



# Abbots Langley Parish Neighbourhood Plan

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## INTRODUCING THE CONSULTATIVE DRAFT

The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan ('ALNP') covers the fifteen-year period from 2021 to 2036. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, comprising local residents and Parish Councillors, has guided the preparation the Plan. This Group established the vision for the future of Abbots Langley Parish and how this vision can be realised through planning local land uses over the period of the plan.

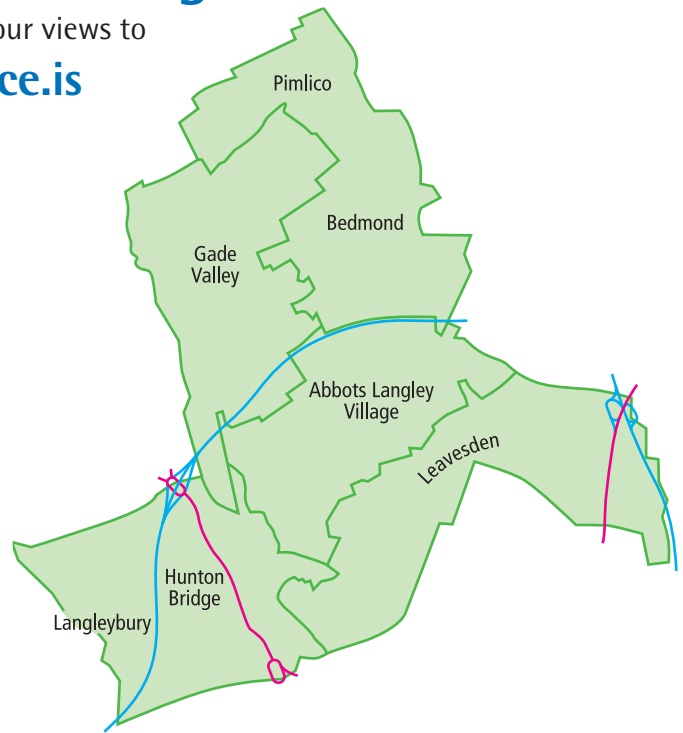
The Neighbourhood Plan describes the profile of the Parish with its varied communities. The Parish comprises the main village of Abbots Langley as well as a number of smaller settlements. In total, there are about fourteen distinct communities within the Parish boundary. The 2019 resident population is of the order of 22,000 living in about 8,800 dwellings. A future Spatial Strategy for land uses across the Parish is proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

## INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

The process of producing the ALNP has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topics included in ALNP are matters found to be of importance to local residents, businesses and community groups. The ALNP Steering Group set up a Commonplace website in June 2015 (<https://abbotslangley.commonplace.is>) as one of the processes to capture the views from local people about the area and how it should develop over the next fifteen years. A leaflet explaining the work and how to access this website was distributed to every household in the Parish in 2016/17. A Public Exhibition on the ALNP was held at the Abbots Langley annual Parish Council meeting in March 2017 and at Summer Carnivals in the Parish. This year we are publishing further articles and holding a number of public exhibitions to encourage further public involvement in the ALNP.

## CHANGING OVER THE CENTURIES

There have been human settlements in the area for over 2000 years. There are well-documented accounts of the physical and social changes that have occurred over the centuries. Significant changes have continued to take place in the last twenty years. These include the introduction of modern commercial industries such as Warner Bros. Studios, Imagination Technologies, RES (a renewal energy company) and other new businesses along the Gade Valley. Houses built in the Parish between 2000 and 2016 numbered 1439 new dwellings, which is at least 50% of all new houses built in the Three Rivers District during this period. The Parish is less than a quarter of the land area of



the District. The Parish population has increased by 18% in the last 15 years, a significantly higher increase than in the surrounding areas.

Local residents believe that no major future new housing should be planned in the Parish until the capacity of its local public services associated with education, local health/social services and local transport networks are increased to meet adequately the current and any planned future demand.

The local community places a high value on the designated open spaces and Metropolitan Green Belt land within the Parish. They do not want this land to be lost to development. However, there are undeveloped sites under consideration by the District Council for new housing in Abbots Langley that are located within designated Metropolitan Green Belt land. Also, development in the Parish must take into account the impact of Climate Change, Brexit and Covid-19 and make investments for the required adjustments in lifestyles and enhancing biodiversity.



## NEXT STEPS

The Consultative Draft of ALNP was published on the Abbots Langley Parish Council website at the end of April 2021. <https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/consultation-draft-abbots-langley-neighbourhood-plan/>

From May 2021 there is a five-month consultation programme with local residents and businesses - completed by the end of September 2021. The ALNP will be revised in response to the feedback from the public.

The Three Rivers District Council will publish their new Local Plan in November/December 2021. As part of this new Local Plan, the District Council published in May 2021 possible sites for new housing development in the Parish. The Parish Council and Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group are considering the implications of their policies and proposals before submitting the ALNP (along with the Background Evidence Base) to the District Council for their consideration and approval, prior to ALNP being reviewed by an External Examiner. It is hoped that the Final Version of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan will be approved at a public referendum in May 2023, before the new Local Plan is adopted.



## EIGHT OBJECTIVES

There are eight key objectives to achieve the Vision Statement for the Parish of Abbots Langley – 2036. These objectives are:

- 1 Contribute to both the local housing needs of the parish while helping to deliver the district-wide housing requirement, including more affordable housing (of all types) as well as housing that addresses the needs of residents of all ages.
- 2 Ensure new development reflects the high-quality local context in terms of building style and materials and is sensitively designed to be attractive, to minimise flood risk, mitigate climate change, promote biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint.
- 3 Strengthen, support and promote local economic activity in all retail, industrial, commercial and professional activities and maximise opportunities for tourism including the regeneration of the Grand Union Canal.

- 4 Protect both historic and the environmental assets of the parish, preserving the green setting of the settlements and the individual green spaces within them, ensuring that they are linked to create wildlife corridors. Maintain as much as possible, the five distinctive statutory purposes of Green Belt policies in the Parish.
- 5 Ensure that the provision of local infrastructure and facilities including expanded primary health care facilities and sufficient school places to address the needs of existing and future residents.
- 6 Improve sustainable transport and movement across the parish, in particular through electric vehicle modes, on-demand services and public transport, specifically ensuring there is a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists.
- 7 Explore the potential for viable renewable energy projects locally, serving and ideally owned by the local community.
- 8 Encourage the production of local food including local farms, horticulture, community projects and private gardens/allotments.

## SUMMARY OF POLICIES

The twenty-two policy statements are summarised below, and can be read in *The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan* on the Parish website:

<https://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk/consultation-draft-abbots-langley-neighbourhood-plan/>

### Chapter 5: Spatial Strategy

**AL1 LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT** – Focus any new development within existing settlements and not harmful to designated Green Belt land. Any new development enlarging existing settlements must be controlled. Make the best use of brownfield sites and renewing redundant or vacant buildings.

### Chapter 6: Housing

**AL2 HOUSING MIX** – Housing development to meet the existing and future housing needs of the neighbourhood area. Developers required to submit a Area Specific Affordable Housing and Dwellings Mix Strategy

**AL3 AFFORDABLE HOMES** – All residential development proposals shall provide affordable housing as required by Policy CP4 of the *Three Rivers Core Strategy*. Affordable homes should be well integrated with market housing. The type and size of affordable homes should meet the specific needs with 10% comprising Starter Homes.

### Chapter 7: Local Character, Heritage and Design

**AL4 CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT** – Development is expected to preserve and enhance each local character area taking account of the local context and vernacular of the

area, using appropriate architectural variety in form and materials. Innovation in design must enhance the built form of an area.

**AL5 DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT** – High quality design integrating well with its surroundings, meeting the changing needs of residents, minimising its impact on the local environment and meeting Design Guidelines.

**AL6 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN** – Development is encouraged to achieve the highest level of sustainable design, in order to reduce energy consumption and climate effects.

**AL7 LISTED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF CHARACTER** – Planning permission will not be granted for development that would result in the loss of either listed buildings, or the buildings or structures of listed local character. Where a scheme has a potential impact on archaeological remains, a Heritage Statement should be prepared in support of planning applications.

### **Chapter 8: Local Economy**

**AL8 RETAINING/ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF LOCAL CENTRES** – Development proposals that provide a balance of uses: retail, leisure and community, commercial and residential - will be supported subject to compliance with all relevant development plan policies. The reuse of historic buildings within Abbots Langley Village Centre for activities that will enhance the vitality and viability of the Village Centre are strongly encouraged.

**AL9 SUPPORTING RECREATION AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM** – Development proposals for recreational and tourism activities, including additional visitor accommodation and a Visitor Centre, will be supported where there are demonstrable economic and social benefits of the proposals and the siting, scale and design has strong regard to the local character, historic and natural assets of the surrounding area.

**AL10 A SAFE, ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING VILLAGE CENTRE** – Development proposals to enhance the public realm in Abbots Langley Village Centre will be encouraged, particularly where they enhance movement by pedestrians and cyclists. Provision of information totem points to provide guidance for visitors and residents.

### **Chapter 9: Natural Environment**

**AL11 NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND RURAL CHARACTER** – Development proposals should maintain and where practicable enhance the natural environment, landscape features, the rural character and setting of the Parish. Development proposals that achieve a net gain in biodiversity will be particularly supported.



**AL12 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT** – Proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connect chains of green infrastructure with the aim of delivering a measurable net environmental benefit for local people and wildlife. Proposals which threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.

**AL13 PROTECTION OF LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS** – The *Neighbourhood Plan* identifies locally significant views. As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals within the shaded arcs of the various views should be designed in a way that safeguards the locally significant view or views concerned.

**AL14 PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES** – Local policy for managing development on a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts. Proposals for development on Local Green Spaces will not be supported.

### **Chapter 10: Leisure and Community**

**AL15 ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GROWING SPACES** – Proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of existing allotment spaces will not be supported unless alternative and equivalent allotment space is provided. The provision of additional allotment facilities and/or community growing spaces is encouraged.

**AL16 PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HOUSES** – Development proposals to change the use of public houses will only be supported if their existing use is demonstrably unviable. Proposals for the expansion of existing public houses in the Parish to develop appropriate community-based activities, such as a restaurant will be supported.

**AL17 MAINTAINING EXISTING SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES** – Strong support will be given to the provision and maintenance of leisure facilities to support the growing population of the Parish.



**AL18 MAINTAINING EXISTING HEALTH SERVICES** – Expanding and enhancing the health care facilities at key sites within the village of Abbots Langley and surrounding settlements will be supported.

**AL19 EDUCATION PROVISION** – Proposals which provide, enhance and facilitate the continued delivery of educational provision on existing state education land, including associated playing fields, will be supported. Proposals for the expansion of existing schools will be supported and, if local demand requires a new school, it will be supported, subject to some specified criteria.

### **Chapter 11: Transport and Movement**

**AL20 FOOTPATHS, CYCLE PATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS** – To ensure that residents can access social, community, public transport, schools, retail and other important facilities both within Abbots Langley and in neighbouring settlements, new developments should ensure safe pedestrian, and where feasible cycle, access to link up with the existing footpath and cycleway networks. Development proposals to improve cycling and walking will be supported. The network of ancient lanes across the Parish of Abbots Langley will be protected and enhanced.

**AL21 BUS SERVICES AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT** – Contributions from new major development in the Parish will be used to provide additional community bus services or, where appropriate, improvements to the public bus service by way of increased services and improvements to public transport infrastructure. These contributions will be collected through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

**AL22 PUBLIC CAR PARKING** – Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces will not be supported. Proposals that enable the provision of additional, publicly accessible off-road car parking spaces, to alleviate parking congestion near to businesses, schools and at transport hubs, will be supported. Alongside any new public car parking provision, there is strong support for dedicated bicycle parking facilities, preferably with

e-bike charging points, covered and secure; and future-proofed electric vehicle charging points

### **ASPIRATIONAL PROJECTS**

- 1 Sunnyside Community Food Production & Training Project.
- 2 Using aerial photography to measure factors affecting climate change across the Parish:
  - a) measuring heat loss from buildings across the Parish
  - b) increase locally generated electricity
  - c) understanding the location, size and height of trees/hedgerows across the Parish.
- 3 Development Plan for Abbots Langley Village Centre.
- 4 Community Affordable Housing Scheme.
- 5 Measures to enhance biodiversity and wildlife corridors in the Parish.
- 6 Planning the completion of the off-road cycle and footpath networks and other measures to assist with the decarbonisation of private transport:
  - a) Completing the off-road cycle/footpath networks
  - b) Off-street and on-street electrical charging systems.
  - c) shared transport – local electric car/cycle/scooter clubs.

### **HELP SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Q1** Do you support these key objectives? Any further comments?
- Q2** Do you agree with these policies? Can you suggest any changes or additions?
- Q3** Are there other aspirational projects you would support for the future use of land in the Parish?

### **COMMENTING ON THE ABBOTS LANGLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

We encourage you to share your ideas with us because we recognise, as residents and businesses, you have the local knowledge to know what is best or needs improving in your community. During this year we will update the Neighbourhood Plan based on the comments we receive.

There are various means to respond to this Neighbourhood Plan:

- add your comments to our website:  
<https://abbotslangley.commonplace.is>
- write to the Abbots Langley Parish Office at: ALNP, Langley Road, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, WD5 0EJ.
- e-mail Peter Warman, Chair of ALNP:  
[warmanconsult@gmail.com](mailto:warmanconsult@gmail.com)

