

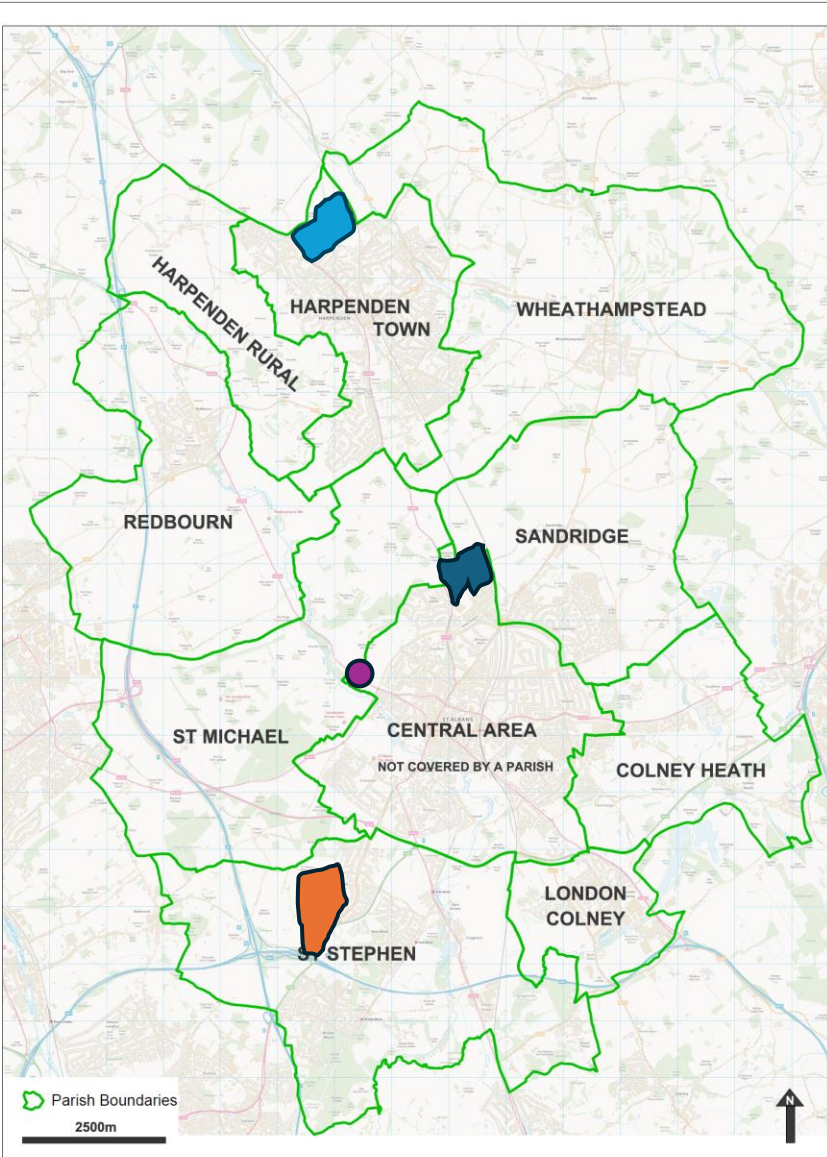
STOP CALA



CLASH
Campaign by Locals Against Sewell Housing



- Key
-  Proposed development in North St Albans (110 dwellings, part of 1,100 dwellings)
 -  Proposed development in Chiswell Green (390 dwellings)
 -  Proposed development at Bedmond Lane Nature Reserve (78 dwellings)
 -  Proposed development in North Harpenden (550 dwellings)



STOP CALA

- Cala is what is known as the “Build to Sell” real estate business of insurance and investment company Legal & General (L&G).
- St Albans District now has four major speculative developments proposed by L&G/Cala.
 - North Harpenden (approx. 550) – application yet to be submitted
 - Chiswell Green (390) – Appeal upheld by Planning Inspectors and approved by Secretary of State (March 2024)
 - Bedmond Lane Nature Reserve (78)
 - North St Albans (150) – former Sewell Trust land (outline application approved with 38 conditions including transport and flooding)
- The Cala site in North St Albans was recently acquired from the Sewell Trust, it is part of the larger North St Albans strategic area aiming to deliver 1100 dwellings on a ground and surface water flood zone above key aquifer filtration points, within the ecological corridor of Heartwood Forest, with no sustainable transport enhancements deliverable at the location.
- In the annual report for L&G, the property business was described as “well placed to create assets which provide robust, inflation-linked income for both our annuity portfolio and, increasingly, third party investors.” In real terms, this means L&G/Cala are not primarily aiming to deliver affordable homes for local residents.
- According to the press, L&G have hired Rothschilds to sell Cala. Cala will be valued on the land bank it has, the buildout rate it delivers and the overall profitability. The recent land grab of sites, including a nature reserve, is a valuation inflating strategy that now puts St Albans at great risk of increased harm to its Green Belt Countryside which should be protected.
- If one Green Belt site is developed outside the Local Plan, it sets a precedent on all other sites for a limited period. Ref: Impact of Bullen’s Green Lane.
- The 80% Liberal Democrat controlled Council are currently looking to release all the Green Belt land owned by Cala and L&G in the emerging Local Plan.
- We will continue to present the case that the land in North St Albans constitutes **inappropriate development on all measures of Green Belt harm, lack of sustainable transport and flood risk.**



Local Plan: current timetable to Regulation 19*

SADC has described the Local Plan as having “no showstoppers”, **however**, we are very concerned as the following issues remain unaddressed:

- Incomplete evidence base for approving the site selection (including highways and flooding)
- No strategy to utilise the newly revised NPPF to protect Green Belt in the District
- Carrying forward sites that are not recommended in the latest Green Belt review by ARUP without evidence and debate
- No demonstration of what arguments the Council are using as “very special circumstances to develop Green Belt”. The Council itself proposed using only a 1/3 of the number using the Standard Method in the LPAG meeting in March 2022.
- In the recent decision by Planning Inspectors, dismissing the appeal on Green Belt countryside at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath, the Inspector was very clear; the current housing and land supply position in St Albans is not enough to justify development.

Upcoming Planning Policy and Climate Committee meetings:

June 25th 2024: Regulation 19 Direction of Travel & Education evidence.

September 12th 2024: Transport Impact Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

September 30th 2024: Final site selection and allocations, Consideration of Draft Local Plan for Regulation 19 Public consultations.

October 17th 2024: Approval of Draft Local Plan for Regulation 19 Public consultations.

*Regulation 19 is the last consultation step in the Local Plan process.
The Planning Inspectorate considers the plan put in front of them for “soundness”.



Revised NPPF: Implications for St Albans

SADC should be utilising the revised NPPF to deliver a better plan for all of us. We cannot see any evidence it will seek to do so. Instead, statements like “no show stoppers” are used and the timetable is not enhanced to deliver a better Local Plan outcome, risking making the Local Plan unsound. It is starting to feel like a repeated show, one where the Plan will be found unsound at Regulation 19 for a third time.

All Regulation 18 consultations so far have shown a high desire by respondents to preserve Green Belt.

Councillors must devise the Local Plan strategy now so Officers have time to deliver it. It is not the time to play politics with the Local Plan.

Councillors have now written to the Secretary of State for DLUHC to request more clarity on how to evidence a deviation from the using the “Standard Method” as is allowed in Paragraph 61. Where as other Councils are getting on with using the framework available, such as Liberal Democrat controlled Elmbridge (Reg 19 process started). Now is the time for action.

Revised NPPF : [National Planning Policy Framework - 13. Protecting Green Belt land - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/617343/NPPF-2019-07-20.pdf)

- Paragraph 61. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. The outcome of the standard method is an advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area.....
- Paragraph 145. Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process.....
- As well as Para 11, footnote 7, the enhanced requirements to deliver sustainable development and protect farmland

