwellings built during the plan period to be affordable housing for local needs, subject to viability. According to NHC's AMR 2023-2024, there

have been fewer total affordable housing completions compared to last year, with 19% of new homes defined as affordable housing, as shown in **Figure 13.4**.

**Figure 13.4 - Affordable Housing Delivery in North Hertfordshire, 2011/12-2023/24**



Source: North Herts Authority Monitoring Report 2023-24

#### Housing Deprivation

13.4.27 **Table 13.12** relates to household deprivation (housing) and indicates that 4.6% of the households in North Hertfordshire were subject to housing deprivation, meaning that their accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating. It was the lowest compared to the county (7.2%), regional (6.2%) and national (7.8%) levels, implying better household conditions in North Hertfordshire.

**Table 13.12 - Households Deprived in Housing Dimension, 2021**

| Household Deprived in the Housing Dimension | No    | Yes  | Total      |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|------|------------|
| <b>District: North Hertfordshire</b>        | 95.4% | 4.6% | 56,732     |
| <b>County: Hertfordshire</b>                | 92.8% | 7.2% | 482,893    |
| <b>Region: East of England</b>              | 93.8% | 6.2% | 2,628,782  |
| <b>Country: England</b>                     | 92.2% | 7.8% | 23,436,083 |

Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

**Retail**

- 13.4.28 The 2024 North Hertfordshire Town Centres and Retail Study, prepared by Lichfields, is the most updated retail review for NHC. It includes an assessment of future retail and leisure-related development needs within North Hertfordshire, as well as the District's main town centres of Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston.
- 13.4.29 According to the Study, key trends such as the implications of Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis continue to affect the high street and demand for town centre uses, which means town centres have had to change and diversify over the past years. Shopping behaviour will continue to change, subject to other emerging changes and uncertainties, and town centres will need to respond by providing a combined retail and leisure experience.
- 13.4.30 In North Hertfordshire, there are four main town centres: Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston and Baldock. These centres compete with each other, and with centres in surrounding authority areas. There are three village centres in Ashwell, Codicote and Knebworth. Ten neighbourhood centres are identified in the District.
- 13.4.31 Each designated centre in the District has been allocated a score out of 16 on a Local Needs Index, which is a useful indicator of whether a centre is meeting some or all the needs of residents, based on the number of categories of shops and services such as food or convenience store, bank, post office, and restaurants.
- 13.4.32 Baldock town centre, the retail centre closest to the Site, scored 12 out of 16, which has the lowest score among all town centres. Additionally, in the survey, respondents were asked which of the town centres they had visited to use shops, services and leisure facilities in the last year, with Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City appearing to be the main non-food shopping destinations in the District. The proportion of all respondents who do most of their non-food shopping at these destinations is relatively high (11.8% and 9.4% respectively). Baldock (29.9%) and Royston (24.8%) have the lowest proportions of regular visitors, reflecting their size and importance in the wider hierarchy.
- 13.4.33 The report also identifies that food shopping was particularly high in Baldock, with a focus on the large Tesco Extra superstore, but non-food shopping was lower than in other centres. Despite all four centres having a reasonable mix of retail and service uses, Baldock has a lower proportion of comparison goods retail than the District and UK averages. Baldock has a strong provision of non-retail services and food/beverage outlets.

## ***Economy and Employment***

### *Employment Profile*

- 13.4.34 North Hertfordshire District hosts a number of internationally important businesses in the environmental technologies, insurance and electronics, as well as companies in pharmaceutical technologies, advanced engineering, information technology and in the service and business support sectors.
- 13.4.35 The area is well-placed in terms of road and rail connections, with good links to both Cambridge and London. According to Census 2021, while 40% of all usual residents (aged 16 years and over in employment) in the wards of Baldock East and Baldock Town work mainly at or from home, 45.4% of them go to work by car or van, 3.9% by train, 0.3% by bus and 9.2% on foot or by bicycle. In terms of distance travelled to work, around 28% of the usual residents travel less than 10 km, meaning that they work locally in Baldock, the neighbouring Letchworth Garden City, as well as Hitchin and Stevenage.
- 13.4.36 In 2023, 54,000 people were estimated to be in employment in North Hertfordshire. Job density (the ratio of jobs to the working age population aged 16-64) in 2022 was 0.8, which was lower than the Hertfordshire average (0.95), the East of England region average (0.88) and the national average (0.84)<sup>2</sup>.
- 13.4.37 As of December 2024, 78.3% of the total jobs in North Hertfordshire were full-time employment, which was lower than 78.4% in Hertfordshire, 77.5% in the East of England and 77% in England. The highest proportion of all persons in employment was in manufacturing with 13%, followed by retail with 9.3%. The median annual earnings of people by place of work were £31,742 as of 2023 and this rate outperformed the county, regional and national levels (£28,696, £28,883 and £29,955, respectively).
- 13.4.38 North Hertfordshire has continued to experience a net gain of employment floorspace since the monitoring period 2018/19. As set out in the Council's AMR 2023-24, a total of 11,606 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace for B1 to B8 and E Use Class have been granted planning permission in this period. Overall, these permissions providing 11,606 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace will result in the loss of 7,906 m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace, meaning that there is still a net gain of 3,700 m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace in 2023/24.

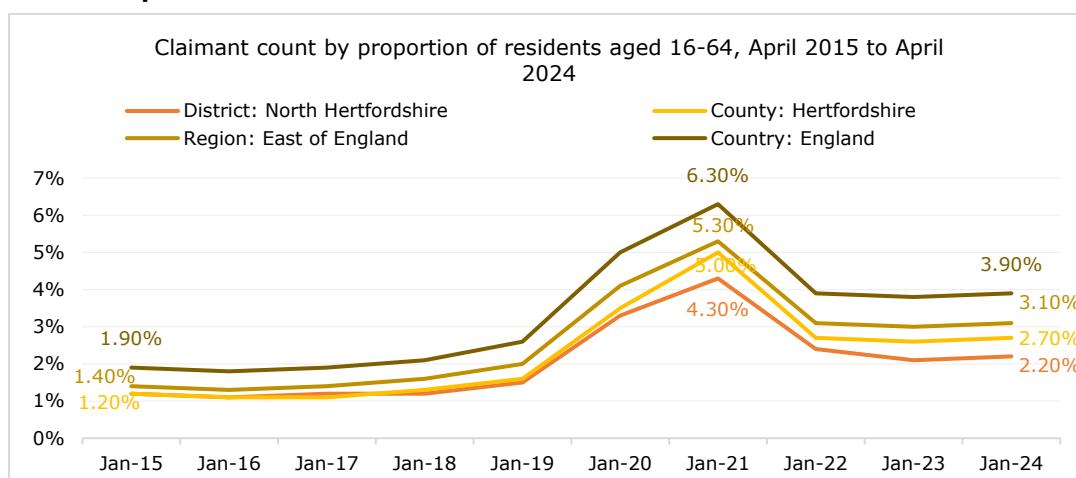
### *Unemployment*

- 13.4.39 Claimant count and employment deprivation are the two measures used to understand levels of unemployment in the area.
- 13.4.40 Claimant count is a measure of the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed, based on administrative data from the benefits system.

<sup>2</sup> Employment, Jobs and Skills Profile for North Hertfordshire, Herts Insight  
(<https://www.reports.esriuk.com/view-report/4ea7205ad2ef485faed8a8af237b2546/E07000099>)

According to the claimant count as shown in **Figure 13.5**, North Hertfordshire had an increasing number of claimant counts for the proportion of residents aged 16-64 (presumed to be within the workforce age group), from 1.2% in January 2015 to 2.2% in January 2024. However, this is consistent with the county, regional and national trends, which experienced rapid changes in 2020 to 2021 due to the global pandemic. The number of working residents aged 16-64 that claimed unemployment benefits in the District had been lower than that in Hertfordshire, East of England and England overall, with a total growth of 83.3% over the period, lower than that of 125% in Hertfordshire, 121.4% in East of England and 105.3% in England.

**Figure 13.5 - Claimants Count by Proportion of Residents Aged 16-64, April 2020 to April 2024**



Source: Claimants count from April 2015 to April 2024, Nomis ([www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk))

- 13.4.41 Employment deprivation figures define a household as deprived in terms of employment if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability. In North Hertfordshire, only 8.6% of total households were deprived in the employment dimension, which was lower than the rate of Hertfordshire with 9.3%, as well as the regional and national rate with 10% and 11.8% respectively, implying that employment within households in North Hertfordshire has outperformed the average level.

**Table 13.13 - Households Deprived in the Employment Dimension, 2021**

| Household Deprived in the Employment Dimension | No    | Yes   | Total      |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|------------|
| <b>District: North Hertfordshire</b>           | 91.2% | 8.6%  | 56,732     |
| <b>County: Hertfordshire</b>                   | 90.7% | 9.3%  | 482,893    |
| <b>Region: East of England</b>                 | 89.9% | 10.0% | 2,628,782  |
| <b>Country: England</b>                        | 88.2% | 11.8% | 23,436,085 |

Source: Census 2021, ONS ([ons.gov.uk](http://ons.gov.uk))

## Education

### Education Deprivation

- 13.4.42 In assessing the education deprivation of the households, a household is classified as deprived in the education dimension if no one has at least level 2 education and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student. As of 2021, in North Hertfordshire, 17.8% of households were deprived in the education dimension. This was lower than the county (18.7%), regional (22.6%) and national (21.5%) rates.

**Table 13.14 - Households Deprived in the Education Dimension, 2021**

| Household Deprived in the Education Dimension | No         |       | Yes       |       | Total      |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|
| District: North Hertfordshire                 | 46,620     | 82.2% | 10,112    | 17.8% | 56,732     |
| County: Hertfordshire                         | 392,734    | 81.3% | 90,159    | 18.7% | 482,893    |
| Region: East of England                       | 2,035,567  | 77.4% | 593,215   | 22.6% | 2,628,782  |
| Country: England                              | 18,398,016 | 78.5% | 5,038,069 | 21.5% | 23,436,085 |

Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

#### *Nursery Provision*

- 13.4.43 **Table 13.15** indicates that there are 17 nursery organisations within a 2-mile walking distance from the edge of the Site, four of which are co-located with primary schools. They comprise day nursery centres, pre-school playgroups, school nursery classes and out-of-school nurseries. The roll size of most of these providers has exceeded their capacity according to their respective Ofsted Inspection Reports, indicating high demand for nursery care and education services.
- 13.4.44 The closest nursery service provider is Puddleducks Day Nursery, 0.4 miles away from the edge of the Site, which provides service to children aged 1 to 4.

**Table 13.15 - Nurseries within a 2-mile Walking Distance of the Site's Edge**

| Nursery provider               | Walking distance from the Site's edge (Postcode) | Age | Capacity | Roll size | Performance (Ofsted) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----|----------|-----------|----------------------|
| <b>Day Nursery</b>             |                                                  |     |          |           |                      |
| Puddleducks Day Nursery        | 0.4 miles (SG7 6AE)                              | 1-4 | 100      | 89        | Good                 |
| Enchanted Day Nursery          | 0.8 miles (SG6 1AQ)                              | 0-4 | 111      | 109       | Good                 |
| Wonderland Day Nursery Limited | 1.5 miles (SG6 1FR)                              | 0-4 | 105      | 142       | Good                 |
| Kattz Kidz                     | 2 miles (SG6 3BQ)                                | 0-4 | 47       | 58        | Good                 |
| <b>Pre-school playgroup</b>    |                                                  |     |          |           |                      |
| Merry-Go-Round-Under 5's       | 0.6 miles (SG7 6PB)                              | 2-4 | 32       | 28        | Good                 |
| Magic Moments Pre-school       | 0.6 miles (SG7 6EN)                              | 2-4 | 24       | 33        | Good                 |
| Glebe Kids                     | 1.7 miles (SG6 1DR)                              | 2-5 | 60       | 75        | Outstanding          |

| Nursery provider                            | Walking distance from the Site's edge (Postcode) | Age  | Capacity                      | Roll size | Performance (Ofsted) |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Cherry Tree Pre-School                      | 1.8 miles (SG6 2JZ)                              | 0-5  | Newly opened in February 2025 |           |                      |
| Priory Pre-School, Norton                   | 2 miles (SG6 1DA)                                | 2-4  | 20                            | 32        | Good                 |
| <b>School nursery class</b>                 |                                                  |      |                               |           |                      |
| Weston Way Nursery School                   | 1.1 miles (SG7 6HD)                              | 3-5  | -                             | 77        | Outstanding          |
| Norton St Nicholas CofE (VA) Primary School | 1.3 miles (SG6 1AG)                              | 3-11 | -                             | 226       | Good                 |
| Garden City Academy                         | 2 miles (SG6 2JZ)                                | 3-11 | -                             | 188       | Good                 |
| Hillshott Infant School and Nursery         | 2 miles (SG6 1QE)                                | 3-7  | -                             | 209       | Outstanding          |
| Northfields Infants and Nursery School      | 2 miles (SG6 4PT)                                | 3-7  | -                             | 157       | Good                 |
| Weston Primary & Nursery School             | 2 miles (SG4 7AG)                                | 3-11 | -                             | 126       | Good                 |
| <b>Out-of-school care</b>                   |                                                  |      |                               |           |                      |
| Jousters At St Mary's                       | 1.3 miles (SG7 6HY)                              | 4-11 | 32                            | 54        | Met                  |
| Funzone Out Of School Club                  | 1.9 miles (SG6 1NX)                              | 4-11 | 94                            | 118       | Met                  |

Source: Hertfordshire Directory ([directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk)) and the most recent Ofsted Inspection Reports ([reports.ofsted.gov.uk](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk))

#### *Primary Education*

- 13.4.45 According to the DFE's Travel to School for Children of Compulsory School Age - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities dated January 2024, the statutory walking distance to school for students aged 8 or below is 2 miles, while for those aged 8 or over it is 3 miles. In this section, a 2-mile walking distance is used to understand the primary education baseline condition surrounding the Site.
- 13.4.46 Out of 33 infant, junior or primary schools in North Hertfordshire, 6 of them are within a two-mile walking distance from the Site, according to the Hertfordshire school directory website.
- 13.4.47 According to the 2024/25 school admission statistics provided by HCC, these 6 primary and infant schools within two miles of the Site offered a total of 210 reception places, leaving 37 spare spaces (17.6%) following 173 allocation places in 2024/2025. The majority of the schools within the 2-mile catchment area of the Site have capacity and all have received a 'Good' rating in their most recent Ofsted Inspection Reports.
- 13.4.48 The nearest primary school to the Site is the St John's RC Primary School, 0.3 miles away from the edge of the BA2 Site.

**Table 13.16 - Primary Schools within 2-mile Walking Distance from the Site's Edge**

| Primary School (Category)                                       | Walking distance from the Site's edge (Postcode) | Age  | 2024/25 available reception places (A) | 2024/25 allocation (B) | Spare spaces (A-B) | Ofsted |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| <b>Primary School</b>                                           |                                                  |      |                                        |                        |                    |        |
| St John's RC Primary School (Academy)                           | 0.3 miles (SG7 6TT)                              | 4-11 | 30                                     | 22                     | 8                  | Good   |
| Hartsfield JMI School (Community)                               | 0.4 miles (SG7 6PB)                              | 4-11 | 60                                     | 60                     | 0                  | Good   |
| Norton St Nicholas C of E (VA) Primary School (Voluntary Aided) | 1.4 miles (SG6 1AG)                              | 3-11 | 30                                     | 30                     | 0                  | Good   |
| Garden City Academy (Academy)                                   | 2 miles (SG6 2JZ)                                | 3-11 | 30                                     | 24                     | 6                  | Good   |
| <b>Infant / Junior School</b>                                   |                                                  |      |                                        |                        |                    |        |
| St Mary's CofE (VC) Infant School (Voluntary Controlled)        | 1.1 miles (SG12 0RL)                             | 5-8  | 60                                     | 37                     | 23                 | Good   |
| St Mary's CofE (VC) Junior School (Voluntary Controlled)        |                                                  | 9-11 |                                        |                        |                    | Good   |

Source: Hertfordshire Directory ([directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk](https://directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk)), Hertfordshire School Planning (<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/school-planning/school-planning.aspx>) and the most recent Ofsted Inspection Reports ([reports.ofsted.gov.uk](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk))

#### Secondary Education

- 13.4.49 To understand the nearby secondary education to the Site in Hertfordshire, priority areas are set up for secondary schools so that the students who live within the school's Priority Area will be considered for a place before children who live outside the priority area, as shown in **Appendix 13.2**.
- 13.4.50 There are 6 secondary schools in North Hertfordshire, and only the Knights Templar School in Baldock is within the 3-mile radius from the edge of the Site, and within the Priority Area that covers the Site. There are two additional secondary schools within the nearby priority area of Letchworth Garden City. However, these are just outside the 3-mile walking distance buffer from the edge of the Site.
- 13.4.51 The three schools offered a total of 510 Year 7 places in 2024/25, leaving 18 spare Year 7 spaces (3.5%). All of them have a 'Good' rating in accordance with the respective latest Ofsted Inspection Reports.

**Table 13.17 - Secondary Schools within 3-mile Walking Distance from the Site's Edge within the Priority Areas Covering or Near the Site**

| Secondary School (Category)                                           | Walking distance from the Site's edge (Postcode) | Age   | 2024/25 available reception places (A) | 2024/25 allocation (B) | Spare spaces (A-B) | Ofsted |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| <b>Within the Priority Area of 'Baldock and Surrounding Villages'</b> |                                                  |       |                                        |                        |                    |        |
| The Knights Templar School (Academy)                                  | 0.7 miles (SG7 6DZ)                              | 11-18 | 210                                    | 208                    | 2                  | Good   |
| <b>Within the Priority Area of 'Letchworth Garden City'</b>           |                                                  |       |                                        |                        |                    |        |
| Fearnhill School Maths and Computing College (Foundation)             | 3.3 miles (SG6 4BA)                              | 11-18 | 120                                    | 117                    | 3                  | Good   |
| The Highfield School (Academy)                                        | 3.3 miles (SG6 3QA)                              | 11-18 | 180                                    | 167                    | 13                 | Good   |

Source: Hertfordshire Directory ([directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk](https://directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk)), Hertfordshire School Planning (<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/school-planning/school-planning.aspx>) and the most recent Ofsted Inspection Reports ([reports.ofsted.gov.uk](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk))

#### *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support*

13.4.52 According to the SEND Strategy 2022-2025, around 36,000 children and young people in Hertfordshire have an identified SEND need, which is equivalent to around 13.3% of pupils in Hertfordshire schools. Hertfordshire has a slightly higher proportion of pupils receiving SEN Support compared to its statistical neighbours and the England position overall. The number of pupils with SEN Support in Hertfordshire schools increased from 24,493 in 2015/16 to 27,565 in 2019/20, comprising a 12.5% growth.

13.4.53 In North Hertfordshire, there are two special educational needs schools within a 3-mile radius of the edge of the Site as shown in **Table 13.18**.

**Table 13.18 - Special Schools and Further Education Colleges in Hertfordshire**

| Schools                       | Type of the school and need support                                         | Walking distance from the centre of the Site (postcode) | Age   | Performance (Ofsted) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| Brandles School               | Special male school<br>For social, emotional and mental health difficulties | 2.1 miles (SG7 6EY)                                     | 11-16 | Inadequate           |
| Woolgrove School (Letchworth) | Special mixed academy<br>For pupils with learning disabilities              | 2.2 miles (SG6 2PT)                                     | 4-11  | Good                 |

| Schools                              | Type of the school and need support                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Walking distance from the centre of the Site (postcode) | Age   | Performance (Ofsted) |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| North Herts Education Support Centre | Working with young people, schools, families and other associated professionals providing education for young people who are permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion from their school in the North Hertfordshire area | 4 miles (SG6 3LY)                                       | N/A   | Outstanding          |
| The Priory School (Hitchin)          | Mixed secondary school<br>Providing Specialist Resource for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, and/or autism                                                                                                       | 7.2 miles (SG5 2UR)                                     | 11-16 | Good                 |

Source: Hertfordshire Directory (directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk) and the most recent Ofsted Inspection Reports (reports.ofsted.gov.uk)

#### *Adult Education*

13.4.54 Adult education includes all education and training that takes place at the age of 18 and above, following the definition from Health Equity Evidence Review, and is provided across the County by HCC. It is mainly supported by *Step2Skills*, and the adult community learning and employment support service, which provides opportunities for adults in Hertfordshire to get involved in learning and employment within the community. A wide range of courses is provided, including digital skills, arts and crafts, and accredited learning. In June 2024, courses regarding CAD employability and work skills were provided in North Hertfordshire.

13.4.55 From 2022 to 2023, there were a total of 1,818,480 participants in adult (19+) further education and skills in England, increasing by 5.8% from 1,718,790 in 2021-2022. According to Step2Skills' Needs Analysis Funding Year 2023/24, there were a total of 4,000 participants in adult (19+) further education and skills in 2021/22, in which 8% of whom were residents of North Hertfordshire.

#### **Parks and Open Space**

13.4.56 The latest evidence-based document in relation to open space, North Hertfordshire Open Space and Standards 2016, provided an updated position on the latest provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities in the District. Seven types of open spaces have been identified, and their definitions are further explained in **Appendix 13.3**.

- Parks and gardens;
- Amenity greenspace (including recreation space);
- Provision for children and young people;
- Outdoor sports facilities;
- Natural and semi-natural greenspace;
- Green corridors;
- Cemeteries and churchyards; and

- Allotments.

13.4.57 In assessing the open space provision in the District, the review considered provision across the six spatial areas: Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston, Rural Area East and Rural Area West. According to the Review, the District has a high level of open space provision in general. Nevertheless, Baldock has the least open space provision with only 78.52ha in total as set out in **Table 13.19** below. In terms of the hectares of open space per 1,000 population, the area has only 7.64ha of open space provided per 1,000 population as of 2016, which is the second lowest compared to other areas.

**Table 13.19 - Open Space Provision in North Hertfordshire, 2016**

| Area                   | Population    | Hectares of open space | Open space per provision per 1,000 population |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Baldock</b>         | <b>10,280</b> | <b>78.52 ha</b>        | <b>7.64</b>                                   |
| Hitchin                | 32,721        | 269.28 ha              | 8.23                                          |
| Letchworth Garden City | 33,249        | 210.56 ha              | 6.33                                          |
| Royston                | 15,781        | 127.57 ha              | 8.08                                          |
| Rural Area East        | 7,395         | 540.22 ha              | 73.05                                         |
| Rural Area West        | 27,678        | 1194.06 ha             | 43.14                                         |

Source: North Hertfordshire Open Space and Standards 2016

13.4.58 The predominant type of open space in Baldock is natural and semi-natural green space (35.59ha), while the lowest types of provision are provision for children and young people (0.98ha) and green corridors (1.68ha). Compared to other areas in the District, the provision of amenity green spaces and green corridors in Baldock is the lowest, while the area has the highest provision of allotments.

**Table 13.20 - NHC's standards for typologies of open space and their respective provision in the District overall and Baldock**

| Type                                            | Quantity and total area |                   | Ha per 1,000 population |               | Standard (Ha per 1,000 population) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
|                                                 | The District            | Baldock           | The District            | Baldock       |                                    |
| Parks and gardens                               | 11 sites, 59.49ha       | 2 sites, 3.94ha   | 0.73                    | 0.38          | No standard                        |
| Amenity greenspace (including recreation space) | 200 sites, 369.26ha     | 15 sites, 5.78ha  | 2.9                     | 0.56 (lowest) | 2                                  |
| Provision for children and young people         | 73 sites, 12.8ha        | 5 sites, 0.98ha   | 0.1                     | 0.09          | 0.57                               |
| Outdoor sports facilities                       | 113 sites, 544.52ha     | 10 sites, 25.05ha | 4.28                    | 2.5           | 1.6                                |
| Natural and semi-natural greenspace             | 112 sites, 1,195.61ha   | 4 sites, 35.59ha  | 9.41                    | 3.55          | 2                                  |

| Type                       | Quantity and total area |                 | Ha per 1,000 population |                | Standard (Ha per 1,000 population) |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
|                            | The District            | Baldock         | The District            | Baldock        |                                    |
| Green corridors            | 46 sites, 59.04ha       | 4 sites, 1.68ha | 0.46                    | 0.16 (lowest)  | No standard                        |
| Cemeteries and churchyards | 50 sites, 36.55ha       | 2 sites, 1.74ha | 0.29                    | 0.17           | No standard                        |
| Allotments                 | 43 sites, 32.4ha        | 3 sites, 3.76ha | 0.25                    | 0.37 (highest) | 0.25                               |

Source: North Hertfordshire Open Space Review & Standards 2016

### **Sports Facilities**

13.4.59 North Hertfordshire District Council Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report (August 2015) presented a supply and demand assessment of a number of playing pitches and outdoor pitch sports in North Hertfordshire, including:

- football pitches (grass and third generation turf (3G));
- cricket pitches;
- rugby union pitches;
- hockey pitches (artificial grass pitches (AGPs));
- tennis courts;
- bowling greens;
- athletics tracks; and
- golf courses.

13.4.60 The quality and capacity of the eight types of sports facilities, except golf courses, due to their nature of private ownership, have been summarised in **Appendix 13.4** in accordance with the Assessment Report.

13.4.61 Overall, the majority of the sports facilities in North Hertfordshire have spare capacity and are considered adequate to meet the needs of the current and future needs, including football pitches, artificial grass pitches, cricket squares, tennis courts, bowling greens and golf courses. Nonetheless, the reports stated that focus should be placed on improving the quality of the sports facilities, especially football courts, with only 46% of them being of good quality, rugby fields and tennis courts, particularly those located at council sites. The analysis area of Letchworth and Baldock and District generally aligns with the overall provision in the District, except having a shortfall of spare capacity of cricket pitches when factoring in displaced demand.

### **Libraries**

13.4.62 As shown in **Table 13.21**, there are five public libraries in North Hertfordshire. The closest library to the Site is Baldock Library, around 1.6 miles driving distance from the Site, followed by Letchworth Library with 4 miles driving distance from the centre of the Site. Meanwhile, Arlesey Resource Centre and Library in the nearby Central Bedfordshire within the county of Bedfordshire, was also in proximity to the Site, with around 6.6 miles driving distance.

**Table 13.21 - Public Libraries in North Hertfordshire**

| Library                             | Offer                   | Postcode | Driving distance to the centre of the Site |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Within North Hertfordshire</b>   |                         |          |                                            |
| Baldock Library                     | Library                 | SG7 6DH  | 1.6 miles                                  |
| Letchworth Library                  | Library                 | SG6 3PF  | 4 miles                                    |
| Hitchin Library                     | Library and study space | SG5 1EW  | 6.6 miles                                  |
| Royston Library                     | Library                 | SG8 9JN  | 9.8 miles                                  |
| Knebworth Community Library         | Library                 | SG3 6ER  | 11.4 miles                                 |
| <b>Outside North Hertfordshire</b>  |                         |          |                                            |
| Arlesey Resource Centre and Library | Library                 | SG15 6SN | 6.1 miles                                  |

Source: Library opening hours and locations, Hertfordshire County Council website ([www.hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk))

### **Crime and Safety**

- 13.4.63 According to Police.uk, the Site is under the coverage of the local policing team of Royston and Royston Rural team. Baldock itself is covered by the local policing team of Letchworth and Baldock Town.
- 13.4.64 In terms of the crime types within and surrounding the Site from May 2024 to April 2025, violence and sexual offences were the common crime types, occupying 33.2% and 37.0% respectively, followed by anti-social behaviour with 22.7% and 21.0%, as detailed in **Table 13.22** below.

**Table 13.22 - Crime Types in North Hertfordshire, May 2024 to April 2025**

| Crime Type              | Royston and Royston Rural |       | Letchworth and Baldock Town |       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|
|                         | Crime Count               | %     | Crime Count                 | %     |
| Anti-social behaviour   | 345                       | 22.7% | 803                         | 21.0% |
| Bicycle theft           | 16                        | 1.1%  | 31                          | 0.8%  |
| Burglary                | 88                        | 5.8%  | 125                         | 3.3%  |
| Criminal damage & arson | 104                       | 6.9%  | 250                         | 6.5%  |
| Drugs                   | 30                        | 2.0%  | 66                          | 1.7%  |
| Other theft             | 157                       | 10.3% | 284                         | 7.4%  |
| Possession of weapons   | 5                         | 0.3%  | 26                          | 0.7%  |
| Public order            | 75                        | 4.9%  | 193                         | 5.1%  |
| Robbery                 | 6                         | 0.4%  | 36                          | 0.9%  |
| Shoplifting             | 59                        | 3.9%  | 344                         | 9.0%  |

| Crime Type                 | Royston and Royston Rural |             | Letchworth and Baldock Town |             |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
|                            | Crime Count               | %           | Crime Count                 | %           |
| Theft from the person      | 10                        | 0.7%        | 27                          | 0.7%        |
| Vehicle crime              | 89                        | 5.9%        | 150                         | 3.9%        |
| Violence & sexual offences | 503                       | 33.2%       | 1415                        | 37.0%       |
| Other crime                | 30                        | 2.0%        | 71                          | 1.9%        |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>1,517</b>              | <b>100%</b> | <b>3,821</b>                | <b>100%</b> |

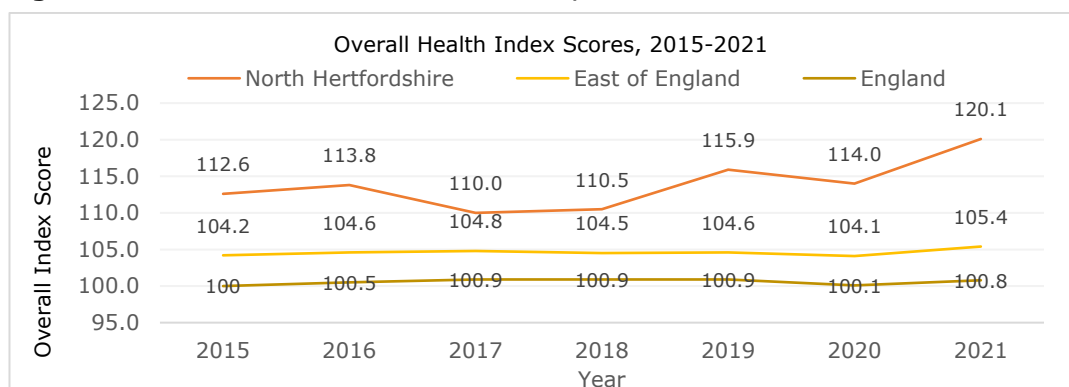
Source: Police UK (www.police.uk)

## Health

### Health Overview

- 13.4.65 The Health Index system is a measure presented by ONS to assess health in England, in which a score of 100 represents that of average health in England in 2015, meaning a score higher than 100 indicates better health. In North Hertfordshire, the overall health index score from 2015 to 2021 increased from 112.6 to 120.1, generally higher than the East of England and England overall.

**Figure 13.6 – Overall Health Index Scores, 2015-2021**



Source: Health Index Scores in England, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

- 13.4.66 The general health data from the Census 2021 further shows an overview of perceived health condition reported by the usual residents between 2011 and 2021, with an increase in those reporting good or very good health condition, as illustrated in **Table 13.23** below. In North Hertfordshire, residents reporting that they are in very good or good health slightly increased from 84.3% in 2011 to 84.6% in 2021. The figure in 2021 was lower than the county average (85.4%) but higher than the regional (82.9%) and national (82.2%) averages.

**Table 13.23 - General Health Conditions Reported by Residents, 2011 and 2021**

| General Health Condition |      | Very good health      | Good health           | Fair health          | Bad health          | Very bad health   |
|--------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| North Hertfordshire      | 2011 | 50.2%<br>(63,801)     | 34.1%<br>(43,360)     | 11.8%<br>(14,965)    | 3.1%<br>(3,958)     | 0.8%<br>(1,030)   |
|                          | 2021 | 50.6%<br>(67,385)     | 34.0%<br>(45,317)     | 11.5%<br>(15,363)    | 3.1%<br>(4,089)     | 0.8%<br>(1,056)   |
| Hertfordshire            | 2011 | 50.9%<br>(568,026)    | 33.9%<br>(378,624)    | 11.3%<br>(125,609)   | 3.1%<br>(34,316)    | 0.9%<br>(9,487)   |
|                          | 2021 | 52.6%<br>(630,028)    | 32.9%<br>(394,320)    | 10.8%<br>(129,404)   | 3.0%<br>(35,371)    | 0.8%<br>(9,675)   |
| East of England          | 2011 | 47.2%<br>(2,761,271)  | 35.2%<br>(2,060,157)  | 12.9%<br>(752,324)   | 3.6%<br>(212,830)   | 1.0%<br>(60,383)  |
|                          | 2021 | 48.3%<br>(3,058,673)  | 34.6%<br>(2,194,562)  | 12.5%<br>(791,639)   | 3.6%<br>(226,719)   | 1.0%<br>(63,479)  |
| England                  | 2011 | 47.3%<br>(25,005,712) | 34.2%<br>(18,141,457) | 13.1%<br>(6,954,092) | 4.2%<br>(2,250,446) | 1.2%<br>(660,749) |
|                          | 2021 | 48.5%<br>(27,390,829) | 33.7%<br>(19,040,735) | 12.7%<br>(7,147,346) | 4.0%<br>(2,248,255) | 1.2%<br>(662,881) |

Source: Census 2011 and Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

*Health and Lifestyle*

13.4.67 The importance of physical activity for individual and community health has been highlighted through the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has become more important than ever to focus on preventative health measures, including physical activity, and to invest in those people who need it most<sup>3</sup>.

13.4.68 The percentage of physically active children and adults in Hertfordshire increased from 2019/20 to 2022/23. As of 2022/2023, percentages of both physically active children and adults were the highest compared to the regional and national levels, as set out in **Table 13.24** below.

**Table 13.24 – Percentage of Physically Active Children and Adults, 2019/20 to 2022/23**

| Year  | County: Hertfordshire |                   | Region: East of England |                   | Country: England     |                   |
|-------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
|       | Children (aged 5-16)  | Adults (aged 19+) | Children (aged 5-16)    | Adults (aged 19+) | Children (aged 5-16) | Adults (aged 19+) |
| 19/20 | 44.3%                 | 69.2%             | 45.5%                   | 67.3%             | 44.9%                | 66.4%             |
| 20/21 | 47.5%                 | 66.8%             | 43.2%                   | 65.7%             | 44.6%                | 65.9%             |
| 21/22 | 47.7%                 | 69.7%             | 46.8%                   | 68.0%             | 47.2%                | 67.3%             |
| 22/23 | 50.9%                 | 69.8%             | 48.3%                   | 67.7%             | 47%                  | 67%               |

Source: Herts Insights (<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/herts-insight/home.aspx>)<sup>3</sup> Hertfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026, HCC

- 13.4.69 In terms of the obesity rate, as shown in **Table 13.25** below, while the percentage of children aged 4 to 5 classified as overweight or obese in Hertfordshire slightly declined from 20.1% in 2019/20 to 18.2% in 2022/23, that of adults had an increasing trend in the same period. Nevertheless, the percentage in Hertfordshire had been the lowest compared to the regional and national figures.

**Table 13.25 – Percentage of Children and Adults Classified as Overweight or Obese, 2019/20 to 2022/23**

| Year  | County: Hertfordshire |                   | Region: East of England |                   | Country: England    |                   |
|-------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|       | Children (aged 4-5)   | Adults (aged 18+) | Children (aged 4-5)     | Adults (aged 18+) | Children (aged 4-5) | Adults (aged 18+) |
| 19/20 | 20.1%                 | 59.6%             | 21.8%                   | 62.2%             | 23.0%               | 62.6%             |
| 20/21 | N/A                   | 61.8%             | 28.1%                   | 63.8%             | 27.7%               | 63.3%             |
| 21/22 | 19.7%                 | 60.8%             | 20.9%                   | 63.9%             | 22.3%               | 63.8%             |
| 22/23 | 18.2%                 | 60.9%             | 20.0%                   | 64.8%             | 21.3                | 64.0%             |

Source: Herts Insights (<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/herts-insight/home.aspx>)

#### *Health Deprivation and Disability*

- 13.4.70 Household deprivation in the health and disability dimension also includes the health conditions of residents, which classifies a household as deprived in the health dimension if any person in the household has general health that is bad, very bad, or is identified as disabled. As shown in Census 2021, nearly 30% of the households in North Hertfordshire were deprived in the health and disability dimension, which was slightly higher than the Hertfordshire average, but lower than the regional and national levels.

**Table 13.26 - Households deprived in healthy and disability dimension, 2021**

| Area                          | Households <u>are not</u> in health and disability deprivation | Households <u>are</u> in health and disability deprivation |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| District: North Hertfordshire | 39,792 (70.1%)                                                 | 16,940 (29.9%)                                             |
| County: Hertfordshire         | 345,473 (71.6%)                                                | 137,420 (28.5%)                                            |
| Regional: East of England     | 1,800,705 (68.5%)                                              | 828,077 (31.5%)                                            |
| Country: England              | 15,766,885 (67.3%)                                             | 7,669,200 (32.7%)                                          |

Source: Census 2021, ONS ([ons.gov.uk](https://ons.gov.uk))

- 13.4.71 In terms of long-term health problems or disability for usual residents, as set out in Census 2021, a total of 16% of residents in North Hertfordshire are disabled under the Equality Act, 8.1% of the usual residents are not disabled but have long-term health conditions without limiting everyday activities. These figures are higher than those of Hertfordshire but lower than the regional and national figures overall.

**Table 13.27 – Percentage of Long-Term Health Problems or Disability for Usual Residents (under the Equality Act), 2021**

| Area                          | Disabled: day-to-day activities limited a lot | Disabled: day-to-day activities limited a little | Not disabled: has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| District: North Hertfordshire | 5.9%                                          | 10.1%                                            | 8.1%                                                                                                      |
| County: Hertfordshire         | 5.5%                                          | 8.9%                                             | 6.9%                                                                                                      |
| Regional: East of England     | 6.6%                                          | 10%                                              | 7.2%                                                                                                      |
| Country: England              | 7.3%                                          | 10%                                              | 6.8%                                                                                                      |

Source: Census 2021, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

- 13.4.72 As for the mental health conditions of residents, according to the Annual Population Survey conducted by ONS in relation to residents' well-being, four measures are asked on an 11-point scale, as set out in **Table 13.28** below. Overall, the average well-being scores in all four measures in Hertfordshire are similar to the average scores in the East of England and are higher than the country's averages.

**Table 13.28 – Average Well-Being Score in 2022-2023**

| Area                    | Average well-being score (0 'not at all' - 10 'completely') |                                    |           |         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
|                         | Life satisfaction                                           | Are things done in life worthwhile | Happiness | Anxiety |
| County: Hertfordshire   | 7.5                                                         | 7.8                                | 7.4       | 3.3     |
| Region: East of England | 7.5                                                         | 7.8                                | 7.4       | 3.2     |
| Country: England        | 7.4                                                         | 7.7                                | 7.4       | 3.2     |

Source: Annual Population Survey 2022/23, ONS (ons.gov.uk)

*Health Infrastructure**Healthcare Services*

- 13.4.73 On the wider scale, integrated care systems (ICS) are established to serve all regions of England. Located within the county of Hertfordshire in the East of England, North Hertfordshire is covered by Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS, managed by their Integrated Care Board (ICB)<sup>4</sup>. This ICS oversees a number of NHS trusts that deliver a range of healthcare services across hospitals and specialist units. The Site is covered under the East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust.
- 13.4.74 The NHS trust also collaborates with the primary care networks (PCNs), grouped by the GP practices, to provide joined-up care, which is also overseen by the ICB. Locally in

<sup>4</sup> About our NHS Integrated Care Board, NHS Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board (<https://www.hertsandwestessex.ics.nhs.uk/about/icb/about/>)

North Hertfordshire, there are 10 GP practices grouped into two primary care networks (PCNs), in which the Site is covered under the Icknield PCN.

General Practice Provision (GP)

- 13.4.75 Each GP provision comprises its own catchment area, in which the Site is currently within the catchment area of two GP surgeries. While The Baldock Surgery covers the entirety of the Site, Spring House Health serves mainly the southern half of the Site.
- 13.4.76 The closest surgery to the Site is The Baldock Surgery, 1.3 miles away from the centre of the Site. It consists of 1,583 patients per GP, lower than the national average of 2,257 patients per GP, according to the March 2025 record, and is currently accepting new patients.

**Table 13.29 – GP Provision within the Site**

| Name of Surgery     | Distance from the centre of the Site | Number of registered patients (June 2025) | No. of GPs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Patients per GP | Current status (May 2025) |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| The Baldock Surgery | 1.3 miles                            | 12,666                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 GPs</li> <li>• 6 trainee GPs</li> <li>• 4 nurses</li> <li>• 2 paramedic practitioners</li> <li>• 2 healthcare assistants</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                 | 1,583           | Accepting new patients    |
| Spring House Health | 19 miles                             | 22,289                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 GPs</li> <li>• 2 mental health nurses</li> <li>• 1 nurse practitioner</li> <li>• 1 practice nurse</li> <li>• 1 healthcare assistant</li> <li>• 2 pharmacists</li> <li>• 1 care coordinator</li> <li>• 3 social prescribers</li> <li>• 2 physiotherapists</li> </ul> | 2,786           | Accepting new patients    |

Source: NHS website ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) and Digital NHS website ([digital.nhs.uk](http://digital.nhs.uk))

Dentist

- 13.4.77 There are 6 Dental Practices within 3 miles of the centre of the Site, three of which are currently accepting new NHS patients. The 6 dental practices are employing a total of 33 dentists. The closest dental practice to the Site is mydentist, 0.6 miles from the centre of the Site. More information is available in **Table 13.30** below.

**Table 13.30 - Local Dental Practices within 3 miles of the Site**

| Name                                  | Distance from the Site | No. of dentists | Current status (May 2025)                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| mydentist, Whitehorse Street, Baldock | 0.6 miles (SG7 6QN)    | 6               | Accepting new patients                                 |
| The Arch Dental Care                  | 1.9 miles (SG7 6BG)    | 7               | Accepting new patients                                 |
| Park View Dental Care                 | 2.2 miles (SG6 1NY)    | 7               | Not accepting new NHS patients for routine dental care |

| Name                      | Distance from the Site | No. of dentists | Current status (May 2025)                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Purleys Dental Care       | 2.4 miles (SG6 4TS)    | 6               | Not accepting new NHS patients for routine dental care |
| Letchworth Dental Surgery | 2.4 miles (SG6 3DE)    | 4               | Accepting new patients                                 |
| Stotfold Dental Clinic    | 2.5 miles (SG5 4LY)    | 3               | Not confirmed                                          |

Source: NHS website (www.nhs.uk)

#### Social Care Facilities

13.4.78 Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for offering adult social care services that support older, disabled and neurodiverse people, their families and carers.

13.4.79 For long-term support, according to the social care overview by NHS Digital, access to long-term support of community care, nursing and residential care in Hertfordshire is similar to the regional and national levels. In terms of community care for people aged between 18 to 64, 30.5% of clients get access to long-term support, which is more than 28.7% in the East of England and 29.9% in England overall, as shown in **Table 13.31**.

**Table 13.31 - Percentage of Total Clients Accessing Short-Term and Long-Term Adult Social Care Support, 2022-2023**

| Long-term care: percentage of clients accessing long-term support | Hertfordshire | East of England | England |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------|
| Community care (including prison): 18 to 64                       | 30.5%         | 28.7%           | 29.9%   |
| Community care (including prison): 65 and over                    | 40.7%         | 40.8%           | 40.2%   |
| Nursing and residential care: 18 to 64                            | 5.9%          | 5.2%            | 5.2%    |
| Nursing and residential care: 65 and over                         | 22.9%         | 25.3%           | 24.8%   |

Source: Adult Social Care Overview Interactive Report 2014-2023, NHS Digital (www.digital.nhs.uk)

#### Care Homes

13.4.80 A care home in England is a residential facility where individuals, typically older adults or those with disabilities, receive support with daily activities. They provide a safe and supportive environment for people who can no longer live independently, offer professional medical and personal care, as well as reduce isolation through social interaction. In Baldock, there are three care home facilities, as set out in **Table 13.32** below, all of which are older people residential and nursing homes.

**Table 13.32 – Care Homes in Baldock**

| Care homes in Baldock                | Distance from the Site's edge (Postcode) | Service type                               |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Providence Court (Quantum Care Ltd)  | 0.1 miles (SG7 6TT)                      | Older People Residential and Nursing Homes |
| Burleigh House Residential Care Home | 0.8 miles (SG7 6AA)                      |                                            |
| Osbourne Court Care Home (Baldock)   | 0.8 miles (SG7 6EN)                      |                                            |

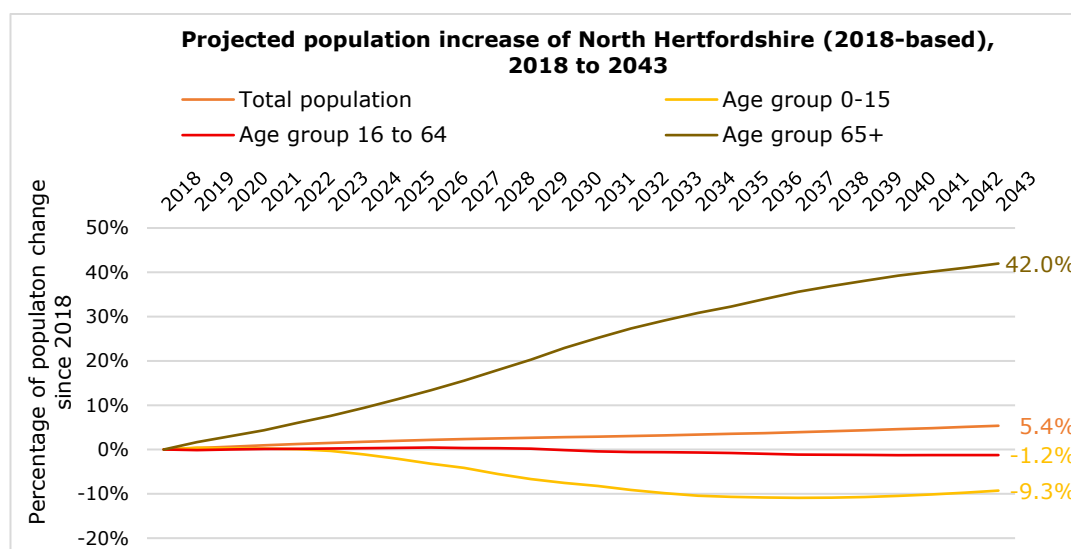
Source: Hertfordshire Directory (directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk)

### The Projected Future Baseline

#### Population

- 13.4.81 Based on the population projection from ONS that adopted the 2018-based principal scenario, North Hertfordshire will have a steady increase as shown in **Figure 13.7** below, with 5.4% of population growth from 133,214 in 2018 to 140,363 in 2043. In particular, over the Local Plan period from 2011 to 2031, the population will increase by 9,591 from 127,494 in 2011 to 137,085 in 2031 (7.5% increase).
- 13.4.82 However, the Review of the Official Projections for North Hertfordshire by ORS in August 2022, which was the evidence base of NHLP, has referred to ONS 2018 10-year migration approach to project population increase. The review indicated that the population over the plan period from 2011 to 2031 will have a rise of 15,515 from 127,494 in 2011 to 143,009 in 2031, which is a more substantial growth of 12.2%, meaning that the housing targets of the adopted NHLP were informed by this more rapid population growth projection.
- 13.4.83 Nevertheless, it is worth noting that population projections of the age groups of 0 to 15 and 16 to 64 consist of decreasing trends. The population is projected to drop from 26,932 in 2018 to 23,845 in 2043 among the age group of 0 to 15, and from 81,689 to 80,682 in the same period for the age group of 16 to 64. Meanwhile, the age group of 65 and over has a more significant projected rise, with a 42% increase from 25,243 in 2018 to 35,839 in 2043. Such a trend indicates that the projected steady population growth based on 2018 statistics is largely contributing to the significant projection increase of the age group of 65 and over, which further implies an ageing population in the District in the future.

**Figure 13.7 - Projected Population Increase of North Hertfordshire, 2018 to 2043**



Source: Census 2021, ONS (on.gov.uk)

### **Housing**

- 13.4.84 NHLP targets for providing at least 13,000 dwellings over the period of 2011-2031 on a stepped basis, in which 1,120 dwellings will be expected to be delivered every year from 1 April 2024 to 2031, equivalent to a total of 7,840 dwellings. Together with the unmet housing targets in the previous plan period, a further 8,815 dwellings will be required by 2031 in order to meet the NHLP target of 13,000 new homes in accordance with AMR 2022-2023.
- 13.4.85 In 2016, NHC and Stevenage Borough Councils commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to establish the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing in both districts. The recently updated SHMA in November 2023 indicated a net need of 1,227 households in North Hertfordshire that currently need affordable housing and do not currently occupy affordable housing between 2022 and 2031. Following the adoption of NHLP in 2022, the provision of affordable housing is anticipated to continuously increase as the upcoming larger allocated sites will seek a 40% provision of affordable housing.
- 13.4.86 North Herts' Housing Strategy 2024-2029 has further stated the housing development priorities of maximising the delivery of genuinely affordable housing and developing a range of attractive housing options for older people to suit how people wish to live in the future. Therefore, more affordable housing and housing for the elderly are anticipated to be provided for the rest of the plan period from 2024 to 2031.

### **Retail**

- 13.4.87 Informed by Retail and Town Centres Background Paper September 2016, the Council will make provision for an appropriate range of retail and service facilities across the District and is committed to protecting the vitality and viability of all centres in North Hertfordshire, including Baldock, over the plan period of 2011-2031.
- 13.4.88 NHLP will promote, protect and enhance the provision of shops, financial and professional services, cafés or restaurants, pubs or drinking establishments or takeaways in the four main town centres and the other 13 existing Local Centres.
- 13.4.89 NHLP seeks to provide up to 38,100 gross m<sup>2</sup> of additional floorspace over the plan period, including 22,500 gross m<sup>2</sup> of comparison goods, 8,600 gross m<sup>2</sup> convenience and 7,000 gross m<sup>2</sup> food and beverage outlets. 38,100 gross m<sup>2</sup> is a district-wide retail capacity, but it is principally derived from the retail capacity projections for the four town centres.
- 13.4.90 Additionally, considering Baldock, Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City have significant overlapping markets with spend leakage from Letchworth Garden City to Hitchin and a lack of physical space at Baldock to accommodate its projected retail capacity, **Table 13.33** below shows the indicative distribution and phasing of retail provision in the main town centres over the Local Plan period. Baldock town centre is expected to provide no new retail provision over the plan period.

**Table 13.33 - Indicative distribution and phasing of retail provision (m<sup>2</sup>), 2011-2031**

| Years                  | 2016-2021 | 2021-2026 | 2026-2031 | Totals |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Baldock                | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0      |
| Hitchin                | 0         | 3,700     | 3,300     | 7,000  |
| Letchworth             | 5,350     | 5,500     | 5,000     | 15,850 |
| Royston                | 4,350     | 2,200     | 1,800     | 8,350  |
| Strategic Housing Site | 0         | 3,400     | 2,900     | 6,300  |
| Other                  | 0         | 300       | 300       | 600    |
| Totals                 | 9,700     | 15,100    | 13,300    | 38,100 |

Source: North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031

- 13.4.91 The North Hertfordshire Town Centres and Retail Study concluded that there are no pressing requirements to allocate new sites for major retail or commercial leisure developments to accommodate projected growth for the next decade. The priority in the short- to medium-term would be for the reoccupation of vacant shop units, with existing mixed-use development allocations and new facilities in the Strategic Housing Sites sufficient to cover any long-term residual need.

### **Economy**

- 13.4.92 The NHLP states that the Council will proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, support new and existing businesses and seek to build on the District's strengths, location

and offer. The existing Employment Areas within the District's main settlements will be safeguarded to enhance and protect their employment potential. In addition, 19.6ha of land East of Baldock BA10, which is included as part of the Proposed Development, as well as 10.9ha of land west of Royston, are allocated for employment use.

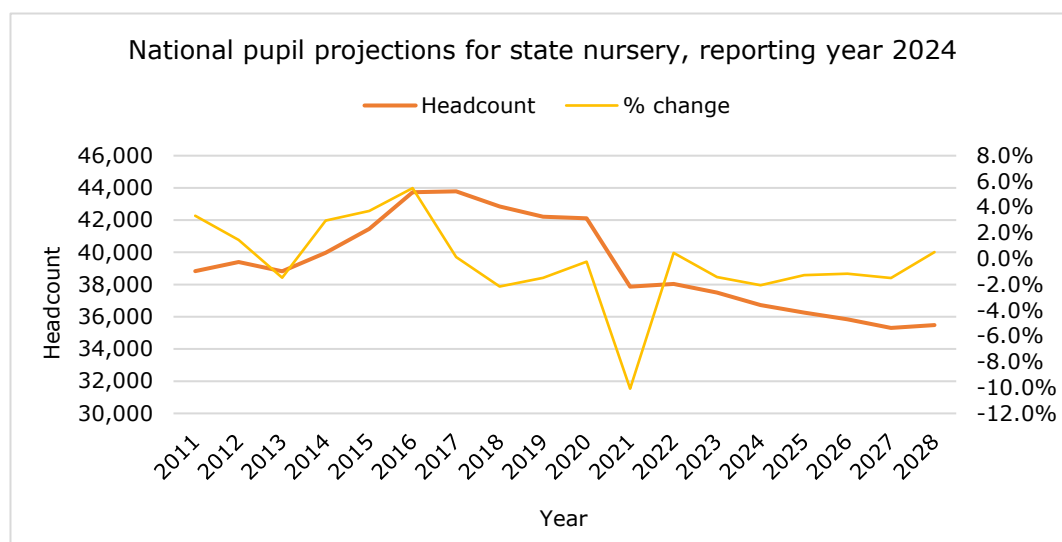
- 13.4.93 Given the proximity of the settlements of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Baldock, there is a significant amount of commuting between them.

### **Social Infrastructure**

#### *Education*

- 13.4.94 The latest pupil projections predict that nationally, state nursery pupils are projected to have a downward trend from 36,726 in 2024 to 35,488 in 2028, with a total drop of 3.37%. Relevant projection information is not available at the county or district level. However, the national statistics show a decreasing demand for nursery education overall.

**Figure 13.8 – National Pupil Projection for State Nursery, 2024**



Source: National pupil projections in reporting year 2024, GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

- 13.4.95 As for primary education, according to the latest summer 2025 primary school area forecast by Hertfordshire County Council, the school areas in Baldock and Letchworth, which cover or are in proximity to the Site, have a decreasing demand in primary school reception places until 2029-30, as shown in **Table 13.34** below.
- 13.4.96 In Baldock Town, between 2025-26 and 2029-30, it is forecasted that the reception places will consist of approximately 18% to 33% of surplus, indicating the availability of the school places in the future near the Application Site.
- 13.4.97 Particularly, St Mary's Infants' School in the school area of Baldock Town will reduce its reception places from 60 to 30 since September 2025 due to the declining primary population, among other schools in Hertfordshire. This indicates a decline in demand for

school places within the existing population which may impact on the viability of existing primary schools.

**Table 13.34 – HCC Primary School Reception Places Forecast, Summer 2025**

| School Area                | Letchworth North |                       | Letchworth South |                       | Baldock Town |                       | Baldock Village |                       |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Available reception places | 150              | Surplus/ Shortage (%) | 180              | Surplus/ Shortage (%) | 150          | Surplus/ Shortage (%) | 60              | Surplus/ Shortage (%) |
| 2022-23                    | 177              | -                     | 170              | -                     | 126          | -                     | 44              | -                     |
| 2023-24                    | 161              | -                     | 165              | -                     | 106          | -                     | 49              | -                     |
| 2024-25                    | 163              | -                     | 175              | -                     | 119          | -                     | 47              | -                     |
| 2025-26                    | 157              | -7 (-4.7%)            | 158              | 22 (12.2%)            | 102          | 48 (32%)              | 45              | 15 (25%)              |
| 2026-27                    | 159              | -9 (-6%)              | 169              | 11 (6.1%)             | 110          | 10 (8.3%)             | 48              | 12 (20%)              |
| 2027-28                    | 144              | -4 (-2.7%)            | 147              | 33 (18.3%)            | 102          | 18 (15%)              | 40              | 20 (33.3%)            |
| 2028-29                    | 135              | 15 (10%)              | 147              | 33 (18.3%)            | 104          | 16 (13.3%)            | 46              | 14 (23.3%)            |
| 2029-30                    | 129              | 21 (14%)              | 145              | 35 (19.4%)            | 102          | 18 (15%)              | 49              | 11 (18.3%)            |

Source: School Planning, Hertfordshire County Council ([www.hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk))

13.4.98 For the future secondary education provision in proximity to or within the Site, **Table 13.35** shows the secondary school year 7 places forecast in Letchworth and Baldock, indicating a decreasing demand in year 7 places until 2023-31.

13.4.99 The figures in Baldock refer to the provision of year 7 places at The Knight Templar School, where there will be an increasing trend in the surplus from 2025-26 to 2031-32, rising from 11.4% to 15.7%. This further implies that the demand for year 7 places will decrease with fewer secondary school pupils.

**Table 13.35 – HCC Secondary School Year 7 Places Forecast, Summer 2025**

| School Area             | Letchworth |                      | Baldock |                      |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Available year 7 places | 300        | Surplus/Shortage (%) | 210     | Surplus/Shortage (%) |
| 2022-23                 | 294        | -                    | 207     | -                    |
| 2023-24                 | 290        | -                    | 210     | -                    |
| 2024-25                 | 284        | -                    | 208     | -                    |
| 2025-26                 | 283        | 17 (5.7%)            | 286     | 24 (11.4%)           |
| 2026-27                 | 265        | 35 (11.7%)           | 183     | 27 (12.9%)           |
| 2027-28                 | 272        | 28 (9.3%)            | 180     | 30 (14.3%)           |
| 2028-29                 | 257        | 43 (14.3%)           | 178     | 32 (15.2%)           |
| 2029-30                 | 266        | 34 (11.3%)           | 170     | 40 (19%)             |

| School Area | Letchworth |            | Baldock |            |
|-------------|------------|------------|---------|------------|
| 2030-31     | 259        | 41 (13.7%) | 165     | 45 (21.4%) |
| 2031-32     | 255        | 45 (15%)   | 177     | 33 (15.7%) |

Source: School Planning, Hertfordshire County Council ([www.hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk))

### *Sports Facilities*

- 13.4.100 North Hertfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (December 2018) sets out recommendations based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement. As per the document, it is expected that in the future, a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites will continue to be adopted, which will range from strategic sites, key centres, clubs or education sites to reserve sites.

### *Parks and Open Spaces*

- 13.4.101 The NHC Greenspace Management Strategy 2022-2027 has a vision of providing high-quality, well-managed green spaces to meet the needs of the communities and contribute positively to sustainability priorities. The Strategy concluded some actions against different types of open space from 2022 to 2027:

- Parks and gardens: town centre parks remain the highest priority for future investment and maintenance.
- Playground provision: budget will be increased to £180,000 annually and sites annually, with the agreement of the Executive Member and Service Director.
- Amenity greenspace: continue to retain the value of the green space and trees, as well as promote the value of the existing green space.
- Burials: continue to see Wilbury Hills Cemetery as the district-wide provision.
- Planning and new development: NHC will consider the adoption and management of new strategic green space in the following circumstances:
  - It is located within the four main towns of Baldock, Letchworth, Hitchin and Royston (and Great Ashby) and complements existing service maintenance operations.
  - The green space is meeting a current deficiency and new provision would meet the needs of existing and new residents.
  - The green space is meeting a strategic gap in the green space network and improving the quantity, quality and connectivity of the district's green space network.
  - Where longer-term revenue streams, such as council tax, can be effectively recycled back into the locality as part of place investment.
  - Where other corporate objectives can be met, such as climate change, biodiversity and health and wellbeing.

- 13.4.102 If the Proposed Development does not proceed, existing community facilities and provision of retail, leisure, open space and sport within the area would continue to serve

existing residents within Baldock and the surrounding area. Additional developments within the area are also projected to provide additional facilities to support increases in population numbers projected within the district.

**13.5 POTENTIAL EFFECTS**

- 13.5.1 This section identifies the impacts that could potentially occur assuming that the Application Site is fully developed in accordance with the OPA parameters.

**Construction Stage**

- 13.5.2 Significant effects on population, housing, education, health and other community facilities are not expected as a result of construction.

**Economy and Job Creation**

- 13.5.3 The 2024 Home Builders Federation (HBF) report 'The Economic Footprint of House Building in England and Wales' identifies the house building industry's ability to drive economic growth and support prosperous economies as a key contribution to the UK economy. The report states that approximately 3.4 jobs (direct, indirect & induced) are created for each new home built. It also estimates that for every 1 direct job in construction, up to 0.6 additional jobs are supported more widely across the supply chain.
- 13.5.4 Considering the above, the Proposed Development of up to 3,200 dwellings has the potential to create a total of around 10,880 jobs (6,800 direct jobs and 4,080 indirect/induced jobs) over the expected development period of 15 years. With an estimated development completion date of 2043 and assuming that work will begin in 2027, up to 725 jobs per year will be created as a result of the Site's construction.
- 13.5.5 Urban&Civic estimates that the construction of the scheme will cost approximately £912 million. According to 'Fine Margins - Delivering financial sustainability in UK construction' by the Confederation of British Society, published in 2020, every £1 spent on construction leads to an increase in total economic output (i.e. GDP increase) of £2.92, which further leads to a multiplier impact of up to £2.66 billion. As a result, the construction of this site will generate capital and revenue expenditure, leading to an increased output in the local and UK economy.
- 13.5.6 The Proposed Development will be completed in various stages during which there will be a significant generation of construction-related employment. However, the phased development will result in potential effects being spread over time and across the Application Site, as not all areas will necessarily be affected at the same time or to the same extent.
- 13.5.7 The geographical source of contractors who would work on the Proposed Development is unknown. However, it is likely that most of the companies would be located within the region. Indeed, most construction workers are likely to be employed from the local labour market, which would promote beneficial effects within this area. Increased spending and job creation would also be experienced by other local businesses, such as building merchants.

- 13.5.8 Aside from direct construction job creation, there would be indirect effects through the supply of materials from local businesses and the expenditure of wages in the wider locality.
- 13.5.9 As a result, it can be concluded that the effect of the Proposed Development on the economy at the construction stage will be temporary in nature and of a local to regional scale and is assessed to have **Moderate Beneficial** impact.

### ***Social Infrastructure***

- 13.5.10 Several Public Rights of Way traverse the Site. Where works affect these routes, it is envisaged that the construction contract will include requirements to maintain these routes. Practical considerations may indicate that a formal application should be made for the temporary diversion of one or more of these routes during the construction period. Any such proposals will be subject to the standard consultation procedures outlined in legislation. Where works affect existing footways on the public highway, the contractor will be expected to maintain a safe route for pedestrians at all times. As a result, the potential direct and indirect effects of the construction work upon existing public rights of way would be temporary, and of local scale, with **Negligible** impact.

### ***Health Impact***

- 13.5.11 Health and safety procedures in line with industry guidelines will be established and adhered to during the construction phase and operation of services to minimise the risks of harm and injury to workers and visitors to the Sites during the construction phase.
- 13.5.12 The construction phase encompasses building and installation of new vehicular access points, housing, schools, employment, mixed-use and landscape areas and other associated works. During the extensive construction stage for each development, there is the risk of construction-related injuries to construction personnel and pedestrians. In terms of potential physical injuries, incidents are likely to occur in and around the Proposed Development if the Site and related traffic are not adequately managed. The presence of structures like scaffolding and heavy machinery, such as cranes, in addition to increased vehicular activity, will pose an increased risk of physical injury. These risks will all be managed through measures set out in the Site-wide and later detailed phase or reserved matters CEMPs.
- 13.5.13 Nevertheless, a positive impact on health will be through the creation of job opportunities as a result of the construction phase, as employment increases health status, comprising social, psychological and financial benefits that improve health and well-being overall.
- 13.5.14 During the period of construction of the Proposed Development, there will be potential air quality, noise and vibration impacts. These impacts will last for the duration of the construction of the development and will therefore be of a temporary nature over the construction period. In line with the Outline CEMP (OCEMP), detailed CEMPs will be

prepared prior to commencement of any development on the Site, to mitigate construction effects on the environment as well as on the amenity (and in turn health) of both existing and new residents.

- 13.5.15 Chapter 5 of the ES (Noise and Vibration) states that the potential noise and vibration impacts of the Proposed Development would have a temporary effect. Practical construction noise and vibration control measures are secured through the implementation of measures within the OCEMP, which adopts construction best practices and will be supplemented by Detailed CEMPs as development progresses. This will ensure that the construction stage effects upon existing properties and other sensitive receptors are assessed as Negligible to Minor Adverse effects for both noise and vibration (not significant).
- 13.5.16 Chapter 6 of the ES (Air Quality) states that construction works have the potential to create dust and particulates. During construction, a package of mitigation measures will be secured through the OCEMP and subsequent detailed CEMPS, which will minimise increases in levels of dust and particulates, with effects thereafter being Negligible (not significant).
- 13.5.17 Any threat to the safety and well-being of construction personnel and pedestrians can be significantly reduced so long as construction guidelines are followed. A way to ensure this would be to utilise construction companies that are willing to be accredited with the Considerate Contractors Scheme. Assuming this is followed, construction sites, companies and suppliers voluntarily register with the Scheme and agree to abide by the Code of Considerate Practice, designed to encourage best practice beyond statutory requirements. This includes protecting the environment, respecting the community, securing the safety of people on and off-site, and valuing the workforce. The assumption is that prior to development taking place, there will be a procurement of contractors who already adhere to these schemes and accreditations.
- 13.5.18 Therefore, it can be concluded that the effect of the Proposed Development on health at the construction stage will be temporary in nature and of a local scale, and is assessed to have **Negligible** impact.

### **Post-Completion Stage**

- 13.5.19 The potential areas of socio-economic change and related potential impacts during the operational phase of the development area are set out below.

### **Housing and Population**

#### *Demographic Impacts*

- 13.5.20 As outlined in paragraph 13.4.21, the average household size in North Hertfordshire was 2.35, based on the district's population and household figures from Census 2021. The Proposed Development of up to 3,200 dwellings will therefore result in a population of up

to 7,520. This represents 5.64% of the total population of 133,211 in North Hertfordshire, as recorded in Census 2021.

- 13.5.21 Based on the population projection from ONS that adopted the 2022-based principal scenario, by 2043, when the Proposed Development is expected to be completed in the 15-year development period, North Hertfordshire is predicted to have a population of 144,184, with a rise of 10,973 from 2021.

#### *Housing Supply Impacts*

- 13.5.22 The main impact on the local housing market will be the increased supply of housing stock by up to 3,200 dwellings, of which up to 40% will be affordable housing, subject to viability. The Proposed Development will therefore provide for 24.6% of the 13,000 homes (including Strategic Housing Sites) required in North Hertfordshire up to 2031 in their Local Plan period, making a substantial contribution to meeting local housing need.
- 13.5.23 Overall, the Proposed Development will therefore be of **Major Beneficial** impact in relation to the delivery of homes, both market and affordable housing, in North Hertfordshire.

#### **Retail**

- 13.5.24 The Proposed Development will provide a Local Centre in BA1, within which up to 700 m<sup>2</sup> convenience retail will be provided. The retail units will be small convenience goods stores, which will serve the day-to-day needs of new residents.
- 13.5.25 The provision of retail facilities at the Site could have a number of potential positive and negative impacts on the surrounding area. A key consideration is the need to ensure that retail and commercial leisure proposals at the Site do not impact on spending patterns in such a way as to affect the vitality and viability of existing centres in the area, particularly Baldock town centre.
- 13.5.26 However, it is important that sufficient retail facilities are provided on site to meet the everyday convenience shopping needs of the residents, not only to ensure a successful development in commercial terms, but also to minimise the need to travel in accordance with Paragraph 110 of the NPPF. Given the proposed size of residential development, the proposed provision of 700 m<sup>2</sup> retail floorspace is not considered significant and will not result in competition to existing centres and a potential impact on vitality and viability.
- 13.5.27 Retail centres/locations that have been considered as being sensitive to the retail proposals are as follows:
- Baldock town centre: Impact on Baldock town centre is of prime importance as this centre is considered to be the primary commercial centre within the locality. However, given the limited scale of the proposals at the Application Site, there is very little prospect of a negative impact on the vitality and viability of Baldock town

centre. In fact, quite the opposite, the likelihood is that residents of the Site would use the town centre for a significant amount of their comparison and convenience shopping needs and major commercial leisure activities, given the proximity of the development site to the Baldock town centre. Therefore, the increased retail expenditure in the town centre by the residents of the Site could potentially have a significant positive impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre;

- Other smaller nearby villages: With or without retail provision, residents in surrounding settlements who normally undertake convenience shopping within their village may find the Site to be more attractive or convenient in terms of the range of goods and services provided. This could result in them switching to the Site from their current village facilities, albeit this is unlikely given the small scale of retail proposed within the Site; and
- Other significant town centres in the surrounding area: Other town centres near the Site in North Hertfordshire include Letchworth Garden City, Hitchin and Royston. However, these are considered to be too far away to be influenced or affected by the Proposed Development.

- 13.5.28 The impact of the provision of retail facilities is likely to be **Negligible** on a permanent and local scale, against the background that they will provide for the day-to-day convenience needs of the Proposed Development population. However, there is a **Minor to Moderate Beneficial** impact on Baldock Town Centre given the increase in population and its proximity to the town centre.

### **Employment Land**

- 13.5.29 The Proposed Development includes the delivery of up to 16 ha of employment uses on the Strategic Employment Site BA10:

- Up to 84,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment uses including a mix of:
  - Up to 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> office (E, g i));
  - Up to 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> indoor sport and recreation (E, d);
  - Up to 26,500 m<sup>2</sup> research and development (E, g ii)) and/or light industrial (Class E, g, iii));
  - Up to 26,500 m<sup>2</sup> industrial (B2); and
  - Up to 6,000 m<sup>2</sup> Health Hub (E, e).
- Waste infrastructure consisting of a mix of:
  - Up to 1,500 m<sup>2</sup> vehicle depot (sui generis);
  - Up to 3,500 m<sup>2</sup> waste transfer station (B2); and
  - Up to 1.1 hectares household waste recycling centre (sui generis).
- Renewable energy infrastructure (sui generis).

- 13.5.30 The supply of employment land represents a permanent and **Major Beneficial** impact on the economic growth required for North Hertfordshire on the local scale. In addition, the Proposed Development of up to 3,200 dwellings, thus around 7,520 new residents,

has the potential to support the growth of new employment and the sustainability of the existing employment areas within North Hertfordshire through an increase in the supply of labour.

### **Job Creation**

- 13.5.31 As above, the Proposed Development includes a Local Centre providing a mix of uses, as well as up to 84,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment uses on the Strategic employment Site BA10, including up to 6,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace for the Health Hub. Additionally, secondary school provision to meet need generated (either on or off site), up to two 3FE primary schools, a SEND school and up to 550 m<sup>2</sup> nursery floorspace.
- 13.5.32 Once the Proposed Development is completed, the retail centres, schools, employment and hotel/residential institutions are expected to provide an increase in jobs. The net employment generated by the Proposed Development will also support additional indirect and induced jobs. A central-based employment multiplier of 1.3 has been applied to each job generated, as advised in the HM Treasury Green Book (2022), to calculate total jobs, including additional indirect and induced jobs.

### **Retail and Employment Uses**

- 13.5.33 Regarding job creation from non-residential uses, the figures rely on the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) Employment Density Guide (3rd Edition) published in November 2015. It estimates approximately 3,565 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs across various skill levels, including 2,742 direct jobs and 823 indirect/induced jobs, as shown in **Table 13.36** below.

**Table 13.36 – Potential Job Creations on-Site Retail and Employment Uses**

| Non-residential uses |                               | GEA (m <sup>2</sup> ) | Respective measuring unit equivalent               | HCA Employment density (m <sup>2</sup> per FTE) | Jobs (FTE) |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Use class            | Development                   |                       |                                                    |                                                 |            |
| Local Centre         |                               |                       |                                                    |                                                 |            |
| C1/C2                | Hotel/residential institution | 3,500                 | Assuming a mid-scale hotel <sup>5</sup> : 114 beds | 1 per 3 beds                                    | 38         |
| E                    | Convenience retail            | 700                   | 565 m <sup>2</sup> NIA <sup>6</sup>                | 20 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                           | 28.3       |
|                      | retail/café/restaurant        | 800                   | 646 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                             | 20 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                           | 32.3       |
|                      | Office                        | 550                   | 444 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                             | 12 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                           | 37.0       |
|                      | Gym                           | 1,150                 | 1,093 m <sup>2</sup> GIA <sup>7</sup>              | 65 m <sup>2</sup> GIA                           | 16.8       |

<sup>5</sup> The calculation is based on the assumption that a mid-scale hotel is provided, considering 65% of the hotel floorspace is used for bedrooms and each bedroom is 30 m<sup>2</sup> and accommodates 1.5 beds.

<sup>6</sup> Net Internal Area. As set out in the HCA Employment Guide (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, November 2015), as a general benchmark, 15-20% acts as a suitable assumption for converting gross to net areas in non-industrial properties. In this Chapter, 15% is set as the benchmark.

<sup>7</sup> Gross Internal Area. According to the HCA Employment Guide (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, November 2015), the general benchmark of converting GEA floorspace into GIA is a reduction of 5%.

| Non-residential uses                                     |                                                  | GEA (m <sup>2</sup> ) | Respective measuring unit equivalent                  | HCA Employment density (m <sup>2</sup> per FTE) | Jobs (FTE) |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Use class                                                | Development                                      |                       |                                                       |                                                 |            |
|                                                          | Nursery                                          | 550                   | Shown in <b>Table 13.37</b> below                     |                                                 |            |
| F2                                                       | Community hall                                   | 500                   | N/A                                                   |                                                 |            |
| Sui generis                                              | Pub/takeaway                                     | 750                   | 606 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                                | 20 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                           | 30.3       |
| Strategic Employment Site BA10                           |                                                  |                       |                                                       |                                                 |            |
| E                                                        | Health Hub                                       | 6,000                 | Shown in <b>Table 13.38</b> below                     |                                                 |            |
| E(g)(i)                                                  | Office                                           | 20,000                | 16,150 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                             | 12 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                           | 1,345.8    |
| E(d)                                                     | Indoor sport & recreation                        | 5,000                 | 4,750 m <sup>2</sup> GIA                              | 65 m <sup>2</sup> GIA                           | 73.1       |
| E(g)(ii) or E(g)(iii)                                    | Research and development and/or light industrial | 26,500                | 21,399 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                             | 50 m <sup>2</sup> NIA                           | 428.0      |
| B2                                                       | Industrial                                       | 26,500                | 25,175 m <sup>2</sup> GIA                             | 36 m <sup>2</sup> GIA                           | 699.3      |
|                                                          | Waste transfer station                           | 3,500                 | 5 jobs as per advice from HCC and NHC waste consultee |                                                 |            |
| Sui generis                                              | Vehicle Depot                                    | 1,500                 | N/A                                                   |                                                 |            |
|                                                          | Household recycling centre                       | 1.1ha                 | 8 jobs as per advice from HCC and NHC waste consultee |                                                 |            |
|                                                          | Renewable energy infrastructure                  | N/A                   | N/A                                                   |                                                 |            |
| Anticipated FTE jobs                                     |                                                  |                       |                                                       |                                                 | 2,742      |
| Net Indirect and induced FTE jobs (under 1.3 multiplier) |                                                  |                       |                                                       |                                                 | 823        |
| Total FTE jobs                                           |                                                  |                       |                                                       |                                                 | 3,565      |

### Education

- 13.5.35 Under the Proposed Development, it is anticipated that a total of 166 direct FTE education jobs will be generated through the Proposed Development, increasing to 216 jobs when the 1.3 multiplier is applied, which is further illustrated in **Table 13.37** below.

**Table 13.37 - Potential job creation from the on-site education**

| Education              | Estimated pupils generated                       | Job per child <sup>8</sup> | Job   |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| Nursery facilities     | Proposed 2 x 50-place nursery = 100 pupils       | 1 per 5.5 pupils           | 18.2  |
| 2 x 3FE primary school | 210 per FE <sup>9</sup> x 6 forms = 1,260 pupils | 1 per 10.4 pupils          | 121.2 |

<sup>8</sup> Derived from pupil to adult ratio within schools for maintained schools in Hertfordshire, School Workforce Census 2024 (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england/2024>)

<sup>9</sup> Baseline design for schools, Department for Education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/baseline-designs-for-schools>)

| Education                                                       | Estimated pupils generated        | Job per child <sup>8</sup> | Job        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| 1 x 5FE secondary school <sup>10</sup>                          | 150 per FE x 5 forms = 750 pupils | 1 per 11.2 pupils          | 67.0       |
| <b>Anticipated FTE jobs</b>                                     |                                   |                            | <b>206</b> |
| <b>Net Indirect and induced FTE jobs (under 1.3 multiplier)</b> |                                   |                            | <b>62</b>  |
| <b>Total FTE jobs</b>                                           |                                   |                            | <b>268</b> |

#### *Health Hub*

- 13.5.36 The proposed Health Hub will have 6,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, comprising 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> for GP (which is expected to accommodate the relocation of the existing GP in Baldock, Baldock Surgery), as well as 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace reserved for the ICB and future health uses to be defined.
- 13.5.37 According to the HCA's Guide, health infrastructure provides a considerable scale of jobs. However, these development types are very complex and encompass a wide range of building types, operational models and services. Therefore, there is no clear or identifiable relationship between floorspace and employment levels, and so no 'general' employment density. Hence, this section makes an assumption about job creation for the Health Hub based on the recent Government's data.
- 13.5.38 Based on the average household number of 2.35 people per dwelling, the Proposed Development of up to 3,200 dwellings will accommodate 7,520 people, which will be covered within the catchment area of the GP at the Health Hub. **Table 13.38** below sets out the expected staff required for the Proposed Development, according to trends in patient-to-staff numbers at GP practices in England in 2022<sup>11</sup>. In general, a total of 8 jobs (including 2 indirect/induced jobs) are required from GPs as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 13.5.39 It is anticipated that the GP surgery and hub will also accommodate non-healthcare staff, including positions such as the business manager and additional administrative staff, therefore, the jobs created by a new GP facility are likely to exceed the estimated figures in **Table 13.38**. Additionally, the use of the remaining 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace in the Health Hub is yet to be defined at the time of writing, and therefore, the number of jobs is unable to be generated. Any new facility will serve both the existing residents of Baldock in addition to the needs of residents generated by the Proposed Development and it can therefore be assumed that the figures provided are a conservative estimate.

<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment, it is assumed that 5FE secondary school places are provided under the secondary school option 3, which refers to providing additional secondary school (5FE) on BA3.

<sup>11</sup> Trends in patient-to-staff numbers at GP practices in England, 2022, ONS (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthcaresystem/datasets/trendsinspatienttostaffnumbersatgppracticesinengland>)

**Table 13.38 – Job Creation from the Proposed Health Hub**

|                                                                 | Number of patients per staff number | Health care staff member required for 7,520 patients |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>All GPs</b>                                                  | 1,810 per 1 GP                      | 4.2                                                  |
| <b>Nurses</b>                                                   | 3,530 per 1 nurse                   | 2.1                                                  |
| <b>Anticipated FTE jobs</b>                                     |                                     | <b>6</b>                                             |
| <b>Net Indirect and induced FTE jobs (under 1.3 multiplier)</b> |                                     | <b>2</b>                                             |
| <b>Total FTE jobs</b>                                           |                                     | <b>8</b>                                             |

13.5.40 In total, the Proposed Development will generate a total of 3,841 FTE jobs, including 2,954 direct jobs and 887 indirect/induced jobs with the 1.3 multiplier. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development will generate more jobs than the expected figures, as some non-residential uses have yet to be taken into account, including the development of the 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> floorspace for other healthcare uses, vehicle depot and renewable energy infrastructure.

13.5.41 The development site provides some opportunities for employment through the creation of retail space, employment space, as well as school places. The Proposed Development will result in a permanent and **Major Beneficial** impact, in relation to employment opportunities in the local area.

### **Social Infrastructure**

#### *Education*

13.5.42 The delivery of up to 3,200 residential dwellings in North Hertfordshire will create around 7,520 new residents, thus, additional demand for education places. Based on the latest 2021/22 pupil yield figures provided by the Department for Education, the proposed development of up to 3,200 homes could lead to 204 early year pupils, 886 primary school pupils and 347 secondary pupils, as detailed in **Table 13.39** below.

**Table 13.39 – Estimated Number of Pupils from the Proposed Development**

| School phase     | 2021/2022 Pupil Yield in North Hertfordshire | Pupils generated from Growing Baldock |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Early years      | 0.0637                                       | 204                                   |
| Primary school   | 0.2769                                       | 886                                   |
| Secondary school | 0.1085                                       | 347                                   |

Source: Pupil Yield Data Dashboard, Department for Education (<https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/pupil-yields-dashboard/>)

13.5.43 The development scheme will include up to two on-site up to 3FE primary schools, the delivery of which will be outlined in the S106, to meet the needs generated by the development after the capacity in existing capacities is taken up by the new population.

- 13.5.44 In the academic year 2023/24<sup>12</sup>, the six primary/infant/junior schools within the 2-mile walking distance radius of the Site have a total of 1,633 places with 1,403 children attending these schools, reaching 85.9% of the capacity. This is in line with the primary school places forecast, which suggests around 15% to 18% surplus in reception places in Baldock town and Baldock village by 2031-32. Therefore, the strategy for meeting the primary education needs of pupils generated by the Proposed Development is to support filling places at existing primary schools first, before new school provision is made on site.
- 13.5.45 In terms of secondary schools, The Knights Templar School is the only secondary school within a 3-mile walking distance radius of the Site, and within Baldock itself. It currently has 1,500 school places, with 1,414 pupils on roll in the academic year 2023/24, reaching 94.3% of the capacity. HCC Education has advised that up to 2FE of current pupils live outside the Knights Templar catchment, predominantly in Letchworth.
- 13.5.46 The Proposed Development will provide additional secondary school places to meet the needs generated. Reflecting the Knights Templar School's important role in Baldock as the single secondary school provider, the Proposed Development includes the following options, which the decision on the option to be taken forward will be made via the School Review Process to be included in the S106 agreement.:
- *Option 1 – Knights Templar expansion and relocation to BA3*  
Relocation and expansion (up to 12FE) of Knights Templar School to BA3. BA3 to accommodate SEND school and secondary school;
  - *Option 2 – Knights Templar expansion*  
Expansion of Knights Templar on existing site (up to 10FE). BA3 to accommodate SEND school and residential (c. 250 units); and
  - *Option 3 – Additional secondary school on BA3*  
Provision of additional secondary school (up to 5FE) on BA3. NA3 to accommodate SEND school, secondary school and residential (c. 90 units).
- 13.5.47 Additionally, the Proposed Development will preserve 1.78 ha of land for the SEND school on the Strategic Housing Site BA3. As set out in the baseline condition, Hertfordshire has a slightly higher proportion of pupils receiving SEN Support compared to statistical neighbours and the England position overall. Therefore, the delivery of SEND school places will help address the need.
- 13.5.48 Therefore, the Proposed Development will be of **Negligible** significance in relation to education, as a result of the provision of additional education capacity.

#### *Sport and Recreational Facilities*

<sup>12</sup> School capacity in England: academic year 2023 to 2024, gov.uk  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-capacity-in-england-academic-year-2023-to-2024>)

- 13.5.49 The development at the Site will result in an increased demand for both formal and informal open space and sports provision. The development will also create demand for children's play facilities.
- 13.5.50 As set out in the baseline section, North Hertfordshire has a high level of open space provision in general, but Baldock has the least open space provision among the six spatial areas. Therefore, against the predicted demand, the Proposed Development makes provision for outdoor sports facilities and children's play space as well as amenity green space, parks and gardens and further green space. **Figure 13.9** below, details the provision of open space and recreational facilities.
- 13.5.51 Within the Proposed Development, a well-connected open space network including a number of strategic green spaces will be provided to cater for the needs of future (as well as existing) residents. An extensive area of publicly accessible informal open space is proposed to cater to the requirements of the new community. This will provide for a broad range of open space provision and sports facilities, including:
- Parks;
  - play areas;
  - formal outdoor sports provision (including ancillary facilities);
  - structural planting;
  - retained and proposed wildlife habitat areas;
  - community food production areas;
  - formal/informal open space; and
  - up to 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of sports pavilion uses (D2).
- 13.5.52 As set out in **Figure 13.9** below, which is set out in the submitted Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Proposed Development will provide a total of 107.43 ha of open space, around 64 ha above the requirement.

**Figure 13.9 – Provision of Open Space and Sports Facilities**

| BALDOCK HYBRID STANDARDS - OPTION 2 - 3,200 UNITS                                                  |                  |                   |                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGY                                                                                | 1,000 population | 7,680 population* | PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT |
| <b>Outdoor Sports Facilities (NHC SPD)</b><br>Grass & 3G pitches, sports pavilion, buffer planting | 1.60 ha          | 12.29 ha          | 11.67 ha             |
| <b>Allotments (NHC SPD)</b><br>Allotments, orchards, community gardens                             | 0.30 ha          | 2.30 ha           | 2.30 ha              |
| <b>Provision for Children &amp; Young People (FIT)</b>                                             |                  |                   |                      |
| Equipped play                                                                                      | 0.25 ha          | 1.92 ha           | 1.92 ha              |
| Informal play                                                                                      | 0.30 ha          | 2.30 ha           | 2.30 ha              |
| <b>Parks &amp; Gardens (FIT)</b>                                                                   | 0.80 ha          | 6.14 ha           | 39.28 ha             |
| <b>Amenity Green Space (FIT)</b>                                                                   | 0.60 ha          | 4.61 ha           | 4.61 ha              |
| <b>Natural &amp; Semi-Natural Greensapce (FIT)</b>                                                 | 1.80 ha          | 13.82 ha          | 45.35 ha             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                       | 5.65 ha          | 43.38 ha          | 107.43 ha            |

\* Based on standard occupancy ratio of 2.4 persons per dwelling to estimate the population (3200 unit scheme x 2.4 = 7,680 population)

Source: Green Infrastructure Strategy October 2025, BMD

13.5.53 Access to natural spaces such as parks, gardens and green spaces has beneficial mental and physical health benefits, especially through encouraging people to be active (cycling and walking). The use of the sports facilities and green space will have a positive impact on the prevalence of obesity in young people in North Hertfordshire.

13.5.54 The provision of these facilities on the Site is proposed for use by the development population on the Site and the existing residents in Baldock. Accordingly, their provision represents a **Moderate Beneficial** impact on the local residents in Baldock, but only a **Minor Beneficial** impact for residents in the rest of North Hertfordshire.

#### *Community Facilities*

13.5.55 The Proposed Development will provide up to 500 m<sup>2</sup> floorspace for a community building (Use Class F2) to satisfy the additional demand for community facilities that were brought by the increase in population.

13.5.56 The community floorspace will foster a sense of community and will accommodate local public meetings and gatherings for events that are important to the community or subsections of it. It is expected that such health and community facilities will be permanent, of small magnitude scale but high sensitivity, and therefore be of **Minor Beneficial** impact as the proposal contributes to the provision of new facilities which may also potentially benefit the wider community.

13.5.57 Overall, the provision of social infrastructure, including education, sport and recreational Facilities and community facilities, will be of **Minor Beneficial** impact.

#### **Health**

13.5.58 Upon completion of the development, the estimated population of the Proposed Development will be approximately 7,520. This significant increase in the population of Baldock is likely to produce substantial demand for new healthcare facilities, creating considerable additional pressure on existing healthcare facilities.

13.5.59 It is difficult to predict how the Proposed Development will affect many of the health indicators as set out in the baseline conditions. For example, the health profiles contain information on matters such as participation in physical activity, obesity rate and general health conditions. It is beyond the scope of this assessment to make projections on such matters, and there is a lack of evidence to enable such judgments.

13.5.60 However, the Proposed Development will result in a number of health impacts on matters covered by the health profiles, either directly or indirectly, and these have been assessed, including:

- Housing;
- Active travel and connectivity;
- Access to public services;

- Open, green spaces, sport and leisure facilities;
- Healthy food;
- Environmental hazards;
- Community safety;
- Employment and economy;
- Equality and social cohesion; and
- Sustainability.

13.5.61 The above health determinants take reference from the HIA assessment table template and the HIA Report in support of Cardiff Local Development Plan 2006-2026 (October 2012), as recommended by HCC.

13.5.62 In respect to health impacts post completion, the following vulnerable groups are likely to be more susceptible to the effects associated with the Proposed Development, as well as more likely to benefit from its beneficial effects:

- Children and young people;
- Older people;
- People with a long-term illness or disability, especially those related to poor nutrition or an unhealthy weight;
- People experiencing deprivation;
- People with long-term health conditions;
- People with mental health conditions; and
- People with physical, sensory or learning disabilities/difficulties.

#### *Housing*

13.5.63 Although the detailed design and mix of homes will be further determined at the reserved matters stage upon planning permission, the Proposed Development of delivering up to 3,200 homes will comprise a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures.

13.5.64 The Site will accommodate a broad range of housing sizes and types from 1-bed apartments to 5-bed homes, including the full breadth of housing typologies, and up to 40% of total homes will be affordable homes, subject to viability.

13.5.65 Housing will be of a high-quality design alongside the provision of appropriate private amenity space. The affordable housing will also be designed to be 'tenure-build' and provided in mixed-tenure streets, distributed across the Site. The quality and the design of the homes will be further assessed in the reserved matters stage upon planning permission for the Proposed Development.

13.5.66 As a result, the above positive health impacts will be experienced by the new residents at the Proposed Development, the extent of the impact will be of **Moderate Beneficial** significance.

*Active Travel and Connectivity*

- 13.5.67 The key movement principles of the Proposed Development are:
- creating a place where half of all trips are made on foot, bicycle or public transport;
  - ensuring town-wide improvements to encourage sustainable and active travel; and
  - reclaiming space for walking, cycling and public transport.
- 13.5.68 The Proposed Development comprises a package of interventions across the town that will reduce through traffic, allowing conditions to be transformed for walking, cycling and public transport. The sustainable movement network will connect all land uses to ensure the proposed dwellings and existing residents can access the new Local Centre, retail uses, and employment opportunities, the schools, and the open spaces within the Site by a range of sustainable modes and are with suitable are within walking and cycling distances.
- 13.5.69 The Proposed Development prioritises the provision of safe, direct and coherent networks for active modes on and off-site that reduce demand for car travel, combined with off-site improvements that manage existing travel demand and prioritise active and sustainable modes of transport. This encourages active travel by including a comprehensive movement network that facilitates movement by non-car modes and a sustainable connection to the existing transport network. Design of the transport network will also comply with relevant design guides and active travel design principles to ensure it is of high quality.
- 13.5.70 Considering the proposal creates positive effects in relation to health by allowing future residents suitable accessibility to active travel modes within the development to achieve a sustainable travel pattern in the development, it is considered to have **Moderate Beneficial** impact.

*Access to Public Services*

- 13.5.71 Strong, vibrant, sustainable and cohesive communities require good quality, accessible public services and infrastructure<sup>13</sup>. Access to social infrastructure and other services is a key component of lifetime neighbourhoods.
- 13.5.72 The Site will provide up to two 3FE primary schools, development options for secondary school provision, and 1.78 hectares of land for a SEND school. Additionally, the proposed development includes community facilities, such as a health hub on the Employment Site BA10, alternatively, as part of the mixed-use Local Centre and a community centre. These social facilities will be accessible by active travel modes.

<sup>13</sup> Rapid Health Impact Assessment Tool, Fourth Edition, October 2019, HUDU Planning Health (<https://www.healthyrbandevelopment.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/HUDU-Rapid-HIA-Tool-October-2019.pdf>)

- 13.5.73 Access to good quality health and social care, education and community facilities has a direct positive effect on human health. Opportunities for the community to participate in the planning of these services have the potential to impact positively on mental health and wellbeing and can lead to greater community cohesion. Therefore, the provision of social infrastructure on site will be of **Moderate Beneficial** significance as it will result in significant positive health impacts on the children who attend the school and the future generation of Baldock.

*Access to Open Space, Green Spaces, Sport and Leisure Facilities*

- 13.5.74 The Proposed Development will provide green infrastructure, open spaces and other landscaped areas, including parks, play areas, formal outdoor sports provision, structural planting, retained and proposed wildlife habitat areas, community food production areas, formal/informal open space and up to 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of sports pavilion uses. The green infrastructure will be delivered across the proposed strategic green infrastructure, which will be supported by an interconnected network, particularly the Baldock Greenway, a circular walking and cycling route around Baldock connecting to the two existing routes.
- 13.5.75 Residents who have exposure to natural spaces, including parks and green spaces can expect to benefit from positive health benefits, as access to quality green space has direct health benefits by providing urban residents with spaces for physical activity, social interaction, and allowing psychological restoration to take place. Additionally, access to green spaces also improves mental health by relieving stress, enhancing social cohesion and overcoming isolation.
- 13.5.76 Considering all of the above, it can be anticipated that the Green Spaces provided as part of the Proposed Development have the potential to have a **Moderate Beneficial** impact on residents, visitors and users of the facilities provided.

*Access to Healthy Food*

- 13.5.77 The Proposed Development includes the provision of new and enhanced allotments. The strategy for productive landscapes at Baldock is to extend existing formal allotments at North Road and Clothall Road as well as providing community growing spaces and informal foraging and edible trails. This will encourage the growing of fruit and vegetables for local consumption, contributing to a healthy diet. Allotments and community growing spaces and gardens will also provide opportunities for physical activity and access to nature and fresh air, with multiple benefits for physical and mental health.
- 13.5.78 There will also be three community growing spaces, co-located next to play areas, MUGAs and sports facilities to create active and multifunctional destinations. These community growing spaces will provide raised community beds, fruiting orchard trees with spaces and seating for informal social activities.

- 13.5.79 Overall, the proposal creates positive effects in relation to health by ensuring access to local healthy food, with a sustainable and accessible connection of the residential areas to the Local Centre that could later meet local grocery needs. The Proposed Development will be of **Minor Beneficial** significance.

*Environmental Hazards*

- 13.5.80 The Proposed Development both at the construction and post-completion stages will result in some impacts on air quality, noise, water resources and ground conditions. The overall assessment effects in relation to health arising from these elements have been set out in the relevant Chapters of the ES.
- 13.6 As set out in Chapter 5 of the ES (Noise and Vibration), after the Proposed Development is complete ('the post-completion phase'), the measures which have been incorporated within the design of the Proposed Development (for example, site layout, and additional measures such as plant noise limits will result in a **Negligible** (not significant) to **Moderate Adverse** (significant) impact in relation to development-led traffic noise and **Negligible** in relation to noise generated from non-residential uses (not significant).
- 13.6.1 In terms of air quality, as concluded in Chapter 6 of the ES (Air Quality), the assessment of air quality impacts on the surrounding area and new population exposure has identified that the Proposed Development effects on both existing households and businesses in and around Baldock (existing receptors), and on the future occupants of the development, will be **Negligible** (not significant). Therefore, no further mitigation measures are considered necessary.
- 13.6.2 Chapter 10 of the ES (Hydrology and Flooding) confirms that the after completion of the Proposed Development, the embedded drainage strategy will include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage runoff, treat water and protect water receptors such as the aquifer, including having regard for the effects of climate change. With the embedded mitigation, the effects will be **Negligible** for water quality and groundwater, and **Minor Beneficial** for flood risk (not significant).
- 13.7 Chapter 12 of the ES (Ground Conditions and Soils) concluded that the development is not expected to significantly affect ground conditions. Landscaping, residential use, and infrastructure will be managed to avoid adverse impacts, and the effect should be negligible. The effect in terms of any identified local soil contamination through controlled management or removal of such contamination will be locally minor beneficial. Where minor contamination is encountered, clean cover systems and hardstanding will break exposure pathways. Residual effects are therefore considered **Negligible to Minor Beneficial** (not significant).

- 13.7.1 Taking into account the findings set out in the respective Chapters of the ES, the impact on the aforementioned environmental hazards as a result of the Proposed Development will be of **Negligible** significance.

*Community Safety*

- 13.7.2 Within the Proposed Development, safety has been one of the critical factors in the general design principles of different aspects, including streets, landscape, travel options and open space. In particular, the Proposed Development will ensure the safety of the access and movement network across the Site.

- 13.7.3 As the design and layout of the development evolves during the planning process, Police Design Out Crime Teams will have the opportunity to engage to assist in ensuring community safety is embedded into the designs.

- 13.7.4 Overall, the proposal creates positive effects relating to health and well-being in terms of crime reduction and community safety, as the development proposal will seek to ensure the safety of the neighbourhoods, resulting in a **Moderate Beneficial** impact.

*Employment and Economy*

- 13.7.5 As set out in the above section in relation to the impact of the Proposed Development on employment land and job creation at the post-completion stage, the delivery of up to 84,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment uses on the Strategic Employment Site BA10 alongside a Local Centre and new social infrastructure supports the growth of new employment and job supply. Indirect jobs will also be supported by the increased expenditure on goods, supplies and services provided by companies in the surrounding area and will support induced employment in local shops, services and other firms.

- 13.7.6 These new jobs will offer employment opportunities for a wide range of skill levels, likely to include management, professional, health and education staff, clerical or administrative and sales staff, as well as skilled and semi-skilled jobs. The proposals will create a mix of full-time, permanent jobs as well as flexible part-time opportunities on-site.

- 13.7.7 Overall, the proposal creates positive effects in relation to health by safeguarding access to work and training, both during the construction phase and after the completion of the development. On this basis, the effect of the employment and economy is considered to be of **Moderate to Major Beneficial** impact.

*Equality And Social Cohesion*

- 13.7.8 Infrastructure will be delivered in a timely manner to support the sustainable growth of the new community, with triggers for delivery secured within the S106 agreement.

- 13.7.9 Bringing together the new residents within Baldock will also enhance social relations and community life. These positive human relationships can prospectively improve the health and well-being of the residents and reduce health inequalities by forming a strong economic, physical and social environment which encourages and supports healthy lifestyles.
- 13.7.10 By ensuring that the development proposal consists of inclusive design and management, and where appropriate and practical, related advice and guidance, creating a positive impact. Therefore, the effect of equality and social cohesion is considered to be of **Moderate Beneficial** impact on the Baldock community.

*Sustainability*

- 13.7.11 The Proposed Development embeds several sustainability key principles, including achieving all building net zero in operational carbon emissions, all-electric development, highly energy efficient homes and buildings and the use of renewable heat and energy-generating technologies. These key principles have helped contribute to the aims of the NHC's Sustainability Strategy, by ensuring all operations and services are resilient to the impacts of climate change and achieving a Net Zero.
- 13.7.12 Homes and buildings will also aim to reduce embodied carbon beyond typical practice in line with standards such as RIBA Climate Challenge Embodied Carbon targets or the emerging Net Zero Carbon Building Standard.
- 13.7.13 The Proposed Development will be a resilient place designed to withstand the changing climate and mitigate its impact on the environment through minimising resources used in the construction and use of buildings and infrastructure and encouraging and facilitating sustainable lifestyles. Buildings and the public realm will be designed for longevity, flexibility and adaptability to create and maintain a thriving community and secure the long-term enjoyment of the open spaces and facilities.
- 13.7.14 In relation to the green and blue infrastructure, the application proposal includes a network of Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDs) to attenuate surface water run-off from the Site, allowing for climate change. The SuDs strategy is closely integrated with the green infrastructure proposals to facilitate recreation and biodiversity benefits.
- 13.7.15 Overall, the proposal creates positive effects in relation to health by minimising the use of resources and addressing climate change early at the masterplanning stage, which is considered to be of **Major Beneficial** impact.

*Overall*

- 13.7.16 Considering all of the above, it can be anticipated that the development of the Proposed Development should have a permanent and **Moderate Beneficial** impact on the health of existing residents, visitors and the population of Baldock.

**13.8 MITIGATION MEASURES**

13.8.1 The Proposed Development has been designed to meet the criteria of sustainable development, following guidance as detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Practice Guidance. This means that the scheme has taken account of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

13.8.2 With the delivery of infrastructure and wider facilities embedded into the Proposed Development, there is no requirement for additional mitigation in respect of Socio-Economic measures.

**Construction Stage**

13.8.3 As set out in the previous section, the socio-economic effects of the Proposed Development will be either beneficial or negligible during the construction phase.

13.8.4 In terms of Health, the impacts are largely positive. At the construction phase, health and safety procedures will mitigate risks identified such as injuries to construction workers and management of construction traffic.

**Post-Completion Stage**

13.8.5 At the post-completion stage, the Proposed Development includes embedded mitigation that reflects the design process. In relation to potential socio-economic effects, such mitigations include provision for new jobs through employment land and local retail opportunities, provision of sites for new education facilities, provision for any required new healthcare facilities, provision for new community facilities, and new formal and informal open space.

13.8.6 No further specific mitigation, above that which comprises embedded mitigation in the Proposed Development, is consequently required.

13.8.7 In respect of the mitigation measures for Noise and Air Quality, will be required to ensure acceptable impacts on future residents. These are set out in their respective Chapters in the Environmental Statement.

## 13.9 RESIDUAL EFFECTS

### Construction Stage

- 13.9.1 By implementing and adhering to Industry Guidelines, the overall socio-economic and health impacts arising from construction will be insignificant. Considering mitigation, it has been assessed that the overall significance of the effect is **Minor Beneficial**. The job creation occurring from the construction of Growing Baldock will have a significant and positive impact on employment and subsequently, a positive impact on health. The risk to health and safety during construction will need to be managed through the Site-wide (and subsequent, more detailed) Construction Environmental Management Plans to ensure that dust and noise are minimised through mitigation.

### Post-Completion Stage

- 13.9.2 In terms of socio-economic effects, the Proposed Development will result in significant residual **Minor to Major Beneficial** effects in relation to local employment, housing delivery, and open space.
- 13.9.3 No significant residual adverse human health impacts are expected as a result of the development. However, there will be significant residual beneficial effects on the future residents of the Site. This is a result of the new residential provision and local amenities including open space, footpaths, community space and play areas.
- 13.9.4 The effects identified are summarised in **Table 13.40** below.

**Table 13.40 - Summary of Effects**

| Potential Effect             | Significance (pre-mitigation) | Mitigation Measure                           | Significance of residual effect     |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Construction Stage</b>    |                               |                                              |                                     |
| Economy and Job Creation     | Moderate Beneficial           | None required                                | <b>Moderate Beneficial</b>          |
| Social Infrastructure        | Negligible                    | None required                                | <b>Negligible</b>                   |
| Health Impact                | Negligible                    | Managed through the OCEMP and detailed CEMPs | <b>Minor Beneficial</b>             |
| <b>Post-Completion Stage</b> |                               |                                              |                                     |
| Housing and Population       | Major Beneficial              | None required                                | <b>Major Beneficial</b>             |
| Retail                       | Minor to Moderate Beneficial  | None required                                | <b>Minor to Moderate Beneficial</b> |
| Employment Land              | Major Beneficial              | None required                                | <b>Major Beneficial</b>             |
| Job Creation                 | Major Beneficial              | None required                                | <b>Major Beneficial</b>             |
| Social Infrastructure        | Minor Beneficial              | None required                                | <b>Minor Beneficial</b>             |
| Health                       | Major Beneficial              | None required                                | <b>Major Beneficial</b>             |

### **13.10 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

13.10.1 This assessment has considered the likely significant cumulative effects arising from the Proposed Development in combination with the following, which have been set out in Chapter 2 of the ES:

- NHLP allocation BA4 – 42 dwellings, appeal allowed on 20 May 2025 (planning reference: 21/01882/FP);
- NHLP allocation LG3 – 120 dwellings, outline permission granted on 3 April 2025 (planning reference: 21/00504/OP);
- NHLP allocation LG1 – 900 dwellings, Strategic Masterplan being prepared and outline planning application to be prepared; and
- North of Bygrave – Solar Photovoltaic Farm, full permission granted on 17 June 2024 (ref: 22/00741/FP).

13.10.2 There will be a cumulative increase in the provision of housing, employment, education, leisure and recreation as a result of the Proposed Development. Overall, it is considered that the beneficial effects on the socio-economic/health factors identified within this Chapter may be enhanced as a result of the wider provision of the above development.

#### **Construction Stage**

13.10.3 The likelihood of these developments' construction period overlapping with the construction of the Site is high. In terms of socio-economic impacts, this will have the wider benefit of boosting construction employment in the wider North Hertfordshire and will have a **Major Beneficial** impact.

13.10.4 Turning to health impacts, each of the identified developments is separated by a reasonable distance. It is a reasonable assumption to suggest that each development would apply appropriate working practices as identified earlier in the Chapter. Therefore, the cumulative impact should be no different from the Proposed Development, namely a **Negligible** impact, when mitigation is considered.

#### **Post-Completion Stage**

##### **Housing and Population**

13.10.5 The nearby developments to the Site that are considered to cause significant cumulative effects are expected to deliver a total of 4,262 dwellings, with diverse housing tenures and types including affordable housing. As such, the housing schemes will have a **Major Beneficial** impact in terms of housing provision.

13.10.6 It is noted that at present the Strategic Housing Site LG1 is yet to submit an outline planning application, but in any event the cumulative impact judgement is considered appropriate.

- 13.10.7 Based on the average household size of 2.35 persons per household, the resident population arising from all these developments, together with the Proposed Development, would be 10,016 persons. This represents a potential population increase of 7.52% in North Hertfordshire. Therefore, the cumulative effects of the combined developments on the population would result in a **Major Beneficial** impact.

### ***Economy and Employment***

- 13.10.8 The combined sites will together result in around 63,150 m<sup>2</sup> of commercial floorspace (including retail, business and employment uses), mainly derived from the Proposed Development and the 900-home proposal at North of Letchworth. It is anticipated that the number of jobs that are directly generated by the floorspace will make a significant contribution to the creation of new jobs in the District.
- 13.10.9 In addition, there are also many other direct and indirect jobs in service industries and uses, along with significant new education provision, community and health facilities at the cumulative developments. It is therefore considered that the combination of these sites will result in a **Major Beneficial** impact in relation to the economy and employment.

### ***Education***

- 13.10.10 Cumulatively, these developments are expected to meet education requirements derived from their own developments, either on-site or through contributions for necessary off-site provision. Therefore, it is concluded that the cumulative impact on the education provision is considered **Negligible**.

### ***Other Social Infrastructure***

- 13.10.11 The Proposed Development, alongside other developments, is expected to deliver **Minor Beneficial** cumulative effects through enhanced open space, sport, and community facilities. These provisions support biodiversity, active travel, and policy objectives, though no significant cumulative impacts are identified.
- 13.10.12 Combined with nearby developments, local access to green and community spaces will promote healthier lifestyles and social cohesion. While long-term benefits are anticipated, no significant cumulative effects are expected.

### ***Health***

- 13.10.13 The cumulative health impacts, when considering the other identified housing schemes, are also difficult to quantify. It is a reasonable assumption to suggest that, at a high level, the benefits identified under the assessment of the Proposed Development will apply to other housing schemes and that a significant increase in new housing stock will have a beneficial impact on the health of the wider population generally. However, there is insufficient evidence to draw any firm conclusions on this matter, and therefore the cumulative impact is considered to be **Negligible**.

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