Stanboroughbury & Symondshyde Charrette

Post Charrette Paper - May 2016



The Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde Charrette was hosted on the Hatfield Estate at the beginning of February and I would like to thank every one who took part. Professor Duany and his team, who are among the leading practitioners in the world in this field; the Gascoyne Cecil Estates team and their advisers; and, above all, the members of the public whose increasingly expert and passionate participation greatly improved the outline proposals that the design team laid before us. Several hundred people took part, many returning several times, and, as we had hoped, engaged in a frank and often robust debate.

All of us are concerned at the number of houses the borough will call for in the new Local Plan. However, it does look as though demand is now so high that the government will insist that at least 12,500 houses be built in Welwyn Hatfield before 2031. Some of these houses may be built on land my family owns. If our community is to have to build on this scale, it seems to me essential that what is built should be of the highest possible quality and that any plans we put forward should have been developed with the full participation of the community. That is why we held this Charrette. It followed others which we held before we submitted plans for the improvement of Old Hatfield and for Mill Green, charrettes which achieved consensus among the many who attended and which greatly improved the original proposals.

I think that what emerged from the Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde Charrette is that, although we may lose green fields, good development can - in exchange - improve quality of life even for existing residents. We addressed questions on schooling, local allotments and community facilities, all of which could be much improved and paid for by new development.

Where perhaps all of us are most concerned is, as ever, on

the question of transport. Developers can help within the areas they develop but Hertfordshire does need a plan for public transport and for better east-west connectivity. Local authorities, other developers, businesses and every one of us need to address the question of county transport urgently. We published a discussion document to coincide with the Charrette as our contribution to this debate.

I hope you will read this post-Charrette paper and send us your comments. I hope, too, you will regard this as the beginning and not the end of the debate and that you will continue to take part as proposals are refined and begin, in time, to be implemented. There will be many matters we will need to discuss continually, not least the question of how we ensure that the quality of the development is maintained once it is built.

We will try and make sure you have plenty of opportunities to continue to take part.

Sincerely

Lord Salisbury

Contents

The Charrette 2
Local Context 4
Historic Analysis 6
Charrette Proposals 10
Important Topics 15 - 31

The Charrette

The Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde Charrette once again underlined the true benefit and effectiveness of genuine community engagement.

The dynamic nature of the charrette process allows people to voice their fears or concerns whilst providing the design team with opportunities to seek appropriate ways to mitigate them. Valuable feedback from those attending, and interaction with specialist consultants, ensured the proposed masterplans evolved significantly during the Charrette.

For example, concerns about traffic impact, provision of allotments, availability of workplaces and noise from the AI(M) were all raised and addressed during the Charrette. Other concerns about developments on existing junctions or a particular home were allayed swiftly by carefully considered design responses.

The Charrette included meetings specifically for:

- Local residents
- Head teachers and other community leaders in and around Hatfield
- Transportation officials, including officials from Hertfordshire County Council
- Green infrastructure experts and advocates
- Representatives for County, Borough and Town Councils
- Local landowners and business owners
- Members of the Welwyn Garden City Society, the WGC Heritage Trust and of the Garden City Institute





Residents and those who work in and around Hatfield were vital to the Charrette process, attending specialised meetings throughout the week and expressing their views on the proposals.







29th - 31st Jan

The design team began their work by familiarising themselves the Charrette was attended with examplar villages detailed in Thomas Sharp's 1946 seminal work Anatomy of the Village, as well as looking at more familiar examples in Hertfordshire. This concluded with a tour of the proposed sites at Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde Farm.

Mon 1st Feb

The Opening Presentation of by residents of communities that may be affected as well as technical professionals and gathering set the tone for the week, setting out the context of the Local Plan and the aims of the Charrette process.

Tue 2nd Feb

featured three key meetings. The morning was devoted to local community, including the challenges of site-specific planning professionals, to other interested parties. This first focused on the extraction of and precedents in the area. minerals at Stanboroughbury. Head teachers and local The evening meeting invited proposals were developing.

Wed 3rd Feb

The first full day of workshops The morning's meeting was for representatives from the local transport. The afternoon discuss the planning context community leaders attended local residents to see how the the afternoon session which covered education, health and community facilities.

Thurs 4th Feb

The discussion focused on the environment, particularly the proposed green corridor across Central Hertfordshire. There was also robust debate Institute. The rest of the day on the question of traditional was spent by the design design vs. twenty-first century team in completing their standards of sustainability. That preliminary proposals which buildings in Old Hatfield's Arm & Sword Lane.

Fri 5th Feb

The morning brought insight from members of WGC Society and Heritage Trust as well as the Garden City the two can easily be combined were presented that evening to is demonstrated by the new residents and the wider public.

Mon 8th Feb

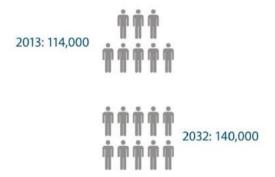
The second Monday saw locals, experts and councillors discussing the need for better public transport across Hertfordshire, including the opportunities afforded by the residents and others who had creation of an east-west public participated in the Charrette transport link.

Tue 9th Feb

The design team drew together all the comments on and reactions to the preliminary proposals and incorporated them into the plans. Many local attended a final presentation.

Local Context

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is required to prepare a new Local Plan which will form the blueprint for future growth in the borough. It is currently estimated that some 12,500 new homes will be needed by 2031 to accommodate a rise in population of almost 30,000. The Plan must not restrict itself to housing but must also include policies for business premises, open spaces, community facilities and schools, transport infrastructure and healthcare.



Welwyn Hatfield SHMA Partial Update, 2015 For those interested, this can be downloaded at: http://www.welhat.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=10575&p=0



Example images from the *Guide to Growth* showing an existing settlement and its relationship to a satellite village.

The Loss of Green Space

Some residents expressed concern that green space would be lost if these proposals were adopted by the Council, and that the character of the local area would fundamentally change if they were to become part of the Local Plan.

Throughout the twentieth century Hatfield evolved rapidly. The houses many of us live in today were built on what, until fifty to a hundred years ago, were green fields. Further homes are now required to house a population which is both ageing and expanding. There is only a limited amount of brownfield land in the borough, so it is impossible for Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council to satisfy this demand for housing without releasing green belt land.

If development is to come, it must be of the highest quality. It is in this context that we are seeking to engage with local communities, who are the best guides to the lessons we can learn from past experience. If green space is to be lost, it should be replaced with something of at least equal value. A typical housing estate is perhaps not of equal value; a walkable, aesthetic and flourishing neighbourhood could be.

All studies are consistent in charting upward population growth of people and dictating the requirement for additional necessary housing. Given, therefore, that development under present legislation is inevitable, it is better to plan for the long term whilst ensuring that any new development which does come to Welwyn Hatfield is of the highest quality. This is what our present discussion is focused upon, and why the involvement of local people, both residents and others with a close association with the area, is paramount in the process.

It is useful, in considering how our local environment will adapt, to look again at the *Hertfordshire Guide to Growth*, published following the University of Hertfordshire's 2008 Charrette. The *Guide to Growth* explored six development scenarios, from maintaining the current trend of piecemeal housing to building new, full-blown Garden Cities, and demonstrated that, then as now, there is no single panacea for future growth. We are now proposing a variety of solutions suggested by the *Guide to Growth*: namely, urban extension to Hatfield at Stanboroughbury and a satellite village at Symondshyde.

The Hertfordshire Guide to Growth can be downloaded at: https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/10289/herts-charrette-guide-to-growth_02-12-2008.pdf

Members of communities that would be affected by the proposals for Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde made constructive and valuable contributions throughout the Charrette. They shared their experiences of and reactions to past failures and successes, described ways in which the impact of development could be reduced on them individually, and suggested how whole neighbourhoods might be improved. Throughout the various workshops and presentations they raised a variety of topics - from the esoteric but vital consideration of window sizes, to calls for a better public transport link in Central Hertfordshire.

The concerns raised can be summarised under several headings:

- Traffic flows and the effect on them of proposed development
- The need for a variety of house types and sizes; and good quality affordable housing
- How to ensure the harmonious integration of new development with existing communities
- The effect on the environment and the need for sustainability
- The requirement for adequate schools, GP/dentist clinics and community facilities
- How to maintain quality through long term stewardship after completion

We address these in detail under Important Topics below.



When green space is lost we lose something of value. We must ensure that we get something of equal value in return.



Below, a rendering of the current farmhouse and setting (top) at the centre of the proposed Symondshyde village.

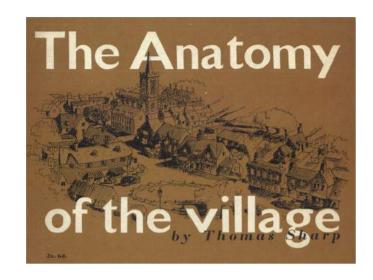


A New Hertfordshire Village: Historic Analysis

Before starting the design process, the design team made a close study of some existing English villages.

As its point of departue the team chose *The Anatomy of the Village*, published in 1946 by town planner Thomas Sharp. In his work, Sharp analysed a variety of English villages and sought to understand their development and evolution over the previous centuries. Sixty years later, the Charrette team revisited several of these and also went to a number of what they considered to be archetypal Hertfordshire villages.

This carefully considered and thought-provoking pre-Charrette preparation enabled the design team to understand the challenges of designing a genuine village able to respond to the demands of the twenty-first century. They looked at the make-up of an English village, what amenities it needs and the minimum size of population needed to sustain local shops. They saw the ways different villages have dealt with growth in the latter twentieth century and observed which aspects of traditional village design work well and those which need to be adapted to the expectations of contemporary life. For example, dealing with parking, with rubbish and with the relationship between vehicles, buildings and pedestrians.



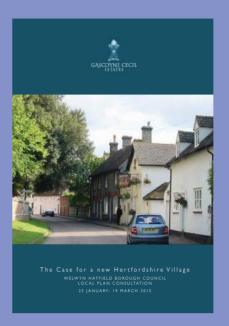
Finchingfield village centre, below, has not significantly changed between 1946 and 2016 but, as elsewhere, the car has made its presence increasingly felt.







The Charrette team prepared for the process by visiting villages in Hertfordshire as well as compelling examples in Essex and Suffolk - for example, Finchingfield and Clare.

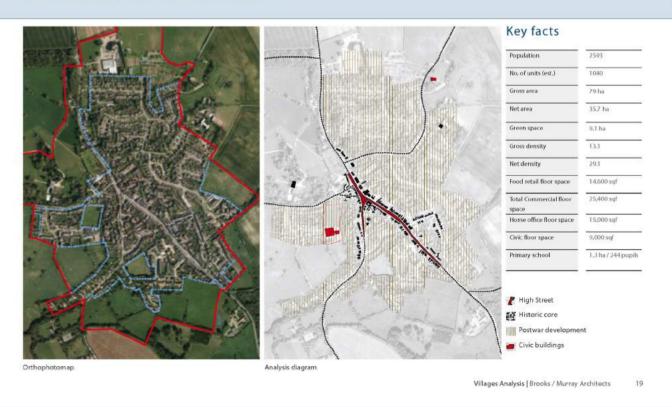


The Case for a New Hertfordshire Village, a further document published by Gascoyne Cecil Estates, puts forward the case for new villages as a viable approach to tackling the current housing crisis. Villages housed a huge majority of the British population for much of the last millenium and the English rural idyll still attracts people out of cities today. This brochure suggests that - as one of several housing delivery models offering answers to the present housing crisis - it is time for a rebirth of the English village.

This is available for download at: http://www.gascoynececil.com/literature

CODICOTE, HERTFORDSHIRE

A large village south of Hitchin, approximately halfway between Hatfield and Hitchin. It is notable for its timber-framed and chequered brick houses.



Above is an example page from the Village Analysis undertaken prior to the Charrette. In the centre we can see the historic core of Codicote (the black buildings), and around this the hatched lines show its subsequent development. To the right, the team's analysis considered statistical details ranging from population size and number of units to area of development space, green space, densities, residential space, commercial space, community facilities and school size.

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Charrette Proposals – The Stanboroughbury Masterplan

The Charrette proposals aim to meet projected housing demand whilst bringing carefully considered, quality design into the local plan. Both sites consist of walkable neighbourhoods: one, an extension to the north west edge of

Hatfield at Stanboroughbury, and the other a satellite village at Symondshyde. Both are large enough to ensure a population big enough to sustain the shops and restaurants which provide residents' daily needs.



Buildings marked in red are spaces reserved for civic buildings that any future community may need or desire.

Key Design Features

Any new development needs to integrate harmoniously with existing neighbourhoods. Stanboroughbury is designed to fit with and, wherever possible, enhance the Hatfield Garden Village neighbourhood, fulfilling previous developers' promises to provide residents the facilities for a flourishing neighbourhood: shops, civic buildings and community facilities.

Green Spaces

We have provided for a defined green buffer in Stanboroughbury between the proposed and existing developments. This is achieved by:

- Expanding the existing allotments to provide a 70m tranche of further allotments and/or green space east of Green Lanes;
- Maintaining the accessible, walkable green space west of Hatfield Garden Village; and
- Developing a series of lakes to the north which simultaneously provides Sustainanble Urban Drainage and attractive parkland available for the benefit of local residents.

A 'green wedge' to the north east corner of the Stanboroughbury site is included as part of the green corridor which Gascoyne Cecil Estates are lobbying for within the wider Local Plan process. This would run from Hertford to St Albans, blocking coalescence between the towns of Central Hertfordshire. Some of this land would provide playing fields for a secondary and primary school, marked in red.

Workplace Buffer & Proximity

Running alongside the AI(M), we propose a number of flexible, small workplaces. These would benefit the community in two ways.

- First, the workplace buildings act as a buffer protecting the nearest houses from motorway noise.
- Second, workplaces which are flexible and can readily adapt to changing economic circumstances more easily attract new business and provide local residents with jobs within walking distance of their homes. This reduces rush hour traffic and gives a more balanced community.

Junction Redesign

- The design team suggested ways to redesign junctions at each entrance to Stanboroughbury to reduce existing bottlenecks.
- For example, the existing Green Lanes could become a quieter access route for its residents whilst the proposed road into Stanboroughbury turns north east past the expanded allotments and green space and threads into the proposed extension.



Existing: Green Lanes as a through road



Suggested: Green Lanes as a quiet access road for residents

Charrette Proposals – The Symondshyde Masterplan



Unwin's *traces on the ground:* the basis for design at Symondshyde.



Residential older community, nestled in the village centre.

Key Design Features

The proposals for Symondshyde represent a unique chance to plan a settlement coherently and from scratch - an opportunity that has not occurred for many years. It will be a sustainable model of development that can provide infrastructure for the enjoyment of future generations.

A satellite village was one of the more viable and attractive scenarios suggested by the *Hertfordshire Guide to Growth*. Symondshyde would be a kilometre north west of the proposed Stanboroughbury boundary, separated by a protected green corridor giving access to leisure areas and attractive landscaping and providing an environment for wildlife.

Traces on the Ground

Symondshyde has been designed around what Raymond Unwin, an influential engineer, architect and town planner from the late Victorian era, would call its *traces on the ground*: the marks made by centuries of human habitation. Unwin, whose work continued into the twentieth century, sought to raise the standard of design of both houses and neighbourhoods, thereby improving quality of life.

At Symondshyde it is proposed that its existing hedge rows, field boundaries, mature trees and footpaths are retained to provide the framework for the village's design, dictating the layout of its streets and the general structure of the new settlement. For example, the existing bridle path would run into the village centre where buildings give way to a more open, concave space.

The proposed site of the village sits nestled within a wooded hollow which makes it invisible to the majority of local residents.

Community Facilities, Village Amenities

In order that Symondshyde becomes a true community, it must have and be able to support a range of community facilities. The village proposal includes a primary school and a retirement community (see *opposite*), as well as provision for businesses. There is also space for civic and community buildings and a village street with opportunities for cafes, small shops and, of course, pubs. It is designed to meet the needs of 1,100 housing units, accommodating the necessary number of people to sustain these shops and enterprises.

Thoughtful, quality design yields public health benefits. Symondshyde has been planned with this in mind: providing, for example, community allotments which bring more opportunities for social contact and diminish chances for social isolation.

Residential Older Community

Close to the centre of Symondshyde, there is provision for a residential community for older people within easy reach of the shops, meeting places and the other amenities those living there require.

Access to the Village

The question of what might happen to Symondshyde Lane (aka Hammonds Lane) was raised during several sessions at the Charrette. The design team explored various options.

Although we initially proposed widening the existing lane into a single-carriageway road, the design team responded to the concerns of a local resident, who preferred the lane in its present state, by suggesting that we disconnect the village from the lane entirely and pursue other access routes into the village.

After further discussion with several residents who were keen to have access to the village, the design team settled on a third option. We propose making sympathetic improvements to the lane, enabling cars to pass each other more easily and providing an access route to the village. Overall traffic on the lane would remain limited as drivers would choose the principal routes from the south and east.

Green Buffer

An important part of this proposal, relating to both Stanboroughbury and the wider Local Plan, is the current work towards a protected green corridor (see *below*) running between Hertford, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and St Albans. The green buffer between Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde is, in effect, an update of the *Salisbury Line* for the twenty-first century. The principles of the *Salisbury Line* were first established in 1947 and it has maintained separation between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield for nearly a hundred years. Any such buffer would, notwithstanding planning policy, be legally safeguarded.

The Village & Its Relationship with Hatfield

The distance of Ikm (2/3 mile) between Symondshyde and the edge of the proposed Stanboroughbury development would ensure that the settlements are close enough to enable local people and others to walk or cycle between the two, but sufficiently distant to provide visual separation and avoid coalescence in the future. This part of the green corridor also gives space for wildlife to thrive.

Important Topics

A number of matters of concern were raised several times throughout the Charrette by residents and others attending. The design team considered each of these as part of their deliberations. Our approach and design solutions are detailed in the following sections.

- 1. Transport
- 2. The Environment
- 3. Housing Choice
- 4. Schools, Clinics & Community Facilities
- 5. Harmony with Existing Communities
- 6. Long Term Stewardship

Transport

The projected need for 12,500 homes will bring more traffic to already congested roads across Welwyn Hatfield and Hertfordshire as a whole.

At the Charrette, discussion centred upon existing highways, including key junctions, and Coopers Green Lane.

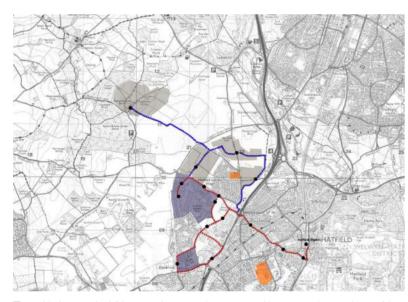
The proposals at Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde include measures designed to mitigate the increased burden they would place on the road network. Both proposed settlements are designed as walkable and cycleable neighbourhoods with a variety of shops, workplaces and additional schools. Their proximity to the Business Park and the University of Hertfordshire places them within walking distance of more than a quarter of Welwyn Hatfield jobs. For those using their car, the masterplans propose routes within each neighbourhood to minimise pressure on external roads.

Whilst, therefore, additional homes at these sites would increase traffic, car usage can be reduced by careful design and by the proximity to employment, schools and other facilities. In addition, the design team, highway engineers and local residents considered specific junctions, Green Lanes and Coopers Green Lane as well as the AI (M) and identified possible ways to ease existing bottlenecks.





The current junction by Whitegate Cottages & Lodge shown next to new proposals for the road layout resulting from discussion with residents concerned about the current speed of traffic along Coopers Green Lane and the proximity of traffic to their homes.

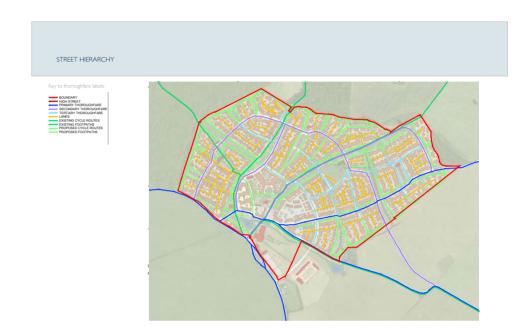


To avoid piecemeal additions at a late stage, bus stops and bus routes into and out of the settlements have been planned from the outset. The existing route is marked in red; the proposed route in blue.



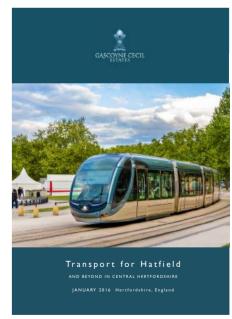
Lanes or mews have been placed behind homes to preserve the aesthetics of the streetscape at the front.

Traffic within the site will travel through a network of roads and pedestrian rights of way designed with the needs of all road users in mind, from those on foot to cyclists, cars, larger vehicles and buses. Drawing in part on the examples of successful existing villages and developments, the hierarchy and design of streets will help to ensure efficient and easy access by public transport. For example, bus routes would be primary thoroughfares of appropriate width and geometry to accommodate the largest vehicles.



In a second, wider ranging session, questions relating to county-wide public transport were considered. The trend towards car clubs and other informal ways of sharing car and taxi journeys was noted, as were imminent technological advances such as driverless cars. These changes will alter dramatically how we travel and will have an impact upon private car ownership and parking needs.

Strategic solutions to encourage a reduction in car use were discussed, specifically the proposal for a designated Central Hertfordshire public transport link - a tram or guided busway - crossing the county from east to west. Such a scheme could connect with cycle routes within a green corridor running between Hertford, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and St Albans, preventing sprawl between towns, encouraging and maintaining biodiversity and providing green, open and safe spaces for cyclists. Those attending discussed measures to achieve this.



For those who wish to undertake further reading, more information is available in *Transport for Hatfield*, which can be downloaded at: http://www.gascoynececil.com/literature/

The Environment

Both Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde are designed to be easily accessible, walkable and cycleable neighbourhoods with a full range of amenities for leisure, schooling and small-scale employment. They have been designed to have the critical mass necessary to sustain these shops or restaurants, schools or surgeries.

Both are proposed as mixed-use communities, offering residents the opportunity to work in places within walking distance of their homes. The consequent reduction in car use would, in turn, offer clear environmental and social benefits.

Gascoyne Cecil Estates have already
demonstrated that it is possible to combine
traditional architecture, built in the Hertfordshire
vernacular, with twenty-first century standards
of sustainability. For example, the newly-built
workplaces and homes along Arm & Sword
Lane in Old Hatfield are heated by a ground
source heat pump and require no gas boilers.
We have also employed other alternative low
carbon technologies (for example, solar farms)
and believe these are an essential part of any
contemporary development.



Location of workplaces (above) and schools (right) near to homes ensures development has far less impact on existing traffic flows than might be expected.



Traditional architecture redolent of well-loved Hertfordshire villages can be easily combined with twenty-first century technologies to meet modern energy standards. The commercial and residental units Gascoyne Cecil Estates recently built along Arm & Sword Lane in Old Hatfield demonstrate this well.



Beautiful, red-brick buildings, well-insulated to minimise energy waste and heated by a ground source heat pump located nearby. The need for gas boilers is removed.



This design reduces internal traffic which, in turn, benefits the environment.

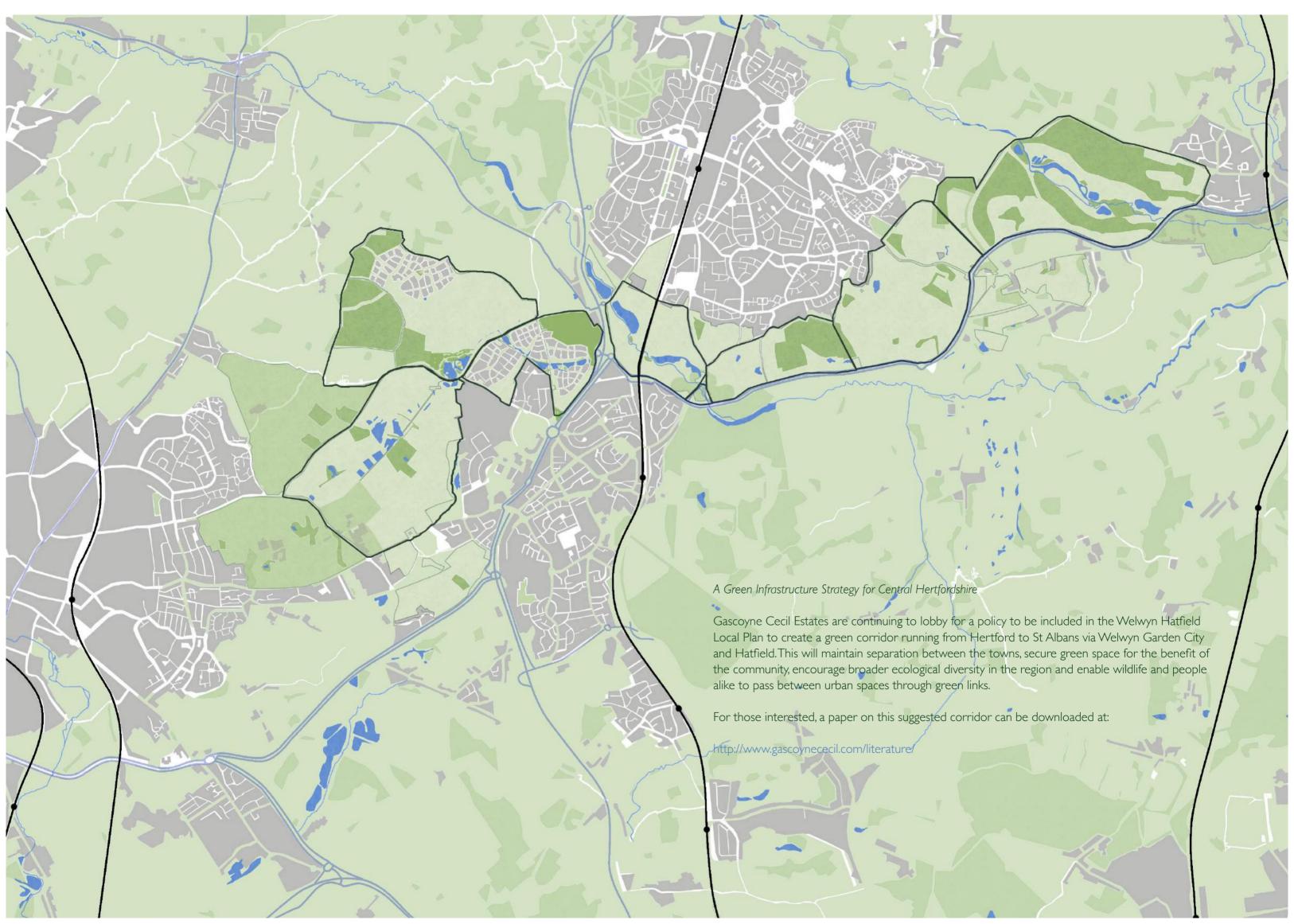


Shops providing daily needs within walking distance further reduce car usage.



Sustainable Urban Drainage is achieved through a series of small lakes at Stanboroughbury, reducing to a minimum the impact of surface water on existing neighbourhoods.

19



Housing Choice

A community cannot flourish without diversity and must include people of all ages and incomes. To ensure this, proposals for the new settlements include a full range of housing, from flats to the variety of houses traditionally found in English villages.

A wide range of house types helps to encourage fluidity of occupancy. For example, as we age and our requirements change older people would be able to move from larger houses to more sustainable, appropriately and attractively designed homes towards the centre of the community. This fluidity of occupancy is important, too, to allow younger people with growing families, who contribute significantly to the sustainability of leisure facilities and schools, to move into larger houses as their circumstances demand.

Once new neighbourhoods are built it is equally important to stop them deteriorating. Proper measures such as restrictive covenants and other controls would be put in place, and administered through an appropriate authority, to deal with concerns about homes in multiple occupation, prevent inappropriate alterations and ensure civic spaces are well-maintained.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is presently maintaining a target of 30% affordable housing under its Local Plan consultation. Beyond this 30% threshold, it is anticipated that the majority of homes would be sold on a freehold basis. The Housing Act, currently proceeding through Parliament, will introduce a number of new forms of tenure, including the designation of starter homes and self-build units. Gascoyne Cecil Estates aims to create a settlement with high-quality design and which contains all types of tenure, house sizes and affordability.

This mixture brings not only the environmental advantages we have outlined elsewhere in this document, but broader benefits offered by successful English villages: social opportunities, community spirit and pride in the local area.

Diversity of Houses

Some people question whether it is possible to build high quality traditional buildings in quantity. Each house detailed opposite in the House Type Lexicon has also been designed to three different grades. Grade 3 presents the simplest version of each house design, increasing in size and complexity through Grade 2 to Grade I and offering, in the example *below right*, higher ceilings, a porch or more marked doorway, an extra bedroom, larger windows and so on, all in the same theme.

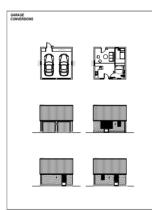
This grading method provides a variety of slightly different houses all using the same architectural vocabulary, for example, the same windows and doors, at different costs. In turn, this creates the social and economic diversity once typical of villages. Furthermore, the scope for slightly different-sized buildings results in an attractive streetscape with architectural continuity but without the repetitive monotony of many typical modern housing developments.

Adopting a transect-based approach also allows the design team to plan from the centre of a neighbourhood to its edges - from most dense to least dense, with more lighting on the high street than in the lanes, more picturesque trees and bigger terraced houses at the centre gradually becoming smaller terraces then cottages and larger detached houses as the village edge merges with the countryside.

Garage Conversions

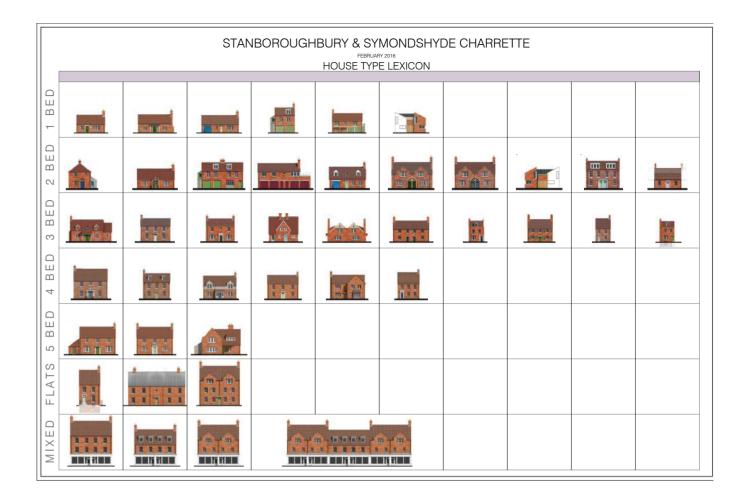
Flexibility to adapt buildings in response to future social, technological or cultural changes is borne in mind in the design of houses and other smaller structures.

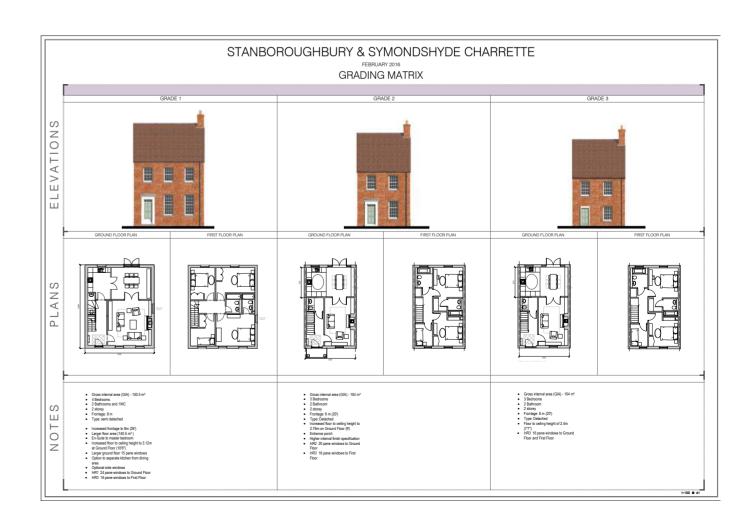
For example, garages - perhaps no longer required to house the private car in years to come - can easily be converted into extra living or work space if and when required.



HMOs

A consistent theme raised at the Charrette was the threat of HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupancy). The Housing Act 2004 defines an HMO as a house or flat let to three or more unrelated tenants who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. HMOs were highlighted as hotspots for absentee landlords catering for university students who are offered, and seek, little attachment to or pride in their local area and invariably treat it poorly. Combatting HMOs and a general degenerative slide will require community management and stewardship as the neighbourhood matures.







Schools, Clinics and Community Facilities

Many who attended the Charrette spoke of their concerns about the lack of community facilities included in previous developments. A very important part of the proposals for Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde is the provision of enough schools and community, sports and medical facilities. Such provision of course involves discussion with the relevant authorities, for example the NHS, and depends on the demand being created by a sufficient number of people. It therefore has implications for the timeline of construction.

Head teachers and other education professionals attending the Charrette expressed disappointment at the high percentage (48%) of Hatfield school pupils who, when moving to secondary school, currently choose to leave Hatfield for St Albans, Hertford or elsewhere. Many were enthusiastic about the prospect of a new school in the area, stressing the opportunities such a development might present for the whole community.

Gascoyne Cecil Estates have undertaken to work with the head teachers' working group so that any development which occurs at Stanbouroughbury or Symondshyde provides the best chance of producing a school to complement current local educational facilities and strengths.

Stanboroughbury Schools - Primary and Secondary





Space allocated for a new primary and new secondary school.



An alternative option to the new primary: space is also allocated for the expansion of the existing Green Lanes primary school.



Symondshyde Primary School





Space allocated for a new primary school.

Education Provision

Typically, smaller and more piecemeal developments of 20-50 houses rarely include land devoted to enhancing local facilities. An advantage of larger developments, such as the ones proposed at Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde, is that land for such purposes, and facilities, can and should be included in the project. They also attract sufficient numbers of people to make such facilities viable as well as desirable.

As described above, head teachers were excited by the prospect of new school facilities in the area, but stressed the importance of collaborating with existing schools and education professionals throughout their design and development: a school imposed from outside would not complement existing strengths and facilities.

Space is provided in the proposals for a new secondary school at Stanboroughbury and a primary school in each neighbourhood. It is possible the new primary at Stanboroughbury would come from an expansion of the existing Green Lanes school.

Whether or not sites are allocated is part of an ongoing exercise, dependent on the outcome of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. Should these sites be adopted, decisions relating to education provision will be subject to further discussion between local residents and the teaching community. Gascoyne Cecil Estates will continue to discuss the proposals and masterplans with all interested parties so that all opinions can be heard and the best possible results achieved.



Harmony with Existing Communities

With good topography and located close to existing infrastructure and sources of employment, Stanboroughbury presents an opportunity to benefit existing communities. At the Charrette, residents of Hatfield Garden Village and Green Lanes said they had been disappointed that the promise of improved amenities within recent development had not been fulfilled. There is, for example, no community meeting space whilst shops and leisure facilities are limited. Although some cycle paths exist, the network is disjointed and few safe opportunities exist for cycling to the north of the site towards Stanborough. Residents with young children expressed disappointment and concern that there is currently very little for their children to do close to home.

The proposals for Stanboroughbury are an opportunity to develop these community facilities, offering access to vital amenities, civic spaces and shops, restaurants and cafes within walking distance. The additional housing would bring sufficient people to sustain these enterprises, make a pub viable or a clinic justifiable.

Careful design and adherence to the well-proven principle of urban to rural transect - whereby the density of a settlement decreases as it moves from its centre to its edges, eventually giving way to countryside - will ensure that the development does not feel intrusively urban. Furthermore, ample green space provides opportunities for leisure and walking, while offering safe access to areas beyond.

Viability and Phasing

One of the key tests in taking these sites forward to the Local Plan will be viability and deliverability. The design of the Stanboroughbury masterplan, in particular, acknowledges this by ensuring it can be brought forward in phases. Significant effort has gone into looking at existing infrastructure, from the provision of electricity to the breadth of the sewer network. Housing would most likely be built first, starting at the southern end of the existing Garden Village, nearest to the Porsche garage and Business Park. Further housing and facilities would come incrementally, introducing new infrastructure as the progress of development requires.

Spheres of Influence

This image shows various spheres of influence within existing communities. For example, although most of the children attending the primary school at Symondshyde would come from the village, some children would come from further afield. Accordingly, the school's sphere of influence as shown is strongest within Symondshyde, but extends a little more widely.

Older students are able to travel further, so the new secondary school at Stanboroughbury would have a broader sphere of influence, possibly attracting some students from Welwyn Garden City and beyond.

Leisure facilities, shops or cafes and restaurants at Stanboroughbury would principally attract those who live and work locally and would, therefore, have a small but intense sphere of influence. A destination pub or restaurant within Symondshyde, whilst still attracting local residents, might draw visitors to it, including walkers and cyclists, in the evening or at the weekend.



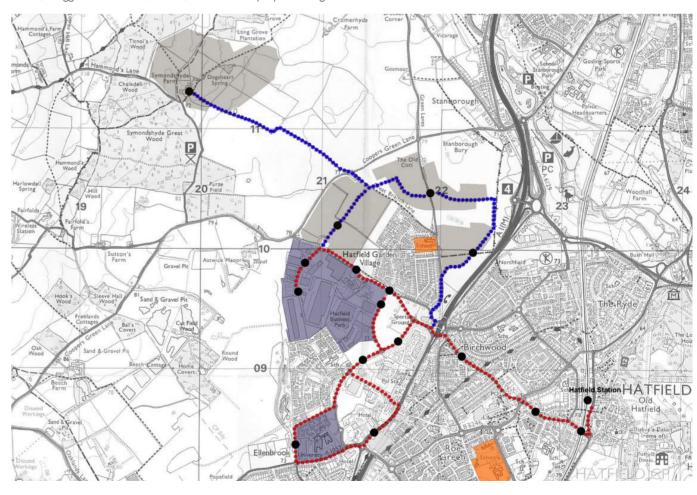
<u>Key</u>

Red - Primary school sphere Green - Secondary school sphere Blue - Destination pub sphere



Above, existing allotments to the south east of Green Lanes would be extended all the way up to the primary school, providing civic green space for existing residents to enjoy and a green buffer between existing and proposed buildings.

Below, a suggested bus route, in blue, to service the proposed neighbourhoods.



Long Term Stewardship – An ongoing commitment to quality

The proposals for Stanboroughbury and Symondshyde are designed to provide high quality, easily accessible, walkable and cycleable neighbourhoods, intended as an example of what can be achieved by careful design and energetic, enthusiastic and continuing consultation with local residents and other interested parties.

Having achieved this, it would be equally important to maintain high standards after completion. Those attending the Charrette expressed concern at inconsiderate parking, ubiquitous bins, general untidiness, poor maintenance of landscaped areas and inappropriate alterations to buildings as possible future problems. The solutions lie in a variety of measures, some of which are mentioned elsewhere in this document, but they include the use of covenants, innovative stewardship and, of course, the involvement of the growing community.

Gascoyne Cecil Estates has, for many years, used covenants on land to prevent inappropriate use or alterations detrimental to the original, agreed purpose of buildings. We would continue with this robust policy, building on our experience, to protect settlements in the long term.

We will continue to observe and explore best practice with a number of similar models such as Hampstead Garden Suburb, Letchworth Garden City and Poundbury, Community Land Trusts and US-style Homeowners Associations. Any new community must be able to manage itself, making joint decisions and resolving disputes. It must have the flexibility to evolve and mature and to respond positively to change. Bearing this firmly in mind, and knowing how much benefit can come from creating an environment in which people can thrive, we will continue to consult and listen to local residents so that, between us all, we can create the kind of neighbourhood that we would want to live in.

Community Leadership

Many models exist which might be adopted, or adapted to suit, to ensure that a strong management framework, well-matched to its purpose, is established.

Community Land Trust

The National Network of Community Land Trusts defines community land trusts as: "local organisations set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets important to the community, like community enterprises, food growing or workspaces. The CLT's main task is to make sure homes are genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier."

Homeowners' Association

A Homeowners' Association exists to oversee the provision of local services, maintain local roads and enhance community facilities. They consist of a small governing body, including executive, legislative and judicial branches, which any new resident contracts into, and are designed to protect against local feuds and similar antisocial influences. The cornerstone of any Association is the ability for residents to appeal against its decisions.

Covenants

Gascoyne Cecil Estates already employ covenants to ensure that buildings are used for their intended purpose rather than for property speculation and profiteering. A measured framework of covenants would be able to prevent widespread alterations of homes, for example, into HMOs and the degenerative effects such alterations have on community life.

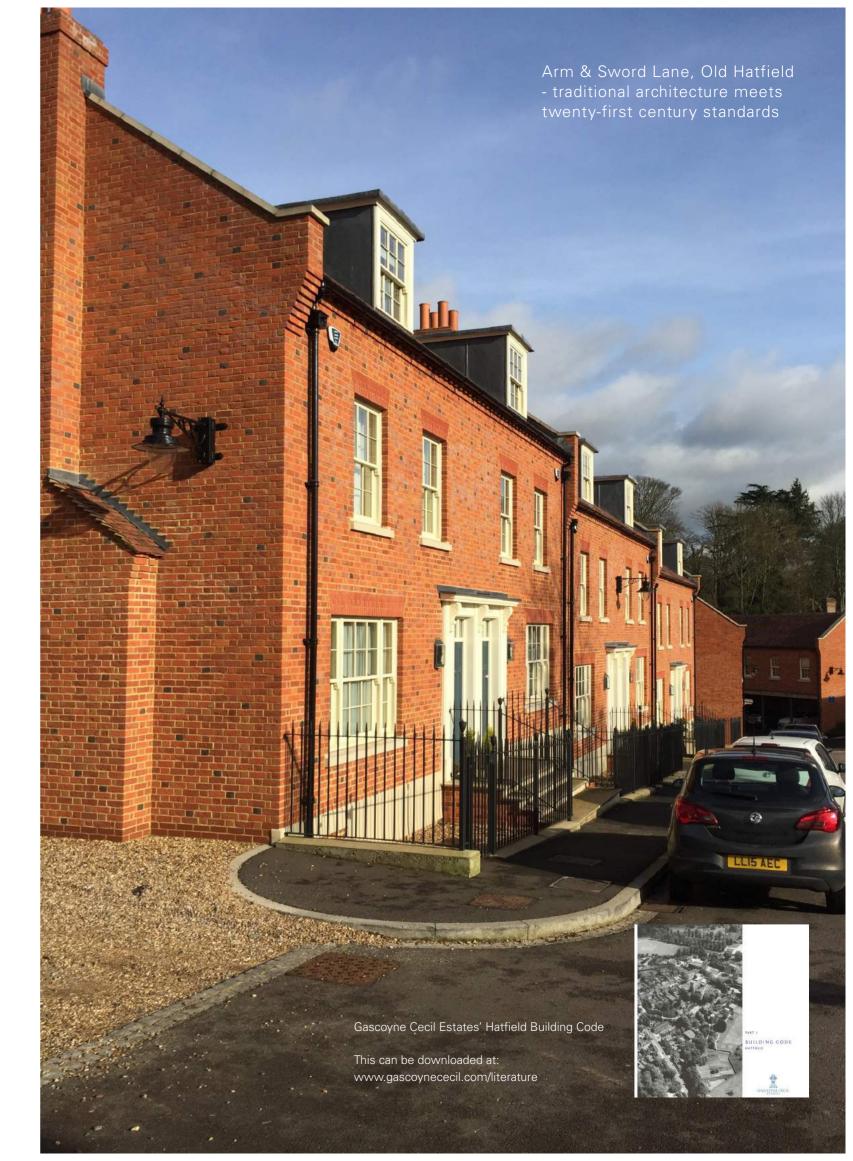
Building Codes and Design Guidance

Building codes are useful tools to ensure houses and workplaces are built harmoniously within a particular area. The town houses opposite, at Arm and Sword Lane in Old Hatfield, were built in line with Gascoyne Cecil Estates' Hatfield Building Code and are clear evidence of the quality that a carefully considered building code can bring to development.

Codes such as this, or less prescriptive Design Guidance documents, also help to encourage architectural consistency over the years, serving to prevent alterations or extensions to houses which are distinctly out of character with other buildings in the local area.

These codes and design guidance can be used in conjunction with management schemes discussed above. The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, for example, operates a management scheme. As part of this, they produce Design Principles for both their Modern Character and Heritage Character areas. Any external alterations to a home requires the consent of the Heritage Foundation in line with these standards before it can get local authority planning approval.

The use of design codes and guidance will help to ensure that the development is built out in accordance with the initial vision. Furthermore, it would form the foundation of appropriate safeguards to ensure that this vision is maintained well into the future.





What Next?

This paper summarises the key themes which were raised and discussed at the Charrette.

Residents were active, enthusiastic and positive participants throughout the process, expressing opinions in meetings and contributing wisely based on experience of past failures and successes.

This paper is by no means the end of the exercise. It is simply one milestone in a continuing consultation process. Gascoyne Cecil Estates will organise further public meetings in the months ahead, following up the specific topics and development proposals explored and discussed at the Charrette.

The dates of future meetings will be well publicised. In the meantime, should you have any specific questions, please contact us via the details below.

Hatfield Park Estate Office Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL9 5NQ 01707 287000



