

# Greenwood Park, St Albans Stage 1 Report

Client: St Stephen Parish Council  
Date: January 2025



**Prepared by**

Document owner	Organisation role
Peter Dawson	Built Environment Manager

**Control**

Date	Author	Approved by
28/01/2025	Megan Cowell	Peter Dawson

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Public Consultation</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Design Vision</b>	<b>5</b>		
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Appendix A: Precedent Images</b>	<b>29</b>
		Case Study 1: Parkwood Community Centre	29
<b>Site Analysis and Assessment</b>	<b>7</b>	Case Study 2: Sands End Arts & Community Centre	30
Site Location	7	Case Study 3: The School Green Centre	31
The Site	8	Case Study 4: The Larick Centre	32
Greenwood Park	9	Case Study 5: Westvleteren Community Centre	33
Site Photographs	10		
Movement	11	<b>Appendix B: Building Plans</b>	<b>34</b>
Sports Provision	12	<b>Appendix C: Policy Context</b>	<b>36</b>
Allotments	13	<b>Appendix D: Supplementary Appraisal</b>	<b>43</b>
		<b>Appendix E: Scoring Matrix</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Precedent Images</b>	<b>15</b>		
<b>Final Options Revised List for Scoring</b>	<b>16</b>		
Maintenance Option 1	18		
Maintenance Option 2	19		
Community Centre Option 1	20		
Community Centre Option 2	21		
Community Centre Option 3A	22		
Community Centre Option 3B	23		
Community Centre Option 5A	24		
Community Centre Option 5B	25		
Community Centre Option 8	26		
Community Centre Option 9	27		

# Executive Summary

Following an open competitive tender process, Place Services have been appointed by St Stephen Parish Council (StSPC) to lead the multi-disciplinary team and develop proposals for the Community Centre and Pavilion at Greenwood Park, which is located to the south of the City of St Albans.

The Parish Council Fixed Asset Development Strategy proposes the relocation of its administrative offices, council chamber and grounds and maintenance facilities to Greenwood Park.

These changes will enable the Parish to improve the efficiency, accessibility and usefulness of its Greenwood Park facilities – including, for example, improved car parking, electric car charging points, astroturf pitch, space for a community orchard and extensions to existing buildings to include a café, additional community rooms and improved public toilets including a changing place unit.

## Challenges

In their current forms neither the Parish Centre (Bricket Wood) nor the Community Centre and Pavilion (Greenwood Park) are adequate in terms of energy efficiency or accessibility, and the capacity and suitability of facilities does not meet our current and future needs.

The ongoing and increasingly costly maintenance of the Parish Centre is no longer a sustainable use of public funding. The Parish Council are however, committed to ensuring a community facility remains in Bricket Wood.

Parish grounds and maintenance facilities do not currently meet modern health and safety standards and are located some distance from Greenwood Park, where most regular work is conducted.

Kitchen and public toilet facilities, parking provision and space for community activities at Greenwood Park also do not meet current demand nor the needs for fully accessible facilities for all members of the community.

## Project Summary

The overarching Neighbourhood Plan Objectives were developed as a guide to the design process and to ensure that the project goals and ambitions are aligned with the council's aspirations for environmental health and wellbeing, financial and social value. The points below summarise the key project objectives developed for this stage:

- Develop proposals for the relocation of administrative and maintenance facilities to Greenwood Park Community Centre and Pavilion, with wider landscape improvements to the Park.
- Ensure that development is well-designed and takes opportunities to improve air quality, climate change, biodiversity and adopts a low carbon/low energy strategy.
- Ensure that the provision of local amenities and infrastructure is provide positive local socio-economic impact and legacy.
- Create viable and deliverable options.
- Provide multifunctional / flexible space to allow multiple functions, such as; Council Chamber, meeting room, conferences / receptions, etc.
- Provide new staff rooms / meeting rooms linked to existing facilities in the Community Centre
- Provide space for community cafe and / or community rooms.
- Create an attractive car park which promotes sustainable travel and ensuring a safe environment for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders.
- Provide disabled car parking bays, electric car charging stations and infrastructure (e.g., gates / bollards, ANPR

cameras, etc).

- Continue to work with stakeholders and the local community to develop the proposals.
- Explore the potential for wider regeneration and improved public realm with the H&L Community Panel.
- Create high-quality attractive community faculties and associated landscaping; improving sustainability, permeability, connections and health outcomes in the area.
- Reflect local heritage within the village.
- Enhance and conserve valued green and open spaces, fields, hedgerows, trees and woodlands that reflect the biodiversity and local history, as well as provide community benefit/value
- Protect and increase wildlife habitats.
- Use the 'Project Principles' to guide and evaluate the proposals (Environmental Value / Health & Wellbeing Value / Sustainability Value / Social Value).

This stage 1 report includes an optioneering study which examines a series of design options for the massing of the proposed/existing buildings and associated landscaping. Ten distinct options have been explored which have been scored individually by the Parish Council's Fixed Asset group. Following the optioneering study, the highest scoring options will be shortlisted for further discussion.

## Design Vision

The Parish Council Fixed Asset Development Strategy proposes the relocation of its administrative offices, council chamber, and grounds and maintenance facilities to Greenwood Park.

These changes will enable the Parish to improve the efficiency, accessibility and usefulness of its Greenwood Park facilities – including, for example, improved car parking, electric car charging points, astroturf pitch, space for a community orchard, and extensions to existing buildings to include a café, additional community rooms and improved public toilets with a changing place unit.

Options have been commissioned from an independent organisation to provide cost-effective approaches to these improvements, emphasising sustainability, accessibility and biodiversity, with facilities which meet both current and future demands. Plans will be advanced in consultation with Parish residents and in accordance with best practice and regulations.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rationalise and modernise all of the Parish facilities provided for the community in a way that addresses environmental concerns and community needs both now and for the future.

*Cllr Mark Skelton, Chair of St Stephen Parish Council Fixed Asset Committee*  
*Cllr David Yates, Chair of St Stephen Parish Council*



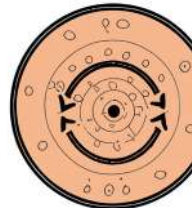
### Environmental Value

Utilise 'landscape led' design, innovative thinking and sustainable optioneering, to maximise the environmental benefits and quality of life whilst minimising the environmental impact and overall infrastructure costs.



### Health and Wellbeing Value

Buildings impact our productivity, the climate, our environment and well-being. Use placemaking and amenity to provide active environments which encourage opportunities for sport and formal exercise.



### Financial Value

Value for money is key to the deliverability of the project. Use innovation and cross-collaboration to capitalise on the Design Team's experience and know how to optimise costings, viability, and deliverability, through a whole life cycle approach and to procurement approaches.



### Social Value

Take a holistic approach to placemaking and local uses to provide assets which benefit both people and place, developed through community and stakeholder engagement and building on the inclusive foundation of the Parish Council to achieve social equity and justice.

# Introduction

Place Services' have been commissioned to produce an Options Study for improving facilities at Greenwood Park in St Albans.

The information in this document is based on the requirements stated for RIBA Stage 1 (Preparation and Brief). It sets out the current condition of Greenwood Park (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'), and the concept and vision for the developing design options.

The site analysis and appraisal has been completed based on existing character areas, using photographs, analytical diagrams, survey data and background information assessments to provide a breakdown of the existing public realm, natural features and current condition of the site.

This process has enabled the team to create a vision and concept for the spaces; utilising existing features and materials, the natural environment, making improvements based on the outcomes of 'The Future of Greenwood Park' community survey (2023) and in accordance with St Stephen Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036 (March 2022) and St Stephen Parish Council Strategic Plan.

It is intended that this report, the public consultation / stakeholder feedback and planning feedback, will provide St Stephen Parish Council (StSPC) with the information required to make an informed decision to proceed with a preferred option(s) to develop at RIBA Stage 2.

This report has been prepared to collate all the documentation prepared during RIBA Stage 1. This is the preparation and briefing stage, which seeks to:

- Develop key objectives and brief through various client, stakeholder and community engagement;
- Commence initial engagement with the local community and visitors of Greenwood Park to help inform the design process;
- Initial engagement with St Albans City & District Planning team to better understand the policy baseline and discuss potential strategies to help inform the built, natural and heritage opportunities and constraints of the development;
- Undertake a baseline analysis and site survey information to inform the design and cost exercise; and
- Evaluate the viability of various development options for Greenwood Park.

## Site Analysis and Assessment

### Site Location

Greenwood Park is located within the village confines of Chiswell Green within the administrative boundaries of St Stephen Parish and St Albans City & District. The Park lies approximately 3.2 miles from St Albans City Station. The A414 and North Orbital Road are immediately adjacent to the Park, defining the northern and eastern boundaries, respectively. The southern boundary is defined by Tippendell Lane, while Watford Road abuts the north-western boundary. There are no Public Rights of Way within the Park however, Greenwood Park is largely publicly accessible to pedestrians on-foot with the vehicular entrance being locked at 10pm.

The site is located within St Stephen Parish, which comprises three main villages, namely; Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green and Park Street, the latter of which includes the residential area of How Wood and the smaller settlements of Frogmore and Colney Street. Greenwood Park itself is located within the village of Chiswell Green which lies to the south of St Albans City and district. Historically, Chiswell Green was merely a stop on the road linking the town of Watford and St Albans, surrounded by a number of farms with associated farm houses.

The wider Parish area is subject to increasing change as new developments are brought forward and guided by the Draft Local Plan: (<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/new-local-plan>)



Aerial View showing Site boundary

## Site Analysis and Assessment

### The Site

There are opportunities to enhance the natural greenspace (e.g., woodland) at the heart of Greenwood Park through additional tree planting and the introduction of walking trails. The playground is a fantastic recreational resource with further opportunities to showcase the natural heritage of the Park in creative ways. This initiative will also link into opportunities to provide new community facilities for sports and leisure activities to support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.



Greenwood Park Butterfly Bank

Greenwood Park is well used by pedestrians and road users, despite its dilapidated infrastructure. The current access road is narrow and there is also an under-provision of car parking spaces which has resulted in surplus parking on the verges of the access road at the detriment of trees and hedgerows.

Other desirable elements would be the inclusion of space for a community orchard and / or gardens, additional tree / woodland planting for biodiversity and amenity, improved play facilities, and extensions or re-development of the existing buildings - to include a café, Council chamber and additional community rooms to establish Greenwood Park as the heart of the Parish.



Allotments & Car Park (North)



Lazy Llama Cafe / Community Centre

Greenwood Park, along with the majority of St Stephen Parish and wider St Albans district are located within the Green Belt. The Site is also located with the Watling Chase Community Forest. Within the Site, St Julian's Wood is designated as Ancient Woodland and along with the woodland to the north of Greenwood Park Community Centre is also identified on the Priority Habitat Inventory (Deciduous Woodland) and National Forest Inventory (Broadleaved Woodland). St Julian's Wood is also noted as an archaeological site subject to recording conditions.

Greenwood Park Community Centre and Pavilion lie close to the south of the Site and are accessed from Tippendell Lane to the south. The North Orbital Road runs along the eastern boundary of Greenwood Park and the northern boundary is largely defined by the A414. Both of these major roads are separated from the Park by intervening vegetation. Midway Surgery is located to the north-west of Greenwood Park and allotments (north). Killigrew Primary and Nursery School and housing set off Watford Road form the majority of the western boundaries of the Park. The larger allotments (south) are located to the south-west of the Community Centre.



St Julian's Wood



# Site Analysis and Assessment

## Greenwood Park



Key features in Greenwood Park (North)



Key features in Greenwood Park (South)

# Site Analysis and Assessment

## Site Photographs



Views our from Greenwood Park



Northern parcel



Cricket Pitch



Play Area



Informal paths



Community Building



Watford Lane Allotment



Tennis Club



Watford Road entrance



Informal paths



Woodland paths



Notice board

### Image Credits

Lewis Reynolds  
Peter Dawson  
Megan Cowell

# Site Analysis and Assessment

## Movement

The main vehicular entrance is provided from Tippendell Lane to the south, providing immediate access to the smaller car park and single lane access to the central larger car park. Other car parking facilities are located to the north-west corner, however these are associated with the adjacent allotments.

A hard-surfaced pedestrian route runs through the site from the north-west on Watford Road to the south on Tippendell Lane. An additional entrance is also located from North Close residential area.

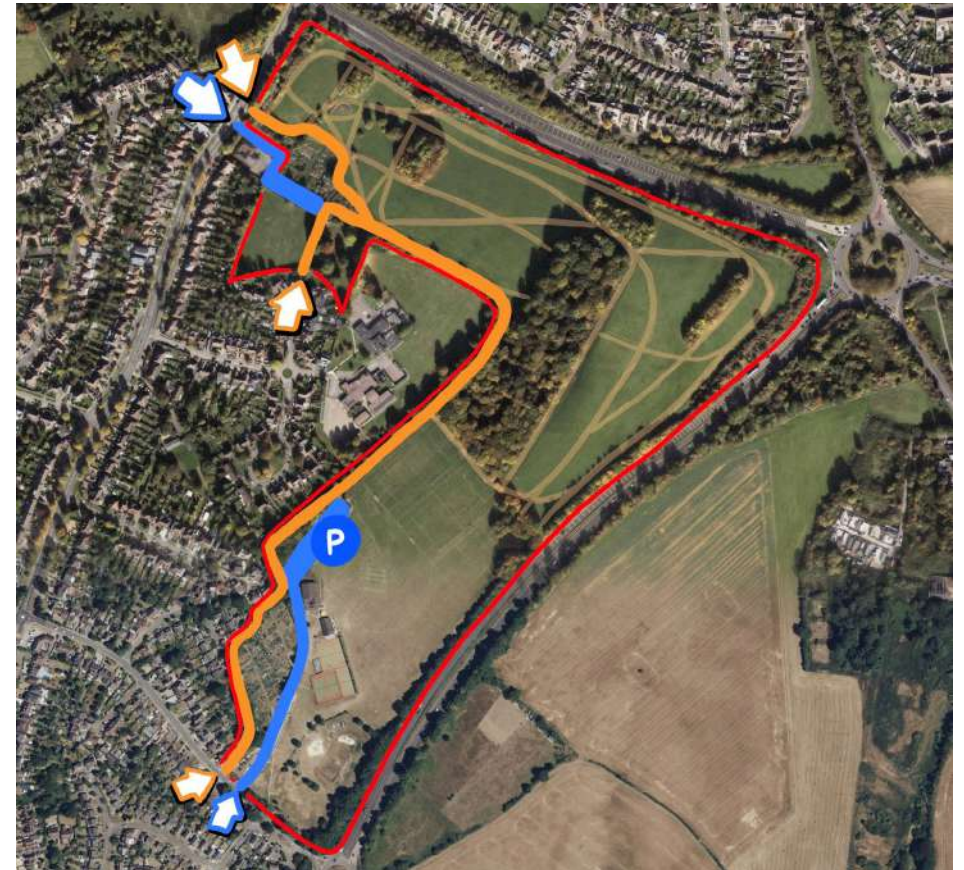
Other informal walking routes are visible throughout the northern parcels of Greenwood Park, passing through St Julians Wood. The southern parcel is primarily utilised for outdoor sports.



Informal walking routes around the northern parcels



North-west entrances



Movement and entrances in Greenwood Park

- Pedestrian routes and entrances
- Vehicle routes and entrances
- P Main car park

## Site Analysis and Assessment Sports Provision

Greenwood Park is home to a tennis club who lease part of the pavilion and all of the tennis courts, and manage their hire to the community. Cricket squares and football pitches are also hired throughout the year depending on the season. The pitches are all located close to Greenwood Park Community Centre and Pavilion which has changing facilities and showers. There is also a play area located adjacent. Car parking facilities are available adjacent, with the main car park located next to Greenwood Park Community Centre and a smaller car park at the entrance to the park on Tippendell Lane.

Sports provision is the focal point of the southern parcel of Greenwood Park and benefits from having the community facilities located in close proximity. Concept design surrounding the community buildings should consider further integrating sports provision into the public realm and increasing accessibility for users and spectators for these sports.

Sport England Active Design 10 Principles aim to create active environments that encourage people to be active throughout their everyday lives ([Appendix C](#)). The foundation principle of 'Activity for all' should underpin forthcoming concept designs, considering the current sports provisions that Greenwood Park delivers to the surrounding community.



Football pitches



Cricket pitch



Sports provision by Community Centre



Lawn Tennis Club

## Site Analysis and Assessment Allotments

Tippendell Lane allotments are located on the access road of Greenwood Park and are one of 3 allotment sites within the St Stephens Parish.

The existing allotments at Greenwood Park are accessible to pedestrians from the south and north via footpaths through Greenwood Park. Vehicular access and car parking is also provided immediately adjacent to the allotments, which also services the Community Centre, cafe, Tennis Club and other park users.

A second allotment site is located to the north-west edge of Greenwood Park, accessed from Watford Road. These allotments have a separate car parking area to the rear of Midway Surgery.



Watford Road Allotments

# Engagement

Following discussions with St Stephen Parish Council Members and staff, the Parish Council commissioned Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Limited to carry out a Community Survey. The Design Team have been meeting regularly with StSPC's Fixed Assets Committee to provide progress reports.

Design development informed by the engagement process will also continue into Stage 2.

The survey results can be found here: [The Future of Greenwood Park, Breakthrough Communications](#)

## Community Survey

Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Ltd met with Members and staff of the Council to better understand the ambitions and what was set out to achieve by carrying out a Community Survey. This included exploring what the Parish Council wanted to understand from users and residents, as well as logistical options for promoting the survey to a wide a group of residents as possible.

Breakthrough Communications explored the specific questions that the Parish Council wanted to ask, and refined these to ensure these contained both open and closed questions, as well as ensuring the language used was accessible, avoided jargon and did not contain any sense of bias. The Council also utilised the survey to ask some further open-ended questions about the future of open space assets.

In order to be as open, inclusive and transparent as possible, StSPC agreed that the Survey should be carried out in both printed and

digital formats and then promoted through as many communications channels as possible. No questions, on either the printed survey or digital survey, were mandatory. Responses would also be anonymous however, it was agreed to ask for three classification questions, in order for StSPC to better understand which voices it was hearing from. It was therefore agreed to ask for a respondent's Post Code, age and number of years lived in the Parish.

It was agreed that a printed copy of the survey should be distributed to local households, which was carried out by the StSPC's contractor, with printed surveys also available from StSPC directly. The digital version of the survey was made available through a page on the Parish Council's website.

The survey was promoted heavily by the Council and by Breakthrough Communications:

- On the council's own social media (organic)
- Through geo-targeted paid-for social media (paid for)
- On the council's website
- Through the door drop of surveys that took place to local households
- Local councillors using their own networks to encourage residents to take part
- Use of a large, printed vinyl banner
- Use of posters in noticeboards and sent to local venues

The survey went live on Tuesday 5th September 2023 and concluded on Wednesday 4th October 2023.

The Community Survey has been involved and a hugely beneficial process for the Parish Council.

Through their feedback we have managed to identify a number of emerging themes which has helped to create a 'Community Brief'. This will help to set a positive aspiration for the future of Greenwood Park for the local community.

In total, there were 717 completed responses to the Survey and it was apparent from the results that there were many positive comments about the Greenwood Park, such as the frequency of visitors, the appreciation of its natural features and habitats (e.g., trees and woodlands, etc) and the strong sense of community, but conversely there was also a high proportion of visitors arriving by car and some apprehension for future change.

The identified Community Themes are set out as follows:



# Precedent Images



**Case Study 1:** Parkwood Community Centre

**Case Study 2:** Sands End Arts & Community Centre

**Case Study 3:** The School Green Centre

**Case Study 4:** The Larick Centre

**Case Study 5:** Westvleteren Community Centre

## Final Options Revised List for Scoring

Original Option	Description	Final Option	Description
1	Ground floor extension to the east side of Community Centre and Pavilion. Maintenance compound located away from building in corner of existing car park. Maintenance facilities located at the rear of the Community Centre, with close proximity to the maintenance compound.	<b>Maintenance Option 1</b>	Maintenance element removed to separate option, see Maintenance Option 1. Maintenance facility and compound located in wooded area located north of existing car park.
		<b>Community Centre Option 1</b>	Ground floor extension to the east side of Community Centre and Pavilion
2	Ground floor and first floor extension to Community Centre and ground floor extension to Pavilion as option 1. Maintenance facilities and compound as per Option 1.	<b>Maintenance Option 2</b>	Maintenance element removed to separate option, see Maintenance Option 2. Maintenance facility and compound located in southernmost tip of allotments.
		<b>Community Centre Option 2</b>	Ground floor and first floor extension to Community Centre and ground floor extension to Pavilion as option 1.
3	New building to house additional community centre functions, Council chamber and associated spaces and maintenance facilities with adjacent compound. Pavilion extension as Options 1 & 2. Access road diverted around new building to create shared public space.	<b>Community Centre Option 3A</b>	New building to house Council Chamber and associated spaces. Community Centre extended at first floor level to house cafe with commercial kitchen and roof terrace. Pavilion extension as Options 1 & 2. Access road diverted around new building to create shared public space.
		<b>Community Centre Option 3B</b>	New building to house Council Chamber and associated spaces. Community Centre improved as per brief. Pavilion building demolished and rebuilt as two storey building to house tennis/sport facilities and cafe. Access road diverted around new building to create shared public space.
4	Introducing two new buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building 1 replaces the existing Pavilion and houses additional Community Centre facilities and the Council chamber.</li> <li>Building 2 to the west of the tennis courts houses Pavilion existing and additional spaces and maintenance facilities. The maintenance compound is located near the park entrance.</li> </ul>	<b>Removed</b>	<i>Deleted option as it replicated option 5. Option 5 now includes two options (5A) a ground floor and (5B) a single storey option.</i>



Original Option	Description	Final Option	Description
5	Introducing two new buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main new building is located where the Pavilion was demolished. The building wraps around the tennis court in an L-shape in plan. It houses additional Community Centre functions, the Council chamber and the original and improved Tennis Pavilion spaces.</li> <li>The new built maintenance building and compound are located near the park entrance.</li> </ul>	<b>Community Centre Option 5A</b>	Introducing a new single storey building, located where the Pavilion was demolished. The building wraps around the tennis court in an L-shape in plan. It houses additional Community Centre functions, the Council chamber and the original and improved Tennis Pavilion spaces.
		<b>Community Centre Option 5B</b>	Introducing a new two storey building, located where the Pavilion was demolished. The building houses the enhanced Tennis/Sports pavilion spaces, a cafe and community space (spread over two floors), the Council Chamber and a roof terrace.
6	Introducing two new buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Community Centre functions and the Council chamber are housed to the north of the existing Community Centre.</li> <li>The new built maintenance building and compound are located near the park entrance as in Option 5.</li> </ul>	<b>Removed</b>	<i>This option was deemed unnecessary as it replicates the updated Option 5A. (New ground floor building.)</i>
7	Introducing two new buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main new building is located to the north of the tennis courts. It houses additional Community Centre functions, the Council chamber and the original and improved Tennis Pavilion spaces.</li> <li>The new maintenance building and compound are located on the easter edge of the allotment site.</li> </ul>	<b>Removed</b>	<i>With the site maintenance options separated out, Option 7 became a replicated version of the new Option 5A.</i>
8	Existing Community Centre to be demolished and replaced with two-storey new built replacing existing functions and adding new. The existing Tennis Pavilion is retained, improved and extended as Option 1. In this option the maintenance building and compound are located in the North of Greenwood Park near the GP practice.	<b>Community Centre Option 8</b>	Existing Community Centre to be demolished and replaced with two-storey new built replacing existing functions and adding new. Pavilion building demolished and rebuilt as two storey building to house tennis/sport facilities and cafe.
9	Includes the demolition of both existing buildings. In their place one large building will house all sports, community and council facilities, as per the brief in a two-storey building. As in Option 8 the maintenance building and compound are located in the North of Greenwood Park near the GP practice.	<b>Community Centre Option 9</b>	Includes the demolition of both existing buildings. In their place one large building will house all sports, community and council facilities, as per the brief in a two-storey building.

# Maintenance Option 1

Maintenance facility and compound located in wooded area located north of existing car park



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	close to community centre and car park
<b>Weaknesses</b>	tree and vegetation removals, existing access restrictions, disconnect from allotments
<b>Opportunities</b>	connections to parking facilities
<b>Threats</b>	biodiversity and green infrastructure removals

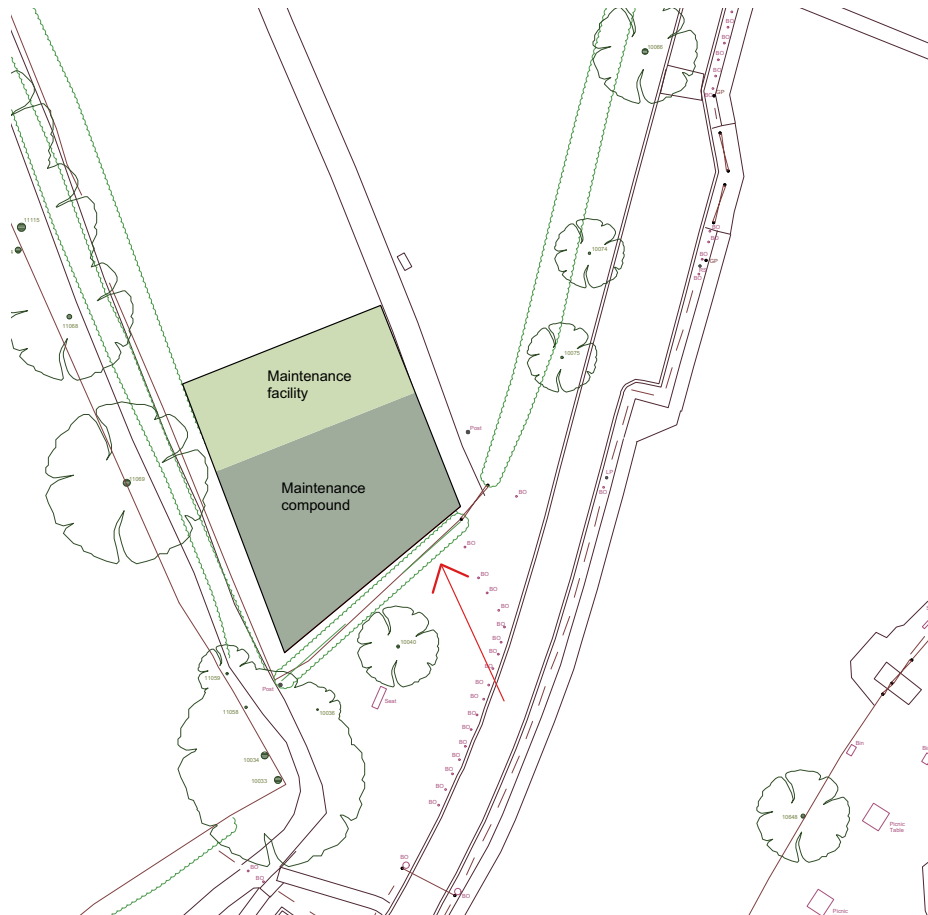
## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	2.2	1.5
Planning risk	2.2	3
Impact on existing uses/users	3	2.5

Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

# Maintenance Option 2

Maintenance facility and compound located in southernmost tip of allotments



### SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	good access from road, connected to allotments, minimal vegetation removals, away from pedestrians
<b>Weaknesses</b>	disconnect from community centre and car park, road crossing to main park
<b>Opportunities</b>	connections to allotments, close to entrance
<b>Threats</b>	tree removals

### Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	4.4	4
Planning risk	2.4	3
Impact on existing uses/users	2	1.5

Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Proposed locations for maintenance building
- Proposed locations for maintenance compound

# Community Centre Option 1

Ground floor extension to the east side of Community Centre and Pavilion



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	maintenance accessibility, more building space, landscape improvements
<b>Weaknesses</b>	extension expense, restricted vehicle access, moved cricket pitch
<b>Opportunities</b>	larger hire space, building extension, viewing areas over cricket pitch
<b>Threats</b>	building expense, cricket pitch moved

## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Visual impact on park	3.2	4
Disruption to existing users	3	3
Benefit for residents of the parish	3.2	3.5
Planning risk	3	3
Sustainability - embodied carbon	3.8	2.5
Value for money	3.2	2
Opportunity for architectural improvements	3.2	2.5
Opportunity for landscape improvements	3.2	3

Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Existing buildings to be improved as per brief
- Proposed locations for Community Centre improvements
- Proposed locations for Pavilion improvements
- Proposed locations for Council Chamber and associated rooms
- Proposed locations for landscape improvements
- Heart of the community: Outdoor space associated to building uses

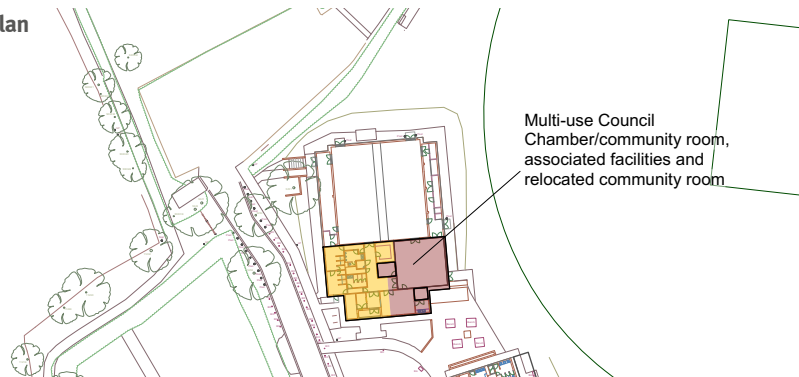
# Community Centre Option 2

Ground floor and first floor extension to Community Centre and ground floor extension to Pavilion as option 1.

**Ground Floor Plan**



**First Floor Plan**



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	landscape improvements, make use of existing facilities
<b>Weaknesses</b>	few building enhancements
<b>Opportunities</b>	pedestrian priority, outdoor central space design
<b>Threats</b>	

## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Visual impact on park	3.6	4
Disruption to existing users	3.8	2.5
Benefit for residents of the parish	4	3.5
Planning risk	3	3.5
Sustainability - embodied carbon	4	3
Value for money	3.8	3.5
Opportunity for architectural improvements	3.6	3.5
Opportunity for landscape improvements	3.4	2.5

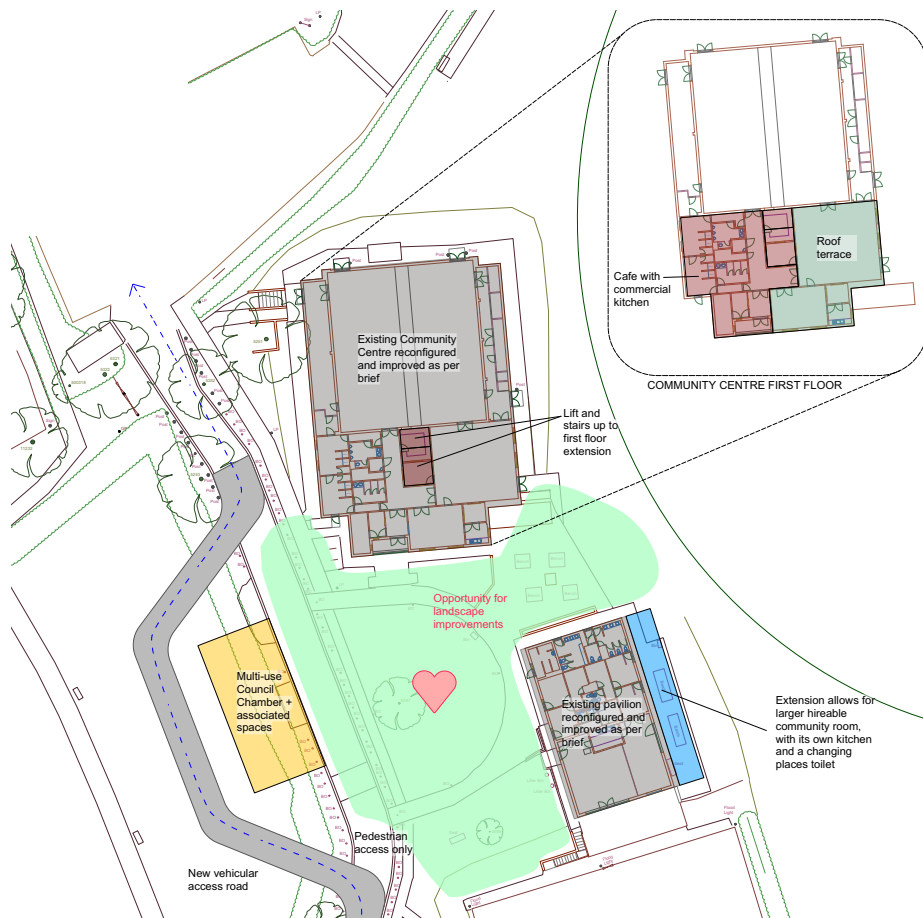
Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Existing buildings to be improved as per brief
- Proposed locations for Community Centre improvements
- Proposed locations for Pavilion improvements
- Proposed locations for Council Chamber and associated rooms
- Proposed locations for landscape improvements
- Heart of the community: Outdoor space associated to building uses

# Community Centre Option 3A

New building to house Council Chamber and associated spaces. Community Centre extended at first floor level to house cafe with commercial kitchen and roof terrace. Pavillion extension as options 1 & 2. Access road diverted around new building to create shared public space.



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	pedestrian priority, additional building space, roof terrace
<b>Weaknesses</b>	allotments removed, road relocation costs, building costs
<b>Opportunities</b>	public space increase, pedestrian priority, new building
<b>Threats</b>	loss of allotments

## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Visual impact on park	3.2	3
Disruption to existing users	2.2	2
Benefit for residents of the parish	3.2	3
Planning risk	2.2	2
Sustainability - embodied carbon	3	2.5
Value for money	2.2	1.5
Opportunity for architectural improvements	3.2	3.5
Opportunity for landscape improvements	3.2	3

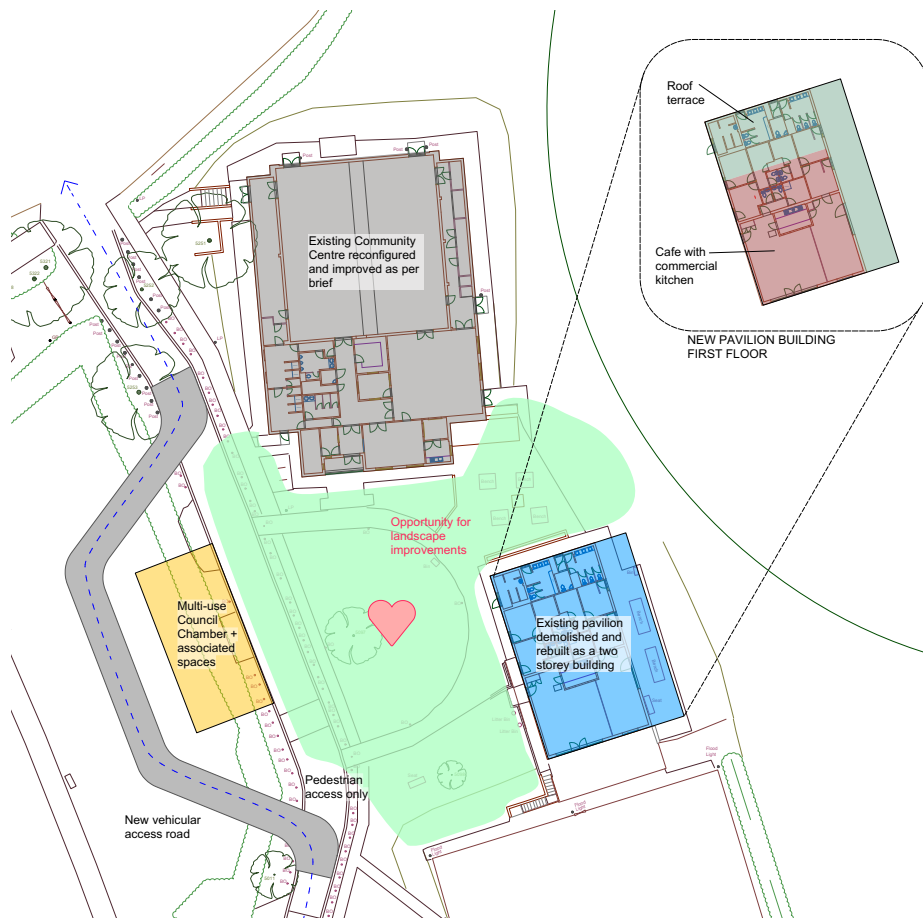
Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Existing buildings to be improved as per brief
- Proposed locations for Community Centre improvements
- Proposed locations for Pavilion improvements
- Proposed locations for Council Chamber and associated rooms
- Proposed locations for landscape improvements
- Heart of the community: Outdoor space associated to building uses

# Community Centre Option 3B

New building to house Council Chamber and associated spaces. Community Centre improved as per brief. Pavillion building demolished and rebuilt as two storey building to house tennis/sport facilities and cafe. Access road diverted around new building to create shared public space.



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	pedestrian priority, additional building space, roof terrace
<b>Weaknesses</b>	allotments removed, road relocation costs, building costs
<b>Opportunities</b>	public space increase, pedestrian priority, new building
<b>Threats</b>	loss of allotments

## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Visual impact on park	3.2	3
Disruption to existing users	2.2	2.5
Benefit for residents of the parish	3.2	2.5
Planning risk	2.4	2.5
Sustainability - embodied carbon	2.6	2.5
Value for money	2.6	1.5
Opportunity for architectural improvements	3.4	3.5
Opportunity for landscape improvements	3	3

Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Existing buildings to be improved as per brief
- Proposed locations for Community Centre improvements
- Proposed locations for Pavilion improvements
- Proposed locations for Council Chamber and associated rooms
- Proposed locations for landscape improvements
- Heart of the community: Outdoor space associated to building uses

# Community Centre Option 5A

Introducing a new single storey building, located where the Pavilion was demolished. The building wraps around the tennis court in an L-shape in plan. It houses additional Community Centre functions, the Council chamber and the original and improved Tennis Pavilion spaces.



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	large landscaped outdoor space, replacement building
<b>Weaknesses</b>	building costs, disconnected building, road access restrictions
<b>Opportunities</b>	lots of additional space for reconfiguration, outdoor space focus
<b>Threats</b>	large areas of grassland lost, cost of replacement building

## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Visual impact on park	3	4
Disruption to existing users	3.2	3
Benefit for residents of the parish	3.4	3
Planning risk	3.2	3.5
Sustainability - embodied carbon	3.2	2.5
Value for money	3.2	2.5
Opportunity for architectural improvements	4.2	3.5
Opportunity for landscape improvements	3.6	3.5

Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Existing buildings to be improved as per brief
- Proposed locations for Community Centre improvements
- Proposed locations for Pavilion improvements
- Proposed locations for Council Chamber and associated rooms
- Proposed locations for landscape improvements
- Heart of the community: Outdoor space associated to building uses



# Community Centre Option 5B

Introducing a new two storey building, located where the Pavilion was demolished. The building houses the enhanced Tennis/Sports pavilion spaces, a cafe and community space (spread over two floors), the Council Chamber and a roof terrace.



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	large landscaped outdoor space, replacement building, roof terrace viewing
<b>Weaknesses</b>	building costs, disconnected buildings, road access restrictions
<b>Opportunities</b>	lots of additional space for reconfiguration, outdoor space focus
<b>Threats</b>	large areas of grassland lost, cost of replacement building

## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Visual impact on park	3.6	4
Disruption to existing users	3.4	3
Benefit for residents of the parish	3.6	3
Planning risk	3.6	3.5
Sustainability - embodied carbon	3.4	2.5
Value for money	3.8	3
Opportunity for architectural improvements	4.4	3.5
Opportunity for landscape improvements	4	3.5

Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Existing buildings to be improved as per brief
- Proposed locations for Community Centre improvements
- Proposed locations for Pavilion improvements
- Proposed locations for Council Chamber and associated rooms
- Proposed locations for landscape improvements
- Heart of the community: Outdoor space associated to building uses

# Community Centre Option 8

Existing Community Centre to be demolished and replaced with two-storey new built replacing existing functions and adding new. Pavillion building demolished and rebuilt as two storey building to house tennis/sport facilities and cafe.



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	several new public spaces, new building, roof terrace
<b>Weaknesses</b>	new building costs, expensive landscaped areas, road access restrictions
<b>Opportunities</b>	better connections between parking and buildings, outdoor cinema
<b>Threats</b>	disconnected maintenance/compound, building loss, HGV access restrictions

## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Visual impact on park	2.8	3
Disruption to existing users	2.2	1.5
Benefit for residents of the parish	2.6	2.5
Planning risk	3	2
Sustainability - embodied carbon	2.4	2.5
Value for money	2.4	2.5
Opportunity for architectural improvements	3.8	3.5
Opportunity for landscape improvements	3.4	3

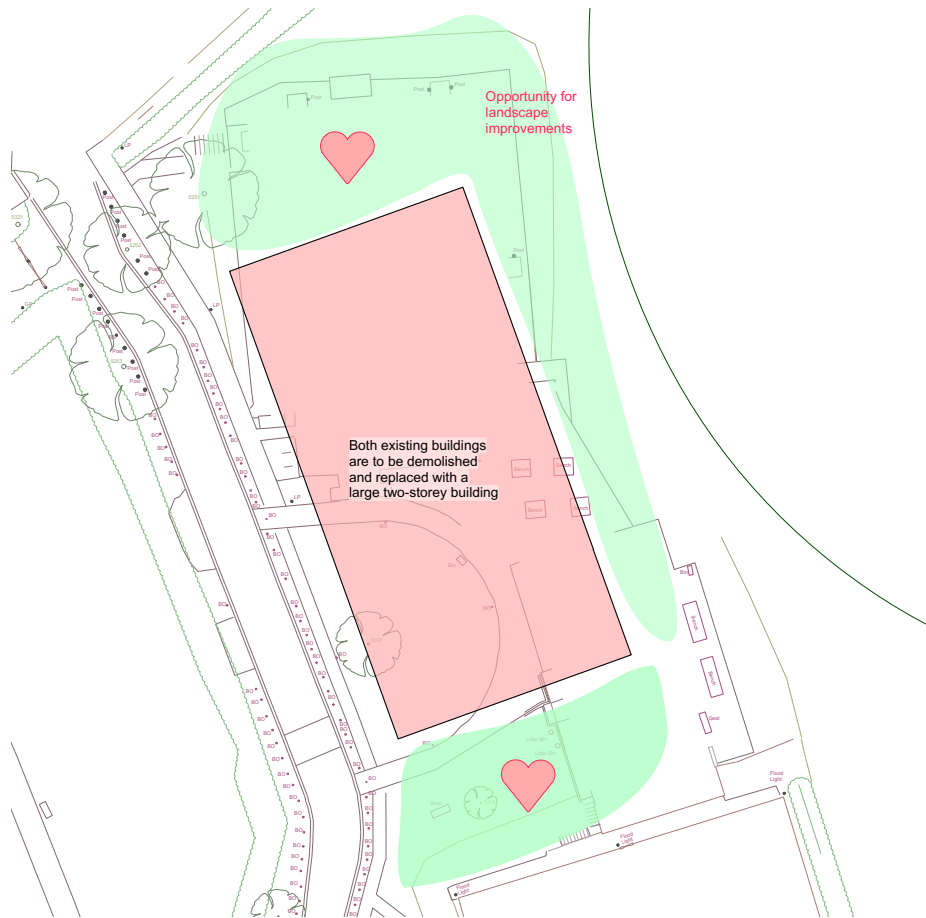
Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Existing buildings to be improved as per brief
- Proposed locations for Community Centre improvements
- Proposed locations for Pavilion improvements
- Proposed locations for Council Chamber and associated rooms
- Proposed locations for landscape improvements
- Heart of the community: Outdoor space associated to building uses

# Community Centre Option 9

Includes the demolition of both existing buildings. In their place one large building will house all sports, community and council facilities, as per the brief in a two-storey building.



## SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	new public spaces, new buildings, community focus
<b>Weaknesses</b>	new building costs, retained restricted access, reconfiguration costs
<b>Opportunities</b>	community central building, easy navigation
<b>Threats</b>	building loss, building and design costs

## Average Scoring for Community Centre Option Evaluation

Scoring Categories	Councillors	Staff
Visual impact on park	2	2.5
Disruption to existing users	2	1
Benefit for residents of the parish	2.4	2.5
Planning risk	2.6	2
Sustainability - embodied carbon	2.2	2.5
Value for money	2.2	2.5
Opportunity for architectural improvements	3.8	3.5
Opportunity for landscape improvements	3.2	2.5

Scoring: 1 = worst 5 = best

### Legend

- Existing buildings to be improved as per brief
- Proposed locations for Community Centre improvements
- Proposed locations for Pavilion improvements
- Proposed locations for Council Chamber and associated rooms
- Proposed locations for landscape improvements
- Heart of the community: Outdoor space associated to building uses

## Public Consultation

In October 2023, St Stephen Parish Council (“The Council”) commissioned Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Limited (“Breakthrough Communications”) to carry out a community survey to ascertain how local residents currently utilise the open spaces and facilities located within Greenwood Park and to ascertain their views on potential future changes and improvements.

Details of the methodology are included within the full report, which can be found using the following link:

Using a range of different promotion methods, including social media, council website, door-drop surveys, local councillor’s network, banners and noticeboards, a total of 717 responses were collected during the month-long period that the survey was live.

A total of 14 questions were asked within the survey, which included the following key findings:

Question 5 asked; “There are currently a range of facilities at Greenwood Park. Which facilities do you generally make use of?”

- 79.49% used the park for walking
- 65.31% visit the woods
- 58.29% visit the coffee shop
- 46.21% meet friends
- 40.73% go to the play area
- 40.45% walk the dog
- 34.83% attend an event

Question 6 asked; “Which additional outdoor facilities would you most like to see at the park, that would encourage you or your children to visit more often?”. Of the results, 37.3% of respondents ranked Woodland Walks as the most important facility that would

encourage more visits to the park. Better playground equipment (20%) and outdoor wellness equipment (14.75%) were also the priority for many of the respondents.

Question 7 asked; “Do you have any additional ideas for outdoor facilities?”. Responses included Play and Sports Facilities, specifically:

- Outdoor gym equipment or fitness areas.
- Facilities for older children (skate park, basketball hoops, bouldering wall).
- Jogging/running tracks with distance markers.
- Multi-purpose sports areas (for basketball, netball, lacrosse, etc.)

Question 8 asked; “Which additional indoor facilities would you most like to see at the park, that would encourage you or your children to visit more often?”. First preferences included:

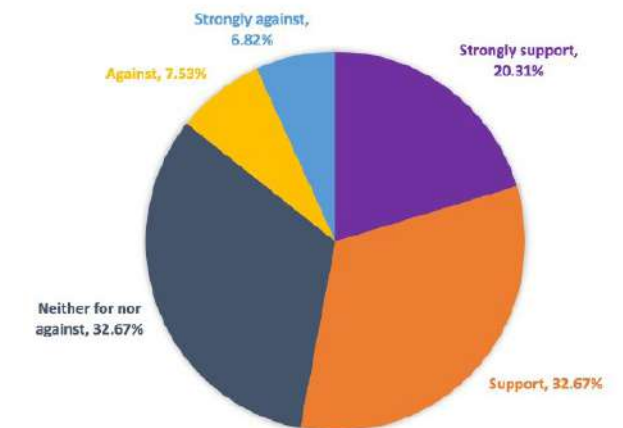
- Community cafe 244 (47.3%)
- Community gym 100 (20.7%)
- Bouldering / climbing wall 61 (13%)
- Adult or children’s community groups or facilities 58 (11.96%)

Question 9 asked; “Do you have any additional ideas for indoor facilities?”. Responses included Play and Sports Facilities, specifically:

- Covered tennis and badminton courts, indoor netball, and basketball facilities for all-year use.
- Fitness activities including classes (yoga, Pilates, dance, indoor cricket), fitness shops, and equipment rental.
- Establishment of new sports like paddle courts, golfing facilities, and pickleball.

Responses also indicated an interest in an expanded cafe with indoor seating, accessible toilets with better maintenance, and a dog-friendly environment.

Question 10b asked; “How would you feel about a full-sized indoor sports court to run co-current activities or a full court for basketball / netball / volleyball etc?”. Results showed 20.31% strong support and 32.67% support.



Question 10C asked; “How would you feel about the current buildings being extended or moved?”. 14.2% expressed strong support and 29.12% expressed support. 21.87% expressed they were either against or strongly against the building being extended or moved.

## Appendix A: Precedent Images

### Case Study 1: Parkwood Community Centre

**Client:** Parkwood Community Association

**Location:** Rainham, Kent

**Architects:** Clay Architects

**Completion Date:** 2011

Parkwood is an area short on amenities and recreational facilities; it was in this context that the Parkwood Community Association was formed and the original Centre built in 1974.

Consisting of a community centre, social club and day care, with an adjoining youth club, by 2000 the facilities were in dire need of expansion and upgrade. The split level plan was not accessible, the building lacked the space and the flexibility to cope with growing demand for its facilities.



The project demonstrates how small interventions can be implemented to uplift the exterior of the existing building. Refurbishment works can be undertaken both internally and externally.



## Appendix A: Precedent Images

### Case Study 2: Sands End Arts & Community Centre

**Client:** Hammersmith & Fulham Council

**Location:** Fulham, London

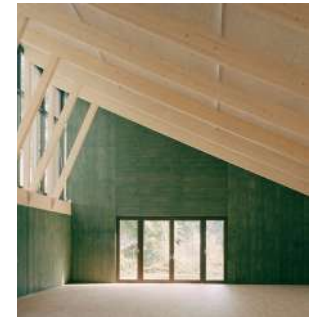
**Architects:** Mae

**Completion Date:** 2020

Located on the northwest corner of Fulham's South Park, the new Sands End Arts & Community Centre is a collaborative development comprising several new connected pavilions arranged around the existing disused Clancarty Lodge, a popular landmark that was refurbished as an exhibition space as part of the same project.



The project demonstrates how refurbishment of an existing unused building in tandem with a new build can create a vibrant community centre. This showcases how a distinctive form and material palette could be used to unify different buildings.



## Appendix A: Precedent Images

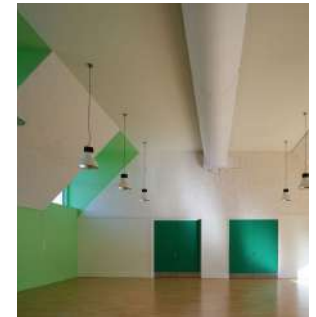
### Case Study 3: The School Green Centre

**Client:** Shinfield Parish Council  
**Location:** Shinfield, Berkshire  
**Architects:** AOC  
**Completion Date:** 2022

The School Green Centre serves as a community hub, integrating a well-being centre, library, creche, venue, meeting rooms, and offices for Shinfield Parish Council. Achieved through refurbishing the existing Parish Hall and constructing a new building, it caters to the needs of a rapidly developing community. AOC's design blends original architectural elements with contemporary design, fostering cohesion between the two buildings, which are also connected as part of the new build.



The project demonstrates the refurbishment of an existing parish council building alongside the construction of a new interconnected community centre. It retains the functionality of the parish office and meeting rooms while expanding to accommodate additional community functions.



## Appendix A: Precedent Images

### Case Study 4: The Larick Centre

**Client:** Tayport Community Trust  
**Location:** Tayport, Fife  
**Architects:** Collective Architecture  
**Completion Date:** 2020

The Larick Centre is in the small coastal town of Tayport, on the River Tay. This new centre was planned and now operated by Tayport Community Trust, and has been quoted as 'a building by the community, for the community'.

The newly opened centre houses a large sports hall, a number of smaller halls, meeting spaces, and a café. Collective Architecture has aimed to provide the client with maximum operational flexibility, giving resilience day to day and through the life of the building, always responding to the needs of the community.

The naturally lit public spaces have been designed with flexibility in mind to cater for a multitude of community uses. The main hall's scale makes it suitable for sports, community and social events. The smaller spaces have been separated with movable walls to allow for expansion and contraction to suit varied and changing uses of these spaces.

The project demonstrates a UK community centre which incorporates a sports hall and a café. This example is a case study for an option that features a rebuild of the community centre.





## Appendix A: Precedent Images

### Case Study 5: Westvleteren Community Centre

**Client:** Gemeentebestuur Vleteren

**Location:** Vleteren, Belgium

**Architects:** Atelier Tom Vanhee

**Completion Date:** 2011

The meeting centre offers accommodation for various community activities. The complex of buildings consists of successive constructions, ranging from a 19th-century school building and an old town hall to an industrial construction from the 1990s. The gabled roof is replaced by a single slope roof, making the room and space higher, and bringing a better acoustic sound in the hall. Several high windows bring light and give views of the nearby church. The central entrance hall connects the different functions and spaces. The use of different types of bricks betrays the successive renovations in the past. The newly added walls are constructed in contemporary bricks. The recent renovation stitches together the patchwork of different bricks.

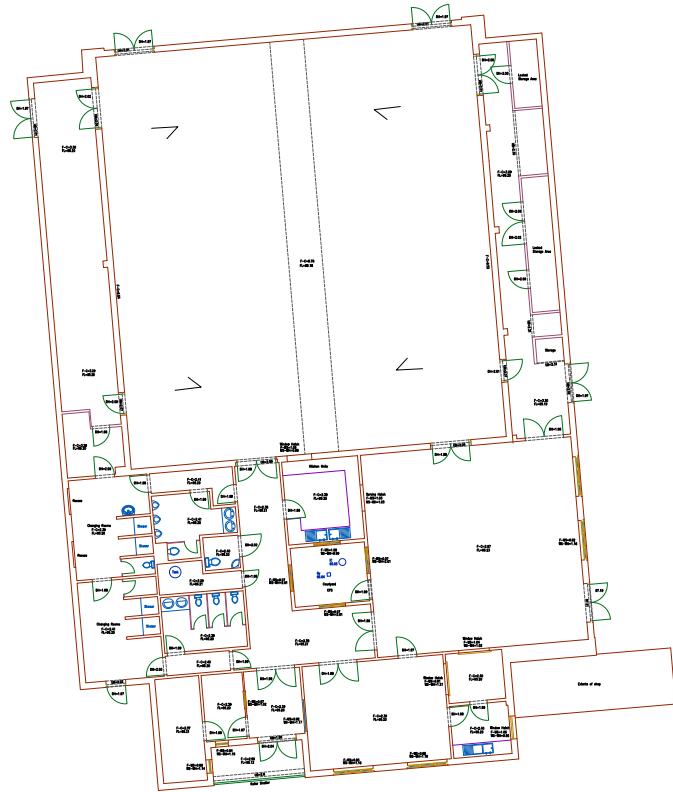


The project is an exemplar showcasing how a unifying material can be employed to stitch together existing building fabric with new additions, creating a cohesive variety of architectural languages and material palettes.

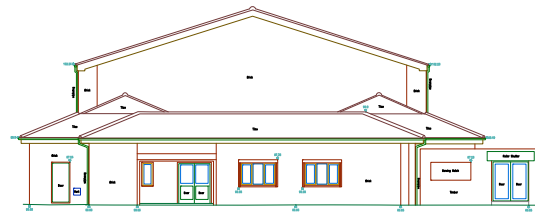


# Appendix B: Building Plans

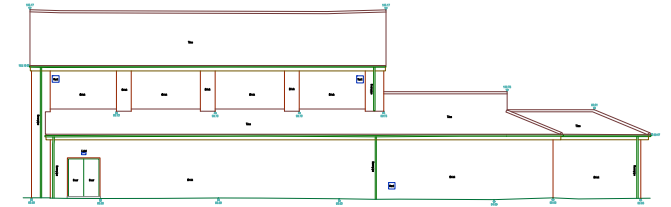
## Greenwood Park Community Centre



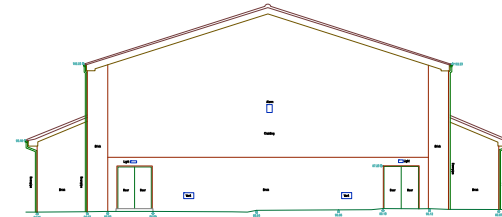
Building Layout



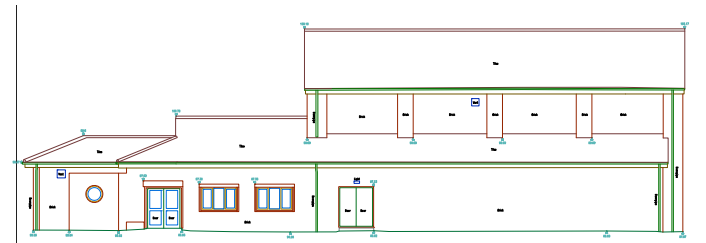
Date: 19/03/20  
Elevation 1



Date: 19/03/20  
Elevation 2



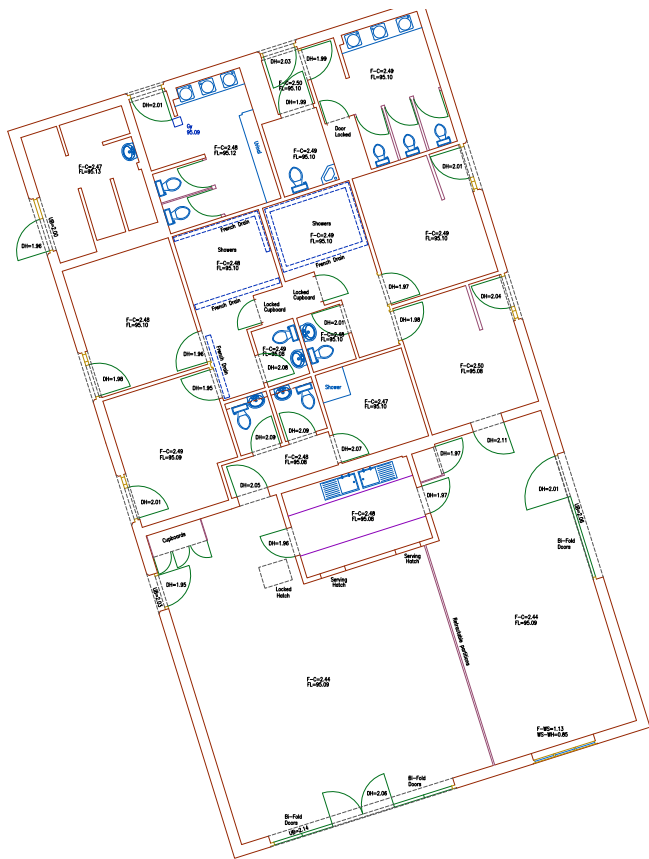
Date: 19/03/20  
Elevation 3



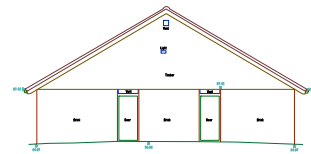
Date: 19/03/20  
Elevation 4

Elevations of Community Centre

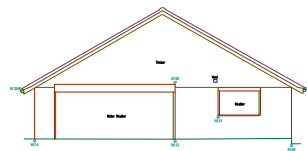
# Appendix B: Building Plans Greenwood Park Pavilion



Building Layout

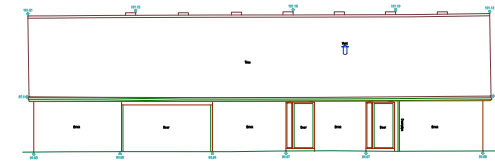


Datum 90.00m  
Elevation 5

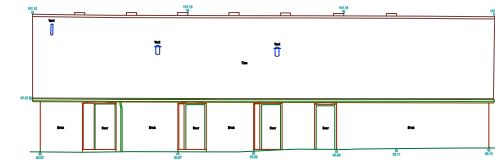


Datum 90.00m  
Elevation 7

Elevations of Park Pavilion



Datum 90.00m  
Elevation 6



Datum 90.00m  
Elevation 8

## Appendix C: Policy Context

### Planning Context

#### National Planning Policy Framework (Last updated December 2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied and provides a framework for local communities and Councils to produce their own locally distinctive plans and policies to address their own specific needs and requirements.

The NPPF states that purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. In doing so, it sets out three overarching objectives which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways, including [but not limited to]:

- **a social objective** - which aims to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by *"...fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being"*;
- **an environmental objective** - which strives to *"...protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy"*.

Section 8 of the NPPF reinforces that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which [among others]: *"...enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health*

*and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling"* (Para 96).

Paragraph 102 states that *"access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change"*. The NPPF also sets out that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless [inter alia]: *"...the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use"* (Para 103).

Section 12 of the NPPF sets out for achieving well-design and beautiful places. It emphasises that the *"...creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities"* (Para 131).

Paragraph 135 also states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments [among others]:

- *"...will function well and add to the overall quality of the area..."*;
- *"...are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping"*;
- *"...are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while*

*not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)"*;

- *"...establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit"*;

This is further reinforced by the desire to *"optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities"* and to create *"...places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users"*.

Paragraph 136 emphasises that *"trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change"*. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments, and that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term management of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

Paragraph 137 sets out that *"design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals"*. It also encourages *"early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests"*. Applicants are also advised to work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community.

## Appendix C: Policy Context

### Planning Context

Para 137 also emphasises that *“applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot”*.

Paragraph 138 states that *“for assessing proposals there is a range of tools including workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as Building for a Healthy Life”*. It emphasises that *“these are of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes...”*.

Paragraph 139 states [among others] that *“development that is not well designed should be refused”*, conversely it also states that significant weight should be given to:

- *“development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents; and/or*
- *“outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings”*.

Paragraph 152 states that *“...inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”*.

Paragraph 154 states that local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are [among others]:

- *“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- *the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- *the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development...”*.

Section 15 of the NPPF sets out for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraph 180 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by [inter alia]:

- *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*
- *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*

- *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”*.

Paragraph 186 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles, including [inter alia]: *“development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.*

## Appendix C: Policy Context

### Planning Context

#### St Albans District Local Plan Review - Saved Policies

The current adopted Local Plan is the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. This is being replaced by the new Draft Local Plan. Local Plans 'expired' after 27th September 2007, unless policies were "saved", in whole or in part. In 2007, a Direction was made saving specific policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994 meaning that they are still part of the development plan for St Albans.

The policies listed in the 'List of Saved Policies' are therefore the remaining policies within the District Local Plan Review 1994. Any policies not included on the schedule have expired and are no longer part of the development plan. The policies considered of relevance to the Greenwood Park Project are as follows, including [inter alia]:

Policy 1 states that the whole of St. Albans District lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt except for the following areas, including [but not limited to]: *"...the towns and specified settlements listed in Policy 2"*.

It also states that *"...the boundaries of the Green Belt around these areas (as shown on the Proposals Map) have been defined by reference to the degree of long term expansion of the built-up areas acceptable in the context of the stated purpose of the Green Belt"*.

Within the Green Belt, except for development in Green Belt settlements (or in very special circumstances), permission will not typically be given for development for purposes other than that required for:

- *"mineral extraction;*
- *agriculture;*
- *small scale facilities for participatory sport and recreation;*
- *other uses appropriate to a rural area;*
- *conversion of existing buildings to appropriate new uses..."*

Policy 1 also emphasises that *"new development within the Green Belt shall integrate with the existing landscape. Siting, design and external appearance are particularly important and additional landscaping will normally be required. Significant harm to the ecological value of the countryside must be avoided"*.

Policy 2 covers Settlement Strategy of the St Albans District. In terms of Policy 2, it identifies the main villages within St Stephen Parish (i.e., Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green, How Wood and Park Street / Frogmore) as "large villages" and therefore excluded from the Green Belt.

It also stipulates that other than the exceptions in Policy 1, development will not normally be permitted except [inter alia]: *"local facilities and service needs of the settlement in which the development is proposed"* and that any subsequent *"development must not detract from the character and setting of these settlements within the Green Belt."*

Policy 9 sets out the criteria for Non-residential Uses within Residential Areas. It states that *"within areas primarily residential in character, the Council will not normally disturb lawfully existing non-residential uses, provided such activities are environmentally acceptable in terms of their visual impact, noise, smell, safety, health or traffic generation"*.

Within towns and specified settlements *"...small scale new non-residential development and redevelopment or extensions to existing sites will normally be permitted in residential areas, where they will not adversely affect their amenity and character by reason of such factors as noise, smell, safety or excessive traffic"*. It also outlines that acceptable uses may include [among others]: public open space and leisure uses which do not generate unacceptable vehicular traffic; local shops and services; and community facilities.

Policy 34 covers Highway Considerations in Development Control and states that *"...development likely to generate a significant amount of traffic, or which involves the creation or improvement of an access onto the public highway, will not normally be permitted..."* unless deemed acceptable in terms of the following considerations [inter alia]: road safety; environmental impact of traffic; road capacity; road hierarchy; and car parking provision.

Policy 35 states that *"in order to mitigate the highway effects of development proposals, the District Council in conjunction with the County Council, where appropriate, will seek highway improvements or contributions to highway improvements and/or improvements..."* particularly where proposals would otherwise result in detrimental highway conditions.

Policy 67 covers Public Meeting Rooms and Facilities. It states that the Council will generally encourage the provision of additional accommodation for community purposes, but *“before granting permission for a change of use or redevelopment of buildings used for community purposes, the Council will need to be satisfied that a need for them no longer exists”*.

Policy 69 covers General Design and Layout. This requires an *“adequately high standard of design”*, taking into account factors such as: context, including the scale and character of the surroundings; materials, which take account of the general colour and tonal value of their background; and other relevant policies.

Policy 74 covers Landscaping and Tree Preservation. This policy states that significant healthy trees and other important landscape features such as hedges, ponds and watercourses, should normally be retained. It also states that planning applications should be supported by a full tree survey and that detailed landscape schemes are normally required as part of full planning applications.

It also states, amongst other things, that landscape schemes must indicate existing trees and shrubs to be retained, the trees to be felled, the planting of new trees, shrubs and grass, and details of screening and paving. Preference should also be given to the use of native trees and shrubs.

Policy 80 covers Floodlighting. It states that planning applications for *“...floodlighting will not be granted where any of the following apply:*

- *the visual impact of floodlighting columns, the intensity of lighting, or glare, would detract from the character or amenity of:*
  - a. *residential properties;*
  - b. *rural areas; or*
  - c. *listed buildings and conservation areas:*
- *the provision of floodlighting would enable an undue intensification or extension of the use of a sports or similar facility to the detriment of the amenity of a residential area or the character of a rural area;*
- *the presence of lighting would harm the ecology of an area.”*

Policy 91 covers the Location of Leisure Facilities. It sets out that *“new leisure proposals and extensions to existing facilities will not normally be permitted unless acceptable in terms of location, access, car parking, environmental impact and safety”*.

With regards to Location, Policy 91 states that *“Medium Intensity Uses will normally be permitted as follows:*

- *Type A: within towns and specified settlements...*
- *Type B: in the Green Belt outside Landscape Conservation Areas...”*

In terms of Landscaping, Policy 91 stipulates that *“proposals shall preserve and enhance their setting and additional landscaping shall be provided where necessary...”*.

Policy 92 covers New Indoor Sports Facilities and states that *“other proposals for indoor sports facilities will be assessed against Policy 91”*.

Policy 95 covers Allotments. It sets out that *“the District Council will refuse planning applications which involve the loss of statutory or non-statutory allotments unless it can be shown that:*

- *suitable replacement allotments are to be provided; or*
- *there is no need for the allotments, taking into account current and previous usage of the site and any others in the vicinity.”*

Policy 96 covers Medium Intensity Leisure Uses in the Green Belt and states that *“medium intensity leisure uses in the Green Belt will normally be restricted to “Type B” uses [i.e., uses requiring large areas of open land with few buildings, but in intermittent or continuous use by relatively large numbers of people (e.g., golf courses, motor and motorcycle sports, sports pitches, clay pigeon shooting, riding stables, and water sports)] and areas other than Landscape Conservation Areas...”*.

Policy 104 covers Landscape Conservation. It sets out that *“the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the quality of landscape throughout the District”*.

## St Albans Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 18

St Albans City & District Council is developing a new Local Plan which establishes the Council's long term spatial planning strategy for delivering and managing development and infrastructure, and for environmental protection and enhancement, to 2041.

Strategic Policy SP1 sets out the Spatial Strategy for St Albans District. It states that *"the Spatial Strategy positively plans for the future to ensure that by 2041 St Albans District is a great place to live, work and visit. The Council requires new growth that enhances the attractiveness and unique character of the District through high quality design that respects local heritage. Growth must be supported by the necessary community infrastructure, transport improvements, green spaces and tree planting"*.

Strategic Policy SP2 covers the response to the Climate Emergency. It states that *"the Council recognises the urgent need to respond to Climate Change through mitigation and adaptation. Furthermore, it stipulates that "the Council will support proposals that help combat Climate Change. Where appropriate, development proposals will need to [inter alia]:*

- *Demonstrate mitigation and adaptation to climate change, including pursuing the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions;*
- *Prioritise the development of previously developed land;*
- *Be designed to improve resilience to climate change, including resilience to increasing temperatures, more frequent drought, more intense storms and wind speeds and heavy rainfall events;*

- *Use the most sustainable locations for growth and so minimising the need to travel while encouraging use of walking, cycling and public transport;*
- *Provide on-site renewables, high standards of energy efficiency, and low carbon energy;*
- *Support the use of sustainable and active transport modes of travel in new and existing developments;*
- *Deliver biodiversity net gain;*
- *Tree planting at scale"*.

Policy CE1 covers Promoting Sustainable Design, Construction and Building Efficiency. It requires that *"new buildings should be designed and constructed to ensure efficient use of energy, water and materials. Energy efficiency and reduced use of energy within buildings is a key component to reducing carbon emissions within the District"*.

It also sets out that *"applicants must demonstrate sustainable design, construction and a high degree of resource efficiency through evidence supporting planning applications, to a degree proportionate to the proposal, through [inter alia]:*

- *"Ensuring all new build development minimises the carbon, pollution and energy impacts of their design and construction. Building conversions, refurbishments and extensions must also, so far as possible, minimise carbon and energy impacts. Proposals must demonstrate that they are seeking to limit greenhouse emissions through location, building orientation, design, landscape and planting taking into account any nationally adopted standards:*

Non-residential development greater than 500m<sup>2</sup> must achieve a minimum of BREEAM 'excellent' or equivalent standards;

- *Retrofitting of existing buildings to reduce carbon and air pollution emissions;*
- *Adopting sustainable construction and demolition methods including using materials with low embodied carbon that are sustainably sourced, and the reuse and recycling of demolished material from the development site; a strategy should be submitted as part of an application;*
- *Minimising waste during the construction and operation phases of development by using the Circular Economy approach"*.



## St Stephen Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036 (March 2022)

The Neighbourhood Plan aims to guide development within St Stephen Parish and provide direction to any interested parties who also wish to submit planning applications. The process of producing the Plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to St Stephen Parish, its residents, businesses and community groups.

The following objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan considered of relevance to this project have been identified through engagement with the community, including [but not limited to]:

- *“Ensure that development is sensitively designed to be attractive, mitigate climate change, promote biodiversity and reduce the Parish’s carbon footprint.*
- *Enhance and preserve valued green and open spaces, fields, trees and woodlands, ponds, lakes and water courses, within and around each village.*
- *Protect and increase wildlife habitats.*
- *Ensure that the provision of local amenities and infrastructure is sufficient to address the needs of existing and future residents.”*

Policy S1: ‘Location of Development’ states that *“development proposals in St Stephen Parish will be supported within the Built-up Area Boundaries of Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green and Park Street, identified on the Policies Map”*. It also sets out that *“...proposals that*

*would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and achieve a net gain in biodiversity will be particularly supported”*.

POLICY S3: ‘Character Of Development’ states that *“the design of new development should demonstrate how it has taken account of the local context and has reflected the character and vernacular of the area, using architectural variety in form and materials, in order to avoid building design that is inappropriate to the Plan area. Innovation in design will be supported where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form in a character area.”*

POLICY S5: ‘Design Of Development’ requires proposals to incorporate high quality design *“which responds and integrates well with its surroundings, meets the needs of the population of the neighbourhood area and minimises the impact on the natural environment.”*

POLICY S6: ‘Minimising The Environmental Impact Of Development’ promotes the maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment, landscape features and the rural character and setting of the Neighbourhood area.

POLICY S10: ‘Green Infrastructure And Development’ states that proposals should be designed to *“create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connective chains of green infrastructure”* and *“improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces will be encouraged in order to enhance the green infrastructure of the Neighbourhood area”*.

POLICY S16: ‘Community Facilities’ supports proposals which sustain or extend the viable use of existing community facilities and

new facilities if they comply with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. *“Development proposals that will result in the loss or significant reduction in the scale and value of a community facility will not normally be permitted unless:*

1. *It is essential to meet utility infrastructure needs and there is no viable alternative; or*
2. *Alternative facilities of equal or better accessibility, size and suitability are provided; or*
3. *It can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the asset or its ongoing delivery is no longer of value to the community; or*
4. *It is no longer economically viable for its current use and has been marketed at an independently agreed price by a property professional for at least a year as a community*
5. *use and it is verified that no interest in acquisition has been expressed.”*

POLICY S19: ‘Allotments And Community Growing Spaces’ states that *“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”*. In the event of removal, *“Alternative allotment provision proposed as part of such proposals will be required to meet the following criteria:*

- *the scale of the alternative site must be of at least an equivalent scale to the existing allotment provision; and*
- *the quality of the alternative site must be of at least an equivalent standard in terms of layout and soil character to the existing allotment provision; and*
- *the location of the alternative provision must be generally accessible by foot and within or adjacent to the defined settlement area of St Stephen, as shown on the Policies Map.”*

## Other Related Guidance

### Building for a Healthy Life

Building for a Healthy Life is the latest edition of, and new name for, Building for Life 12. Building for a Healthy Life (otherwise known as 'BHL') is an industry standard Design Code endorsed by government to help people improve the design of new and growing neighbourhoods.

The current edition of BHL updates England's most widely known and most widely used design tool for creating places that are better for people and nature and will continue to allow a broad range of people to use it easily, including members of the local community, councillors, developers and the local authority. It also allows those stakeholders involved the environment to focus their thoughts, discussions and efforts on the things that matter most when creating good places to live.

The new 'Building for a Healthy Life's 12 considerations' aim to capture the areas of design and placemaking that need most attention but are often some of the most overlooked. BHL is structured across three headings which are intended to guide considerations across all scales of development.

They include:

- Integrated Neighbourhoods
- Distinctive Places
- Streets for all

It is emphasised that BHL should be seen as part of the design process, not a scoring system. It is based on a 'traffic light' system, with good practice highlighted by a green light and poor practice

highlighted by a red light. Where design elements are considered to fall between then an amber light is attributed to that particular consideration.

The more green lights that are achieved, the better that development will be. One of the main objectives is to reduce / minimise the number of amber lights and to avoid red lights altogether. An amber light cautions that an aspect of a scheme is not fully resolved and a red light suggests that one or more aspects should be reconsidered.



### Active Design

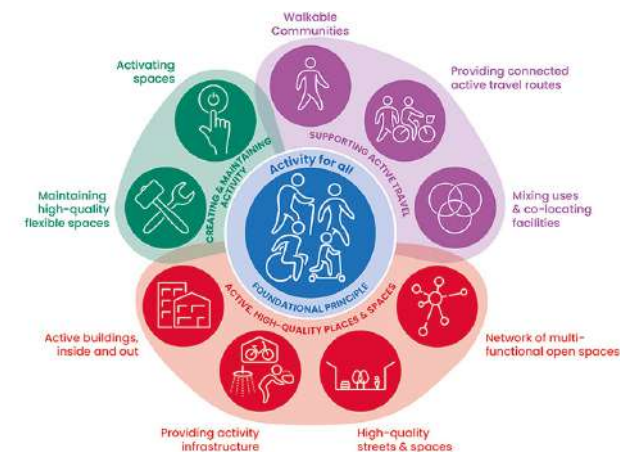
Active environments are the spaces and places for people to be active. They seek to encourage all physical activity—such as active travel, children's play, outdoor leisure and anything else that maximises opportunities for people to be active, as well as sport and exercise. By providing opportunities for physical activity, active environments can help improve the physical and mental health of adults and children.

Sport England, Active Travel England and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) have come together to produce this updated version of the Active Design guide.

Through the promotion of the Active Design 'Ten Principles', the guide seeks to help planners, designers and everyone involved in delivering and managing our places to create and maintain active environments.

The Ten Principles of Active Design are:

- Walkable Communities
- Providing connected active travel routes
- Mixing uses & co-locating facilities
- Network of multi-functional open spaces
- High-quality streets & spaces
- Providing activity infrastructure
- Active buildings inside and out
- Maintaining high-quality flexible spaces
- Activating spaces



## Appendix D: Supplementary Appraisal Stakeholders

Greenwood Park is utilised by a large number of groups, businesses and organisations. This includes the following:



Salsa Mish  
Yes Jess Fitness  
Club Kidz  
Mini Athletics  
Bouncfit  
Val Hamby Line Dancing  
Dance Unlimited Ballet School  
Ceroc  
Reward Pilates  
Stella Nash Pilates  
Montet Designs  
Trish Zacharia  
Lazy Llama Café  
John Smith Fairground  
Spirit Tkd  
Bowls Club  
Tennis Club  
Greenwood Park CC  
Royal Herts CC  
Final CC  
Killigrew Dragons CC

St Albans City Youth FC  
Bricket Wood Acorns FC  
Watford FC  
Fellas Fitness  
Kardale Youth Netball  
Burnham Badminton Club  
St Pauls Badminton Club  
Moles Volleyball Club  
St Albans Marquetry Club  
West Herts Parkinsons Group  
Chiswell Green U3A  
Ver Colne Valley U3A  
St Albans U3A  
Verulam U3A  
Herts Butterfly Society  
Grow Chiswell Green  
Chiswell Green Residents Association  
Park Street Residents Association  
St Stephens Gardening Club  
Chiswell Green Brownies

## Appendix D: Supplementary Appraisal Landscape Context

### National Character Area (NCA 111: Northern Thames Basin)

Natural England produced a framework of 159 countrywide landscape profiles for England, resulting in the National Character Areas (NCAs). The Site is located within [NCA 111: Northern Thames Basin](#) which extends from Hertfordshire in the west to the Essex coast in the east.

The NCA is described as a diverse mixture of large urban areas, smaller urban settlements, as well as remote villages and hamlets surrounded by agricultural lands, grasslands/heathlands and woodlands. It is noted that parklands surrounding 16th and 17th Century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.

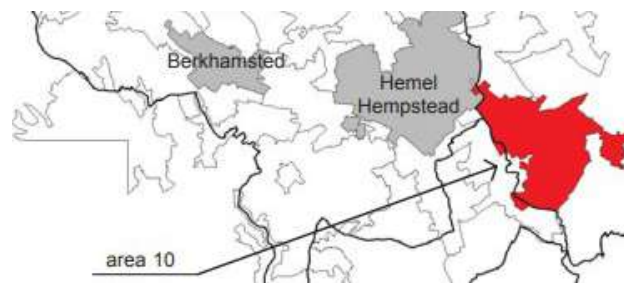
The landform is varied containing the broad valleys of the rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne notable to the north west and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.

The NCA has a mixture of priority habitats with the most abundant of which being woodlands and coastal and flood plain grazing marshes. The pattern of woodlands is varied across the NCA with some areas having considerable ancient semi-natural woodland, while other areas have a more open character. The area also has a significant complex of designed parklands, especially in Hertfordshire



### Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA 10: St Stephen's Plateau)

The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment was produced in 2000 by The Landscape Partnership on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council. This study was extended in 2001 and 2002 to include the St Albans District and Dacorum District. Greenwood Park is located within [LCA 10: St Stephen's Plateau](#).



St Stephen's Plateau is located between the city of St Albans and towns of Watford and Hemel Hempstead. It is dissected by the M1, M25 and M10 motorways. The key characteristics of the Plateau are as follows:

- Undulating plateau to north, gently sloping to south east
- Medium / large open arable fields throughout
- Visually interlocking mixed woodlands to north
- Significant extent of motorways and interchanges with associated earthworks, lights and traffic
- Narrow winding lanes with sparse clipped hedgerows
- Built edge of urban settlements to east
- Dispersed settlement with scattered farmsteads

The LCA also describes this area as a working farmed landscape of predominantly open arable fields which slopes from north-west to south-east. To the north several large mixed woodlands create a local sense of enclosure. Elsewhere hedgerows are sparse with few individual field trees. The settlement pattern is dispersed, connected by a series of narrow winding lanes. The historic land-use pattern is overlaid by a strong network of motorways and junctions. Wooded horizons are common to the north, west and south, whilst to the east the built edge of St Albans and Chiswell Green is prominent.

The visual and sensory perception of St Stephen's Plateau is widely visible from outside, including open views from the urban areas to the east. The scale of the landscape is medium to large. From within the area there are extensive views from the motorways, particularly the M1 and M10, but also from some of the narrow lanes on the arable landscape to the south. To the north the woodland provides a stronger sense of enclosure. The noise of the motorways can be relentless and discordant at times.

## Appendix E: Scoring Matrix

### Combined Weighted Scores of all Options

COMMUNITY CENTRE	1	2	3A	3B	5A	5B	8	9
Visual impact on park	32	36	32	32	30	36	28	20
Disruption to existing users	45	57	33	33	48	51	33	30
Benefit for residents of the parish	80	100	80	80	85	90	65	60
Planning risk	30	30	22	24	32	36	30	26
Sustainability - embodied carbon	19	20	15	13	16	17	12	11
Value for money	64	76	44	52	64	76	48	44
Opportunity for architectural improvements	32	36	32	34	42	44	38	38
Opportunity for landscape improvements	16	17	16	15	18	20	17	16
	318	372	274	283	335	370	271	245

MAINTENANCE	M1	M2
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	44	88
Planning risk	88	96
Impact on existing uses/users	120	80
	252	264

# Appendix E: Scoring Matrix

## Individual Scores

RESPONDEE 1	WEIGHTED SCORING							
COMMUNITY CENTRE	1	2	3A	3B	5A	5B	8	9
Visual impact on park	30	30	50	50	40	40	10	10
Disruption to existing users	45	45	75	75	45	45	15	15
Benefit for residents of the parish	100	100	100	100	100	100	25	25
Planning risk	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Sustainability - embodied carbon	20	20	20	20	20	20	10	10
Value for money	80	80	60	80	80	80	80	80
Opportunity for architectural improvements	20	30	40	50	50	50	30	30
Opportunity for landscape improvements	10	10	20	20	20	20	20	20
	345	355	405	435	395	395	230	230

MAINTENANCE	M1	M2
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	60	100
Planning risk	120	120
Impact on existing uses/users	200	80
	380	300

RESPONDEE 2	WEIGHTED SCORING							
COMMUNITY CENTRE	1	2	3A	3B	5A	5B	8	9
Visual impact on park	30	30	30	30	40	40	40	30
Disruption to existing users	60	60	15	15	60	60	30	30
Benefit for residents of the parish	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Planning risk	20	20	20	20	40	40	30	30
Sustainability - embodied carbon	15	15	15	10	15	15	15	15
Value for money	60	60	60	60	80	80	80	80
Opportunity for architectural improvements	30	30	30	40	40	40	50	40
Opportunity for landscape improvements	20	20	15	15	20	20	25	20
	335	335	285	290	395	395	370	345

MAINTENANCE	M1	M2
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	40	60
Planning risk	120	120
Impact on existing uses/users	200	40
	360	220

RESPONDEE 3	WEIGHTED SCORING							
COMMUNITY CENTRE	1	2	3A	3B	5A	5B	8	9
Visual impact on park	20	40	50	40	20	20	30	20
Disruption to existing users	30	60	30	30	45	30	45	45
Benefit for residents of the parish	50	100	100	100	75	50	75	75
Planning risk	30	20	20	30	20	30	30	30
Sustainability - embodied carbon	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Value for money	60	80	40	40	40	40	40	20
Opportunity for architectural improvements	40	40	40	30	30	40	20	40
Opportunity for landscape improvements	15	15	20	20	15	20	10	15
	260	370	315	305	260	245	265	260

MAINTENANCE	M1	M2
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	20	100
Planning risk	80	120
Impact on existing uses/users	80	120
	180	340

RESPONDEE 4	WEIGHTED SCORING							
COMMUNITY CENTRE	1	2	3A	3B	5A	5B	8	9
Visual impact on park	30	30	20	30	20	30	30	20
Disruption to existing users	15	45	30	30	30	45	30	30
Benefit for residents of the parish	25	75	75	75	50	75	50	50
Planning risk	10	20	20	20	20	20	20	10
Sustainability - embodied carbon	25	25	20	15	10	10	5	5
Value for money	40	60	40	60	40	80	20	20
Opportunity for architectural improvements	30	30	40	40	50	40	50	50
Opportunity for landscape improvements	15	15	20	15	15	15	15	15
	190	300	265	285	235	315	220	200

MAINTENANCE	M1	M2
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	20	100
Planning risk	80	80
Impact on existing uses/users	80	120
	180	300

## Appendix E: Scoring Matrix

### Individual Scores

<b>RESPONDEE 5</b>	<b>WEIGHTED SCORING</b>							
<b>COMMUNITY CENTRE</b>	1	2	3A	3B	5A	5B	8	9
Visual impact on park	50	50	10	10	30	50	30	20
Disruption to existing users	75	75	15	15	60	75	45	30
Benefit for residents of the parish	125	125	25	25	100	125	75	50
Planning risk	50	50	10	10	40	50	30	20
Sustainability - embodied carbon	20	25	5	5	20	25	15	10
Value for money	80	100	20	20	80	100	20	20
Opportunity for architectural improvements	40	50	10	10	40	50	40	30
Opportunity for landscape improvements	20	25	5	5	20	25	15	10
	460	500	100	100	390	500	270	190

<b>MAINTENANCE</b>	M1	M2
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	80	80
Planning risk	40	40
Impact on existing uses/users	40	40
	160	160

<b>RESPONDEE 6</b>	<b>WEIGHTED SCORING</b>							
<b>COMMUNITY CENTRE</b>	1	2	3A	3B	5A	5B	8	9
Visual impact on park	40	40	30	30	40	40	30	25
Disruption to existing users	45	37.5	30	37.5	45	45	22.5	15
Benefit for residents of the parish	87.5	87.5	75	62.5	75	75	62.5	62.5
Planning risk	30	35	20	25	35	35	20	20
Sustainability - embodied carbon	12.5	15	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
Value for money	40	70	30	30	50	60	50	50
Opportunity for architectural improvements	25	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Opportunity for landscape improvements	15	12.5	15	15	17.5	17.5	15	12.5
	295	332.5	247.5	247.5	310	320	247.5	232.5

<b>MAINTENANCE</b>	M1	M2
Ease of access for HGV and other vehicles	30	80
Planning risk	120	120
Impact on existing uses/users	100	60
	250	260

Place Services  
County Hall, Essex CM1 1QH

T: +44 (0)3330 136 844  
E: enquiries@placeservices.co.uk

[www.placeservices.co.uk](http://www.placeservices.co.uk)

[@PlaceServices](https://twitter.com/PlaceServices)

