

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a rural landscape at sunset. A dirt path leads from the bottom right towards the center, flanked by tall grass and some trees. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the center of the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow light across the sky and the field. The overall mood is peaceful but also evokes a sense of loss or change.

Save Our Fields

ABBOTS ROAD FIELDS · ABBOTS LANGLEY

THE FACTS THE PLAN DOESN'T PUT TOGETHER

1,300 homes.
A 96 MW data centre.
One ~~village~~ Small Town.

The draft Local Plan would allocate land for 900 homes on the fields behind Abbots Road and 400 more next door — without first adding up what that does to our water, our roads, our schools and our health services.

Have your say by 11:59pm, Friday 25 September 2026

What this would do to everyday life in Abbots Langley

Put the planning jargon to one side. Here is what the 1,300 homes — plus the data centre already approved next door — would mean for a family living in the community.

58.5 ha

(≈82 football pitches) of green-belt land allocated for the 900-home **H9** site alone; a second site (**H37**) holds the other 400 homes. Not all of H9 is built on — it includes mitigation green space, a school and a medical centre.¹

Hosepipe ban

You are already under a hosepipe ban — announced on 10 July 2026 and brought forward with immediate effect, with the statutory restrictions enforced from 17 July — and the 1,300 homes plus the data centre next door would add the water use of several thousand people (about 6,000–10,000) on top.^{2,3,4}

No secondary

school in Abbots Langley — every nearby one is oversubscribed, selective or faith-based, and the plan builds none.^{1,5}

GPs full

the council's own evidence says GP surgeries in every settlement are already at or over capacity — and the plan secures no NHS funding for a new one.^{1,6}

85%

of the world's chalk streams are in England — yet in a 2014 assessment only 23% were in good health, and the River Gade, which these fields drain into, is rated 'poor'.^{7,8,9}

2038

the earliest the rebuilt Watford General hospital is expected to open.^{10,11}

80 days' worth

of storm-sewage spill time into the River Colne in 2024 — 1,916 hours across 124 separate spills (not 80 separate days).¹²

96 MW

the approved data centre next door — about **100,000 homes' worth of electricity** on the conventional comparison (≈1,000 homes per MW), and up to **~300,000 if it ran flat-out all year** — and no water-use figure for it has been published.^{13,14,15}

In one line

The evidence before the council — its own Green Belt review, the Environment Agency's drought status, and council and county data — shows these fields should stay green and that Abbots Langley's GPs, roads and schools are full. The plan allocates them anyway — so the whole cluster of schemes has to be looked at together, or not at all.

Every figure on this page is taken from the documents listed on page 11, with the source number shown against each one — except where it is marked as our own estimate (the campaign's calculations, method on page 11).



What the plan touches — and where to read the detail

The scheme reaches into almost every part of community life. Each issue below has a fuller page later, with the evidence and the sources.

The plan & the green belt

The council's own review rated these fields **"Fundamentally Important"** — its strongest "keep them green" verdict — and rejected the site in 2023. The government then ordered it back in. The council now also contradicts itself on whether the land is "grey belt".

FULL DETAIL → PAGE 4

Water

We are already in a legal hosepipe ban over a rare chalk aquifer that the Environment Agency says can give no more. The homes and the data centre would add the water use of several thousand people — about 0.9–1.5 million litres a day.

FULL DETAIL → PAGE 5

Roads & rail

Traffic is forecast to rise 15.6% by 2031, Abbots Langley is squeezed through five narrow railway bridges, and Kings Langley station is already busy on a half-hourly service. The plan pays contributions, not fixes.

FULL DETAIL → PAGE 6

Schools

The plan promises a two-classes-a-year primary but no secondary school, while the nearest secondaries are heavily oversubscribed and there is no free transport to them.

FULL DETAIL → PAGE 7

Health & community

GP surgeries are already full, the Watford General rebuild is not expected before 2038, and the council records no funded swimming pool or pitches for the growth.

FULL DETAIL → PAGE 8

Environment & heritage

A globally rare chalk stream, ancient woodland, and the parish's oldest secular building — the Grade II* Tithe Barn — all sit beside the site.

FULL DETAIL → PAGE 9

The missing assessment

No single test looks at the whole cluster — water, sewage, roads, bridges, healthcare and schools together — and the infrastructure it depends on is unfunded or years away.

FULL DETAIL → PAGE 10

Green fields the council itself said to keep

This is not one planning application — it is the draft **Local Plan**, the council's blueprint for where homes go. And the council's own review says these particular fields should stay green.¹⁶

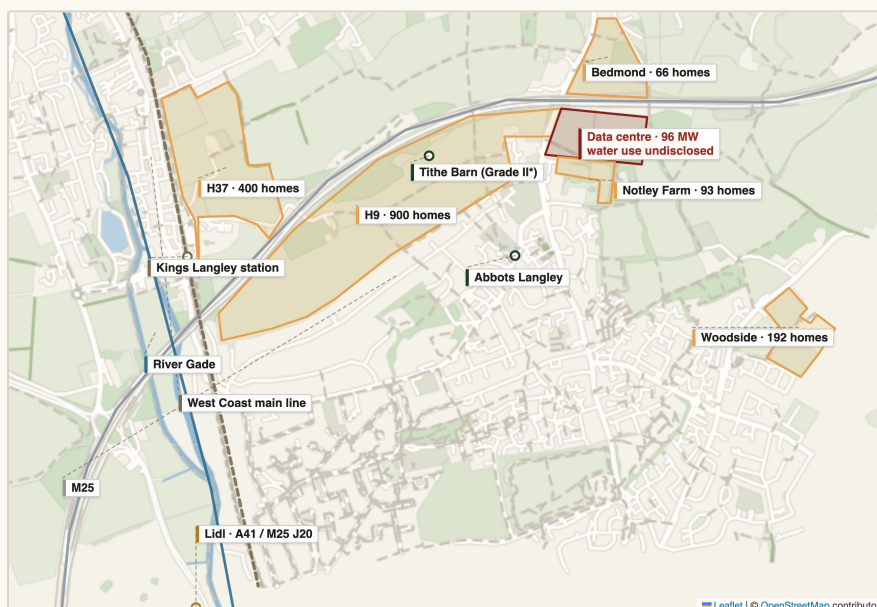
The verdict was "Fundamentally Important". The council's Green Belt Review gave this land its highest "keep it green" rating and found that building on it would harm the green belt in **three ways**. The site was **rejected by the council in 2023** — as its own sub-committee minutes record — then the government **ordered** it back into the plan in 2026.¹⁶

What is the green belt? It is protected countryside that you normally cannot build on. The plan now calls this land "**grey belt**" — a newer label for green-belt land the government says can be built on. But the council's own environment check says the opposite: this is "**green belt land and is not considered to be grey belt**". So the council contradicts itself.^{1,17}

The same check records that building here "**would have adverse effects on biodiversity**" and would mean **the loss of agricultural land**.¹⁷

And its own numbers don't add up. The plan's main policy says it provides for **9,253 homes** against the **12,032** the government's formula says are needed — about **77%** — and it **cannot demonstrate a five-year housing-land supply** (its own Sustainability Appraisal says so), while its Woodside committee report recorded just a **1.7-year** supply. The council's own environmental and health assessments separately say provision is **10,465 homes** — about **87%**. The plan does not explain the difference between 9,253 and 10,465 (they appear to rest on different definitions), but on either figure it falls short of the 12,032 the council accepted it needs.^{17,18,19,20,21}

The cluster — none of it is assessed together



The cluster around Abbots Langley — H9 and H37, the Bedmond Road data centre, Woodside Road, Bedmond, Notley Farm and the new Lidl. Site boundaries are indicative, not the official allocation boundary. Map © OpenStreetMap contributors (© CARTO).

The scheme list: H9 / CFS26a (900 homes), H37 / CFS26c (400), the Bedmond Road data centre (96 MW, approved), Woodside Road (192, approved), Bedmond (66), Notley Farm (93), and a new Lidl at Hunton Bridge (approved). Site capacities per the July 2026 Part II allocation.^{1,13,20}

Water is the sharpest issue — and it is already rationed

The district sits on a **chalk aquifer** — the underground sponge that holds our water supply — and is officially classed as an area of **serious water stress**. The Environment Agency can no longer grant licences to take more water from most rivers and groundwater.^{22,23}

The drought is live. The Environment Agency moved Hertfordshire and North London into **regional drought on 29 July 2026**, after the area's **driest July since records began in 1871**.

Groundwater levels continued declining at all the region's indicator sites.^{24,25} Reports still show **10 areas in drought, as of early September 2026**.²⁶

Affinity Water's own figures: demand up about **20%**; the region received just **1% of its long-term average July rainfall**; Grafham reservoir is below average; and, as of September 2026, the company warns it may have to **"stop or limit how much we take"** before the year ends.^{4,27,28}

What it would add. The 1,300 homes and the 96 MW data centre would draw roughly **0.9–1.5 million litres a day** — about **6,000–10,000 people's** worth of water — on a district already under a ban (our estimate).²

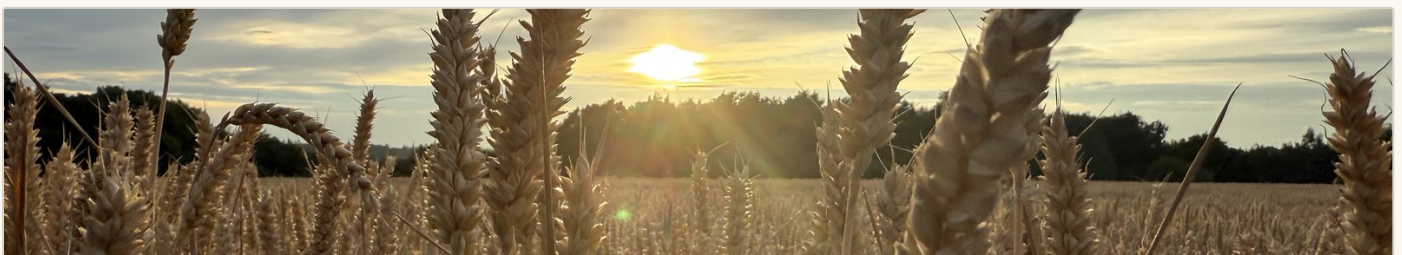
Sewage works already overflow. **Maple Lodge** — serving around **500,000 people** and taking up to **300,000 m³ a day** (that is 300 million litres) — spilled storm sewage into the River Colne for **1,916 hours across 124 spills in 2024**, and is in an **upgrade worth more than £265m** (contract value up to **£280m**).^{12,29,30,31}

The precedent. At the far smaller Woodside Road scheme (192 homes), Thames Water told the council it could not serve the homes without a condition delaying them until the sewage works were ready.²⁰

The named gap. The applicant has **not published** the data centre's water demand — yet the plan tells the housing developer to allow for it. Nationally, **84%** of proposed data centres are in areas **projected to be water-stressed by 2040** — **many already seriously stressed**; Water UK puts peak demand at **7 million litres a day per gigawatt**.^{13,32,33}

The plan's answer: a hosepipe ban and a phasing condition

The plan's water policy relies on **demand management** and a **110 litres-per-person-per-day** standard, plus a phasing rule that could *delay* occupation rather than secure the water first.¹⁸ It adds 1,300 homes and a 96 MW data centre to this catchment in the middle of an observed drought.



The roads are full — and the plan pays, it doesn't build

Traffic is forecast to grow **15.6% by 2031**. The council's January 2026 draft admitted that higher growth would bring "**severe residual impacts**" on rural roads that could not be fixed. The developer's answer is a list of **contributions, not delivered capacity**.^{1,18,34}

Junctions. The council's own transport assessment records "**significant queues on the A41 Watford Road ... and moderate queues on the M25 ... in both the AM and PM peak hours**".³⁵

Parking. The centre's parking is small and free — **Causeway House (105 spaces)** and **School Mead (about 20–24)** — and the council's own masterplan says parking "**fall[s] under capacity**", with 2-hour limits forced to keep spaces turning over.^{36,37,38,39}

Roads. The Woodside Road report records objections that Chequers Lane is "**too narrow for two-way traffic**", and warns that construction lorries would use Woodside Road and Chequers Lane as a cut-through.²⁰

Bridges. Two narrow railway bridges bottleneck the Gallows Hill–Station Road route; the parish's neighbourhood plan counts **five narrow bridges under the West Coast main line** and says fixing the

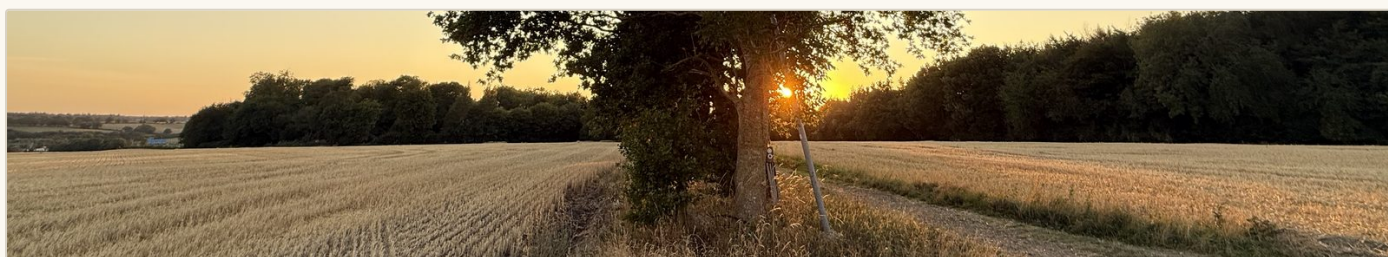
roads may need "**2,000+ homes**" to pay for it.^{40,41} One is a **listed 1837 skew bridge by Robert Stephenson**.⁴²

Rail. Kings Langley sits on the West Coast line into Euston with only a **half-hourly service**, and already handles **507,000 passengers a year** (2024/25, up 12.8% on the year before).^{20,43} The council's own infrastructure plan records "**capacity problems and overcrowding at peak hours**" on London-bound rail and forecasts several Hertfordshire lines **over capacity by 2031** — yet the plan's answer is "**contributions to improvements at Kings Langley Railway Station**" and a park-and-ride: contributions, not extra rail capacity.^{1,6}

Lidl & works. A new Lidl is approved at Hunton Bridge on the A41/M25 J20 corridor (1,457 sqm), but its required junction works had still **not started** by mid-2026.^{44,45} Network Rail works on Station Road, Kings Langley run from **22 November 2026 to 11 May 2027**.⁴⁶

What the plan asks for — and what it delivers

Mitigation for the site is a **mobility hub**, bus re-routing, crossings, a **park-and-ride** near Kings Langley station and bus-priority contributions.¹ These are payments and aspirations — none of them adds a lane, a bypass or a bridge before homes are occupied.



No secondary school, and the nearest ones are full

The plan promises a **two-classes-a-year primary school** on the estate — but **no secondary school** for Abbots Langley, whose nearest secondaries are oversubscribed and often selective or faith-based.¹

Parmiter's admits **216 pupils a year**. In 2026 it drew **1,416 applications** — about **6.6 to 1** — is partly selective, and offered places only to children living within about **900 metres**.^{5,47}

Distance is a minority route in. Only a **minority** of Parmiter's places go by distance — the main proximity criterion covers **22 of 216**, and any "remaining places" are also filled by proximity. Most go instead to siblings, the academic test, music, children of staff or children named in an EHC plan. Local children may enter the test or music routes, but they compete for those places.⁴⁷

St Michael's (a Catholic school) had **512 applications for 180 places** in 2026.⁵

Kings Langley School — the nearest non-selective, non-faith secondary — is already about **97% full** and drew **625 applications for 186 places** in 2026 (about 3.4 to 1), admitting by **priority area and distance**, so living in Abbots Langley is no guarantee of a place.^{48,49,50}

No secondary has spare places. Future Academies Watford, the non-selective comprehensive in Garston, is no exception — **320 applications for 210 places** in 2026, with results **well below the**

Hertfordshire and national averages. Yet the plan still allocates **no secondary school** for Abbots Langley, sending its funding to a new school at Carpenders Park, further away.^{1,5,51,52}

It isn't just Abbots Langley: **Queens' School** drew **1,581 applications for 270 places** and **Rickmansworth 1,526 for 240** in 2026 — secondaries across the area are oversubscribed.⁵

Getting there is hard. There is **no free home-to-school transport** to faith or selective schools, and the only school buses from Abbots Langley run to Kings Langley (the KL4) and through to St Clement Danes (the 852) — **no service to Parmiter's or St Michael's**.^{53,54}

Hertfordshire offers first-choice places to **78%** of pupils, against **83.6%** nationally — so a child here is more likely to miss their first choice.^{55,56}

The long-promised **Woodside Road primary (ED3)** has still **not commenced**, and the nearest new secondary is several miles away at Carpenders Park.¹

The result. The 1,300 homes add roughly **3,120 more residents** (our estimate) — children who would compete for the same already-full schools.²

Why it matters for a family here

If the plan builds the homes without a new secondary school, more children chase the same 216 places at Parmiter's and the same 186 at Kings Langley — with no free transport to reach them.



Full GPs, a hospital not built until 2038, and unfunded facilities

The council's own evidence says **GP surgeries in all settlements are at or over capacity** — and the plan secures only a "medical centre (or provide locally)", with **no secured NHS funding**.^{1,6}

GPs. The council's own evidence says GP surgeries across all settlements are "**operating either over capacity or are very close to reaching capacity**", and Abbots Langley has **three GP practices**.^{6,40}

The precedent. Even the far smaller Woodside scheme (192 homes) produced **no secured health contribution**; for the 900-home H9 site the plan's only health provision is an un-funded "**medical centre (or provide locally)**". The NHS "**is likely to seek**" contributions at several sites, and for **H37 (400 homes)** the plan states it "**will be expected to financially contribute to the new Kings Langley Medical Centre (provided by site H9)**" — but none of this is a secured, funded contribution.^{1,20}

Hospital. The nearest general hospital, **Watford General**, is **not expected to open its rebuilt facility before 2038**, with construction due to begin 2032–34 — and there are **no strategic health facilities within Three Rivers District**.^{10,11,40}

Sport & leisure. The council's own plan says Abbots Langley "**does not have adequate access**" to a **swimming pool**, with **football, cricket and 3G pitch shortfalls** and **no funded site**.⁶

Policing. Abbots Langley has a "**small community**" **police station**, the force has **no capital funding**, and the plan identifies **£1,990,394** of policing infrastructure cost — **not secured**.⁶

The pattern

Across health, sport and policing, the plan *names* what the growth needs but does not *fund* it. New residents would join full GP lists, wait for a hospital that opens after 2038, and find no funded pool or pitches.



A rare chalk stream, ancient woodland, and the parish's oldest secular building

The site borders **ancient woodland** and a **Local Wildlife Site**, sits in the protected zone of the **Chilterns Beechwoods**, and lies in the catchment of the **River Gade** — a **globally rare chalk stream**.

Chalk streams are among the rarest river habitats on Earth: around **85% of the world's are in England**,⁷ and **Hertfordshire holds roughly 10% of England's ~220 chalk streams**.^{8,57} Yet in WWF's 2014 national assessment only about **23%** were at "Good" status, with about **a third Poor or Bad**.⁸

The **River Gade** is rated "poor". A 2021 fish survey described it as "**near desolate**"; after restoration, **14 trout** were recorded in 2025 — proof it can recover, and a reason to protect it.^{9,58}

On the site: ancient woodland (**Long Wood and Round Wood**), a Local Wildlife Site and protected trees; **medium-high landscape sensitivity**; about **14% at moderate-high groundwater flood risk**, with

below-ground drainage not allowed; and a **historic landfill at Ovaltine Farm**.¹

Heritage. The **Grade II* Tithe Barn** (15th-century; the local history society calls it "around 600 years old") — the parish's oldest secular building (the Grade I St Lawrence's Church is older) — sits beside the fields, once part of the **Ovaltine Model Farm** (about 450 acres).^{59,60,61}

Already accepted harm. The data centre next door was approved **despite** the Secretary of State finding significant landscape and visual harm, and giving **great weight** to "less than substantial" harm to the Tithe Barn and Mansion House Farmhouse.¹³



What we're asking for

1. **Delete or defer** the Abbots Road allocations (H9 and H37) until water, roads, schools and health are shown to work.
2. Require **one cumulative assessment** of the whole cluster — homes, data centre, Woodside Road and Lidl — before any allocation is fixed.
3. **Protect the River Gade chalk stream** and the Tithe Barn / Ovaltine landscape.

The missing assessment

Nobody has added it up. Each scheme is judged on its own — no single test looks at water, sewage, the A4251/A41, the bridges, healthcare or the schools together.^{1,18,62}

The money doesn't add up either. The plan itself concedes there **"remains an infrastructure funding gap"**¹⁸ — no pool or pitches funded, GPs full, policing **£1,990,394** unsecured, the hospital not before 2038, and the roads paid for with contributions, not capacity.^{1,6,11,20}

The plan is legal — but we argue it is not "sound"

Under national planning rules a plan must be **positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy**. In our submission, allocating a site the council says should stay in the green belt, without a cumulative assessment and without funding the infrastructure, fails those tests.^{62,63}

How to respond

The draft Local Plan is out for its final consultation — the deadline is **11:59pm on Friday 25 September 2026**.⁶²

1. Find it. Search "Three Rivers Local Plan Regulation 19" and follow the council's consultation page.⁶³

2. For sites H9 / CFS26a and H37 / CFS26c: mark **Legal: Yes; Sound: No**.

3. Pick one or two concerns that affect you personally — water, roads, schools, parking, flooding — and say what should change: remove, reduce, defer, or require the missing evidence first.

4. If you can, note that the cluster has never been assessed together, and that the council's own review calls the land "Fundamentally Important".¹⁶

If you only say one thing

"The council's own review calls these fields 'Fundamentally Important' green belt. We are in a hosepipe ban, the GPs and roads are full, and the schools and hospital are years away. Please delete or defer the Abbots Road allocations."

Full technical detail and the complete, hyperlinked source register are held by the Save Our Fields campaign. Figures were checked against the primary documents in September 2026.

Sources & method

Every figure in this report is drawn from the primary documents below and cross-checked against them, except where it is marked as **our own estimate** — the campaign's calculations (method in the impact study). Where a figure is the applicant's or the council's own claim it is attributed as such. Where something is not published, we say so rather than guess. The Local Plan is a pre-submission draft, so figures should be re-checked against the live portal before use.

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