HERTFORDSHIRE

STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

1991 - 2011

This document incorporates:

- **a 'Written Statement' which comprises Polices 1 to 57 inclusive and a Key Diagram, all of which were adopted by the County Council and became operative on 30 April 1998;**

- **the rest of the text, called an 'Explanatory Memorandum', which introduces and explains the policies.**

This document replaces the 1986 Structure Plan Review incorporating the 1991 Approved Alterations, which was approved by the Secretary of State for Environment on 23 June 1992 and became operative on 14 July 1992.

Price £20.00 including postage

Foreword

The County Council has a legal duty to prepare and review a Structure Plan which sets out the broad directions in which Hertfordshire should develop in the future. It is a key part of the overall development plan for the County, providing a framework for the preparation of more detailed local plans by district and borough councils. It also sets out the overall framework for transportation, minerals and waste planning by the County Council itself.

Work on the new Structure Plan began in 1993 with the firm aim to make development more sustainable. In preparing the Plan, we have consulted very widely, trying to reach everyone with a stake in the policies and whose commitment will be needed to make them work in practice. The County Council is particularly grateful for the input of district councils in working jointly to help shape the content and direction of this Plan.

The Plan was finally adopted on 30 April 1998 following the difficult and controversial decisions which have had to be taken about how best to provide for the County's housing needs. This issue is likely to remain contentious, as once the Government publishes revised Regional Planning Guidance the Plan will need to be updated to make provison for additional housing needs in the period up to 2016.

A key priority will be to keep under continuous review the scope to provide more homes through high quality development within existing built up areas - seeking in the process to make our towns more attractive and convenient places in which to live and work, as well as to minimise the need for further green field development.

However, I want to stress that housing is just one of the many important issues which this Plan covers. It sets the framework for meeting the full range of Hertfordshire's development needs during the Plan period, while seeking to make the best possible use of resources, minimise pollution and congestion, and safeguard all aspects of the environment for future generations to enjoy.

Continuing work in partnership with district councils and many other interested organisations to implement the Plan and monitor the success of its policies are now top priorities for the County Council. Engaging local communities will be at the heart of the Council's approach. In so doing, the aim will be to make stronger connections between land use planning, transportation and wider action to achieve a more sustainable future.

Brian York

Chairman of Environment Committee,
Hertfordshire County Council

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope of Structure Plans

1.   In conjunction with national planning policies and regional planning guidance issued by Central Government, structure plans set the broad strategic direction for the planning of land use and development in the shire counties of England. Structure plans must have regard to national and regional policies and the particular circumstances, needs and problems of the county areas they cover. Structure plans are prepared by county councils and are required to cover a period of at least 15 years. Their main purpose is to provide a consistent framework for the preparation and review of more detailed policies and proposals in local plans which flesh out the broad-brush policies of structure plans.

2.   District-wide local plans are prepared and regularly reviewed by district councils, which are the local planning authorities in Hertfordshire. Figure 1 shows the area covered by each of Hertfordshire's ten district local plans.   However, county-wide local plans on minerals and waste matters are prepared by county councils. All local plans should be in general conformity with the relevant structure plan. The structure and local plan documents, together, make up what is termed the 'development plan' for a county. Most planning applications are determined by district councils, normally in accordance with policies in the relevant local plans. Applications for minerals, waste and certain other types of development are determined by county councils.

Figure 1: District Local Plan Areas in Hertfordshire
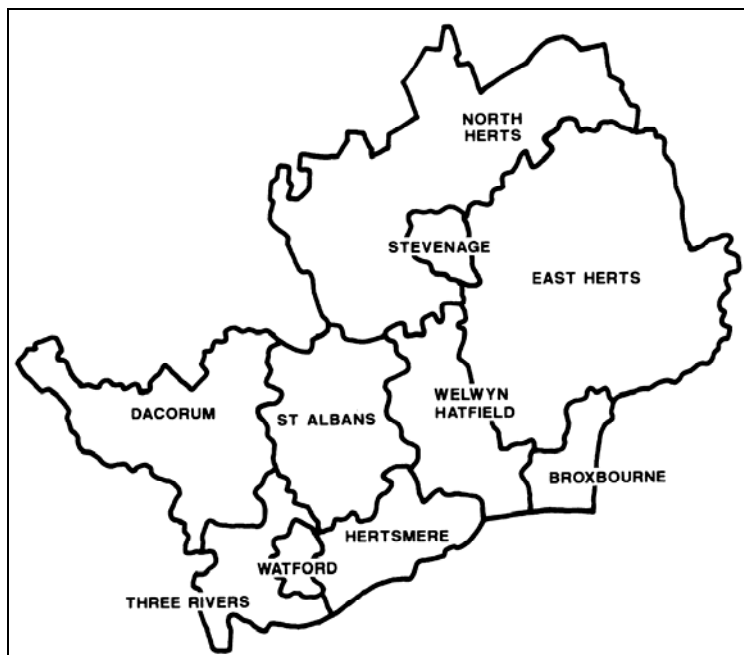
Source: County Council Environment Department Information Service

3.   Structure plans and, in turn, local plans need to be reviewed regularly - both in response to new trends and issues, and to roll forward the time period covered by the development plan. In 1991 Parliament required all planning decisions to accord with the provisions of the development plan, except in any special cases where other material considerations weigh sufficiently heavily to indicate otherwise. The importance now attached to adopted development plans underlines the need to keep them up to date. Moreover, regular review assists a wide range of organisations and land owners to make better informed plans about the long term management of property.

4.   This new Structure Plan Review for Hertfordshire covers the 20 year period 1991 - 2011 and was formally adopted on 30 April 1998. It replaces the previous 1986 Structure Plan Review which incorporated the 1991 Approved Alterations. The new Plan sets out policies on a wider range of land use and transportation planning matters, as listed in the table of contents.

5.   In legal terms, a structure plan is made up of a 'written statement' and a 'key diagram'. The written statement comprises adopted policies, of which there are 57 in this Plan. Unless otherwise specified, these policies are of general application throughout Hertfordshire. The key diagram illustrates the main policies in a schematic form on a non-Ordinance Survey map base. In this plan, the key diagram is placed immediately inside the back cover.

6.   County councils are also obliged to produce an 'explanatory memorandum' as part of published structure plan documents. This serves to provide background information, explain the reasoning behind policies and make reference to other relevant documents. Legally, the explanatory memorandum is not part of the adopted plan but nevertheless may sometimes be a material consideration in determining planning applications. The explanatory memorandum constitutes the main body of this document, within which the adopted policies of the written statement are set in bold type, **thus**.

Overview of Hertfordshire

Location

7.   Hertfordshire is located in the South East Region of the United Kingdom, immediately to the north of London and adjoining the counties of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex. Its southern edge is only 20 kilometres from the centre of London and its northern boundary lies between 50 and 70 kilometres out. As such the County feels the influence, pressures and advantages of lying in the direct hinterland of a major world city and its associated communications.

8.   Hertfordshire lies on or within easy reach of some of the Country's major strategic transport routes, facilitating good access not only to the rest of the Country but also to Continental Europe. Two of the South East Region's main airports, Luton and Stansted, are just outside Hertfordshire to the west and east respectively, while Heathrow and Gatwick airports are also easily reached via the M25 and rail.

9.   Figure 2 illustrates the proximity of Hertfordshire to Continental Europe. The east and west coast mainline railways both pass though the County, with stations at Stevenage, Watford Junction and Hemel Hempstead. These routes are part of the Trans-European Rail Network (TERN) and provide fast rail access to the Continent via the Channel Tunnel and the high speed links onwards to Paris, Brussels and elsewhere. The main freight route to Europe is via Felixstowe and Harwich, to which there is easy road access from Hertfordshire via the A120.

Figure 2: Hertfordshire's Location in Europe
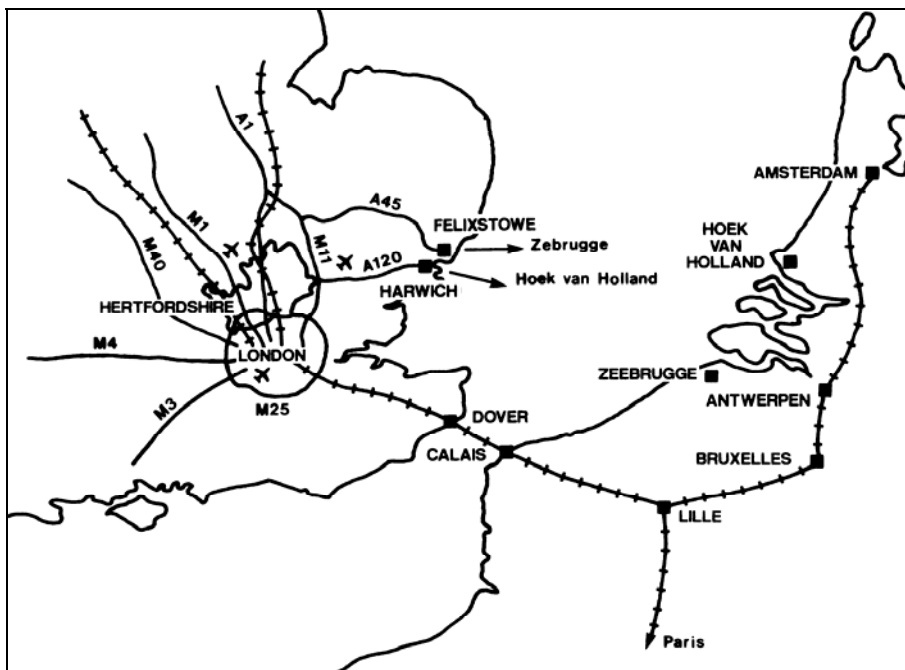
Source: County Council Environment Department Information Service

Natural Features and Land Use

10.   The geology of Hertfordshire ranges from the claylands of the London Basin to extensive chalklands, and is the major factor determining the County's topography and its soils. Gault clay outcrops only at the north-western extremity of the County. Elsewhere it is overlain by up to 205 metres of chalk, which forms the Chiltern Hills in the north west with their chalk scarp and dip slope cut by valleys. The Reading Beds clays and gravels which were deposited over the chalk have largely been eroded apart from some outlying hills, such as that on which St. Albans is built. Glacial clays and gravels overlie much of the north-east of Hertfordshire, and river gravels occupy the Vale of St Albans and many of the river valleys.

11.   The chalk which underlies most of Hertfordshire forms an important water aquifer which provides, from wells and pumped boreholes, a vital source of public drinking water and water for industry and agriculture. It also forms a part of the natural environment providing, in particular, water for the chalk streams which flow across the County.

12.   Hertfordshire covers an area of 634 square miles (164,306 sq. km). A breakdown of the proportion of land in various land use types is illustrated in Figure 3. 'Other urban' includes developed land outside the main settlements and leisure uses which are essentially urban in character, such as golf courses.

Figure 3: Hertfordshire Land Use, 1993
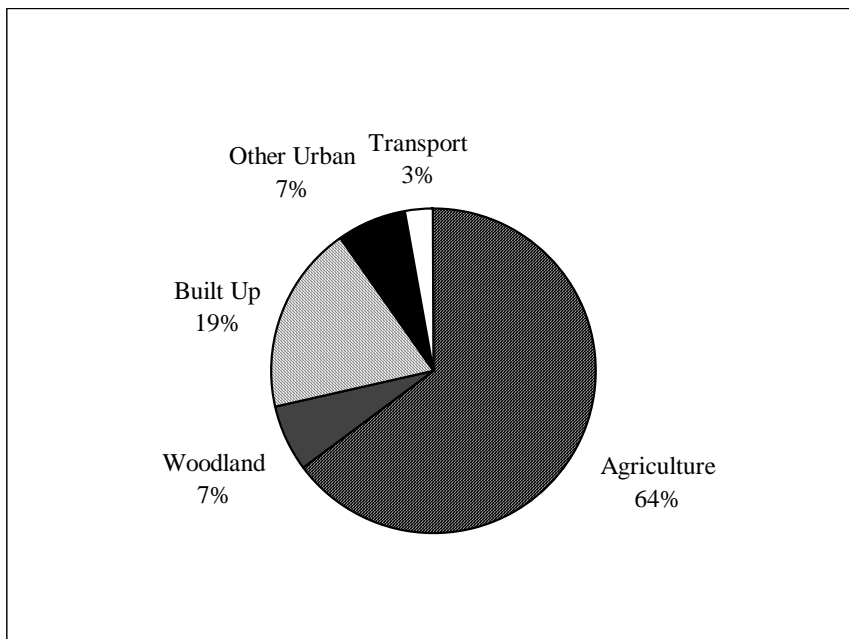
Source: County Council Environment Department Information Service

13.   There have been significant changes in land use during recent years.   The main changes during the decades 1970 - 1980 and 1980 - 1990 are shown in the table below.

Land Use	1970-1980 Area (Ha)	% Change Within Land Use	1980-1990 Area (Ha)	% Change Within Land Use
Agriculture	-2413	2.2% Loss	-1484	1.4% Loss
Woodland	-400	3.5% Loss	197	2% Gain
Transport	559	14.9% Gain	419	9.7% Gain
Residential	1387	7.6% Gain	679	3.6% Gain
Commercial	257	5.4% Gain	145	2.9% Gain
Leisure	951	10.1% Gain	208	2% Gain

Source: Hertfordshire County Council Land Use Change 1970 - 1990

14.   Hertfordshire is the fifth smallest shire county in England, but now has the ninth largest population due to substantial urbanisation during this century. Figure 4 illustrates the degree of urbanisation since 1945 - an increase from 16% to 25% during a period of just 45 years. This is based on data collected by the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), which used a different definition of 'urban' to that used in Figure 3. (In Figure 4, land uses which are outside built up areas but which are essentially urban in character, such as motorways, are all included as 'urban'.)

Figure 4: Urbanisation of Hertfordshire Since 1945
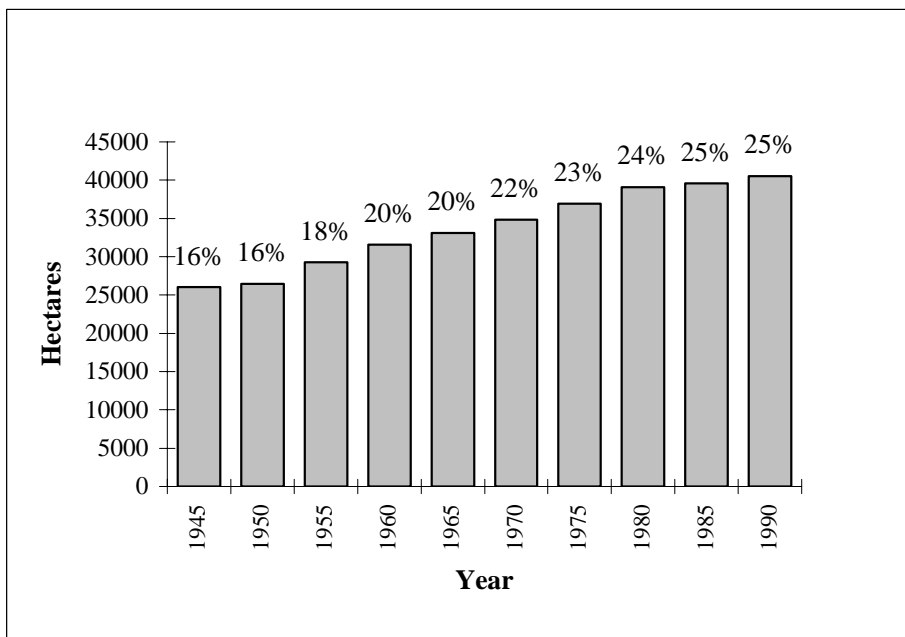
Source: 'The Regional Lost Land', CPRE, 1993

Population and Household Growth

15.   The 1991 Census estimated that in this year the population of Hertfordshire was 975,829, of which 397,708 (40.8%) were single, 471,778 (48.4%) married, 44,523 (4.6%)

divorced and 61,820 (6.3%) widowed. About 20% of the population were under 15 years old, 43% were between 16 and pensionable age, and 37% were of pensionable age. About 4% of the population was of 'non-white' ethnic origin.

16.   The total population of Hertfordshire was estimated to be about 1,016,000 in mid 1996 (based on ONS mid year estimate). The distribution of this between districts is shown in the table below. This also shows the population density and area of each district.

District	Population in 1996	Population Density (per hectare)	Area in 97 (hectares)	Area in 97 (sq miles)
Broxbourne	81,774	15.90	5,143	19.9
Dacorum	134,733	6.34	21,248	82.0
East Herts	123,553	2.60	47,569	183.7
Hertsmere	94,870	9.38	10,116	39.1
North Herts	114,941	3.06	37,537	144.9
St Albans	130,267	8.08	16,118	62.2
Stevenage	76,758	29.56	2,596	10.0
Three Rivers	84,572	9.52	8,881	34.3
Watford	78,930	36.84	2,142	8.3
Welwyn Hatfield	95,417	7.37	12,955	50.0
County	**1,015,815**	**6.18**	**164,306**	**634.4**

Source of population estimates: ONS 1996 mid year estimates

17.   Figure 5 illustrates the latest population projection for Hertfordshire, produced by the Office of National Statistics. The population is projected to rise to about 1,079,000 by 2011, an increase of about 10% since the 1991 Census. This is a larger increase than that indicated by the previous projection. The increase reflects mainly increasing average life-span and changes in migration patterns, not an increase in the birth rate. Population is projected to continue to increase after 2011, the end of the period of this Plan, to about 1,098,000 in 2016 and 1,117,000 in 2021.

18.   The data on which Figure 5 is based is yet to be confirmed. Projections such as this are trend-based and are not intended to take account of development constraints. The population projections represent how the population in an area would change given the continuation of existing demographic trends. This transparency ensures that trend-based projections can be appropriately interpreted and constraints can be separately taken into account within the planning process.

Figure 5: Projected Population Growth in Hertfordshire
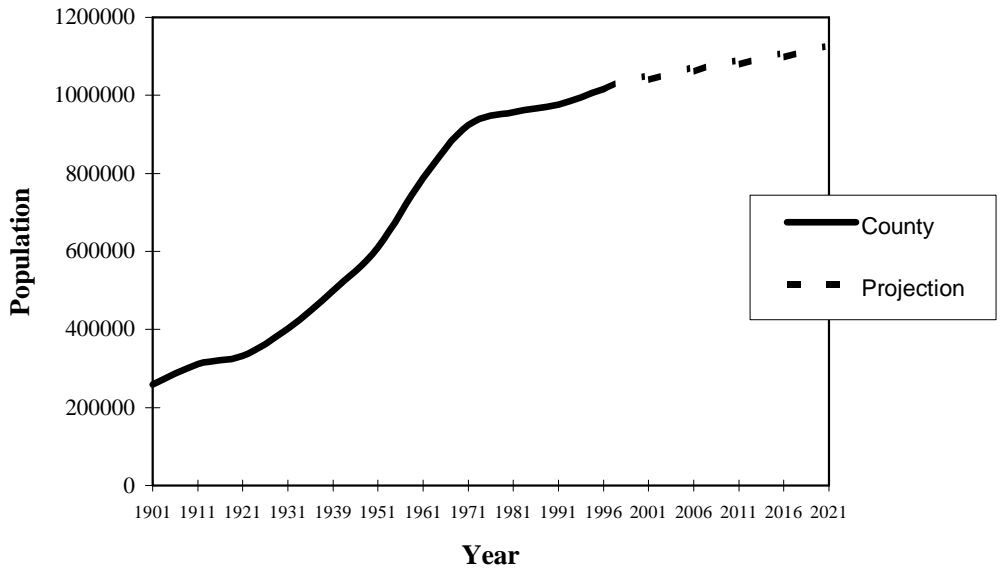
Source: ONS 1996-Based Sub National Projections (1998 second round consultation figures - yet to be confirmed)

19.   Patterns of in-migration into Hertfordshire and out-migration from the County are an important factor in projecting future changes in population and the number of separate households. Figure 6 shows migration since 1984. Each year about 40,000 people come to live in the county, while about the same number move out to live elsewhere. The long term pattern is therefore close to what is termed 'nil-net' migration. In other words about the same number move in each year as move out. Since 1993 there has been slight net in-migration. This is probably correlated closely with the recent upturn in the economy and therefore particularly good job opportunities in the County, at present, compared with some other areas.   In the longer term however, the County Council would expect a pattern of approximately nil-net migration to reassert itself.

Figure 6: Migration into and out of Hertfordshire
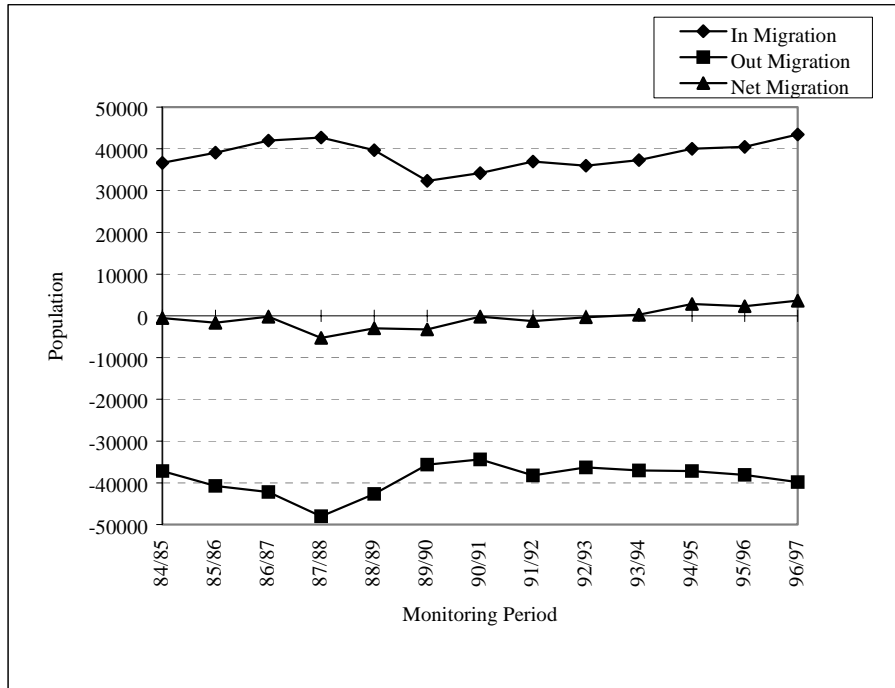
Source: ONS and NHS Central Register. Net migration into Hertfordshire as indicated by the ONS mid year estimate for 1996/7 was 4,800. This includes international migration to/from Herts. However, Figure 6 shows net migration of 3,670 into Hertfordshire during 1996/97. The difference is that 3,670 does not include international migration, as this had not been included in the data for earlier years.

20. The 1991 mid year estimate of households in Hertfordshire was 387,000, of which about 24% were single person households. The latest 1992/93 based set of household projections produced by the Department of the Environment (now the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) indicate that the number of households in Hertfordshire is expected to rise to 459,000 by the end of the Plan period, 2011, a rise of about 72,000 (18%). This household projection is illustrated in Figure 7. A revised household projection to 2021 is expected to be published in 1999. All household projections must be interpreted with caution for the reasons outlined in paragraph 18.

Figure 7: Growth in Households in Hertfordshire, Actual from 1901 to 1991 and Projected to 2016
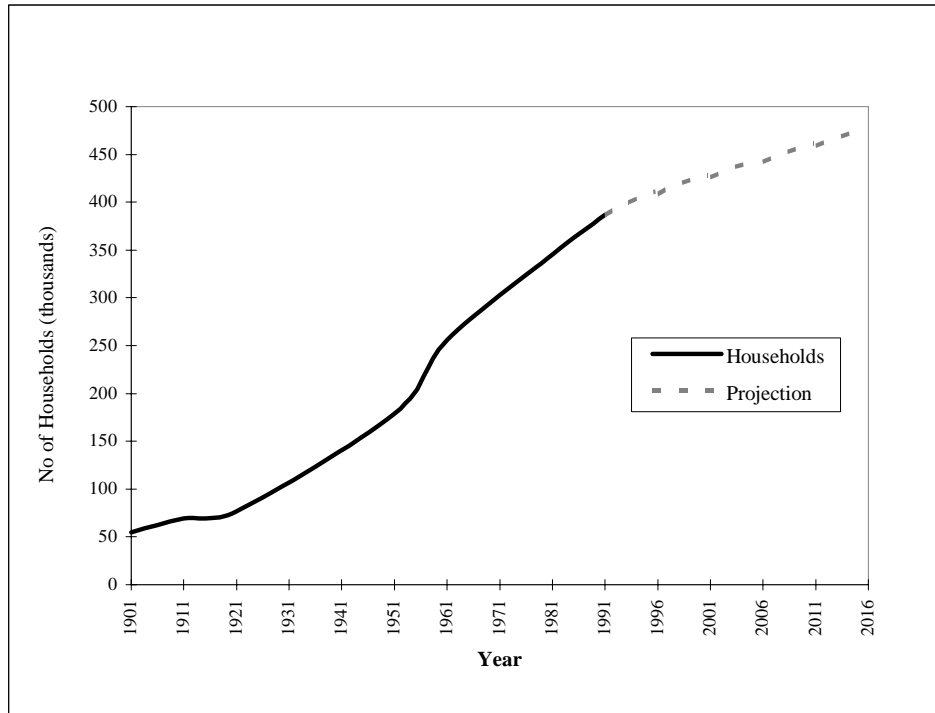
Source: Historical figures to 1991 are compiled from Census reports and definitions have changed, so these figures should be regarded as indicative only. Figures from 1991 to 2016 are from the ONS 1992/93 based projections. All such projections are prone to inaccuracy and so should be treated with caution.

Settlement Pattern

21.   Hertfordshire has a distinctive mix of small to medium sized urban settlements juxtaposed with many smaller villages. The largest towns are Watford (population 84,400 in 1996), Hemel Hempstead (79,400), Stevenage (75,100) and St Albans (62,100). All the other main settlements have a population below 42,000.

22.   About 90% of the population of Hertfordshire live in towns with over 5,000 population. About 60% live in the ten largest towns, each with a population of over 30,000. These towns show the variation in urban character across the County. Watford has some of the characteristics of outer London. Cheshunt, Waltham Cross and Hoddesdon are old towns which now form an almost continuous belt of urbanisation extending out of London along the Lee Valley. St Albans, Hitchin, Hertford and Ware are historic market towns. Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City were the World's first garden cities. Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead and Hatfield are New Towns created since 1945.

23.   Overall, there is no single dominant urban centre, but a dense network of towns. These are socially inter-linked with many people living in one town, working in another and shopping or seeking educational opportunities in yet another. The short distances between settlements mean there is considerable competition between some of them in shopping and leisure provision. Most of the intervening countryside is Green Belt, the extent of which is shown on the Key Diagram.

Transportation

24.   The urban settlement framework of the County described above leads to a complex pattern of movements between towns, particularly the use of the car as the main means of transport.   The County's Principal Road Network alone handles 2.39 billion vehicle-kilometres per year with flows 24% above the average for shire counties.

25.   The County's biggest traffic flows are caused by its role as a transport corridor to and from London and the M25 motorway. The M1 at its busiest point carries 150,000 vehicles per day, three times the flow for the average British motorway.   The heavy use of the motorway and trunk road system has spill-over effects onto the already heavily-used County roads.

26.   Hertfordshire's dispersed settlement pattern is in itself a major generator of car traffic. Business activity is widely spread throughout the County and heavy peak-hour commuting flows are predominantly car-borne.   The pattern of many small to medium sized towns together with widely dispersed villages presents problems in seeking to provide improved yet financially viable passenger transport services.   Car ownership in the County now stands at 0.5 cars per head, the third highest in Britain.

27.   Figure 8 shows the actual increase in road traffic levels in the County since 1985, and estimated to 2006 on the basis of the Government's National Road Traffic Forecasts.

Figure 8 Road Traffic Growth in Hertfordshire, Actual and Forecast to 2006
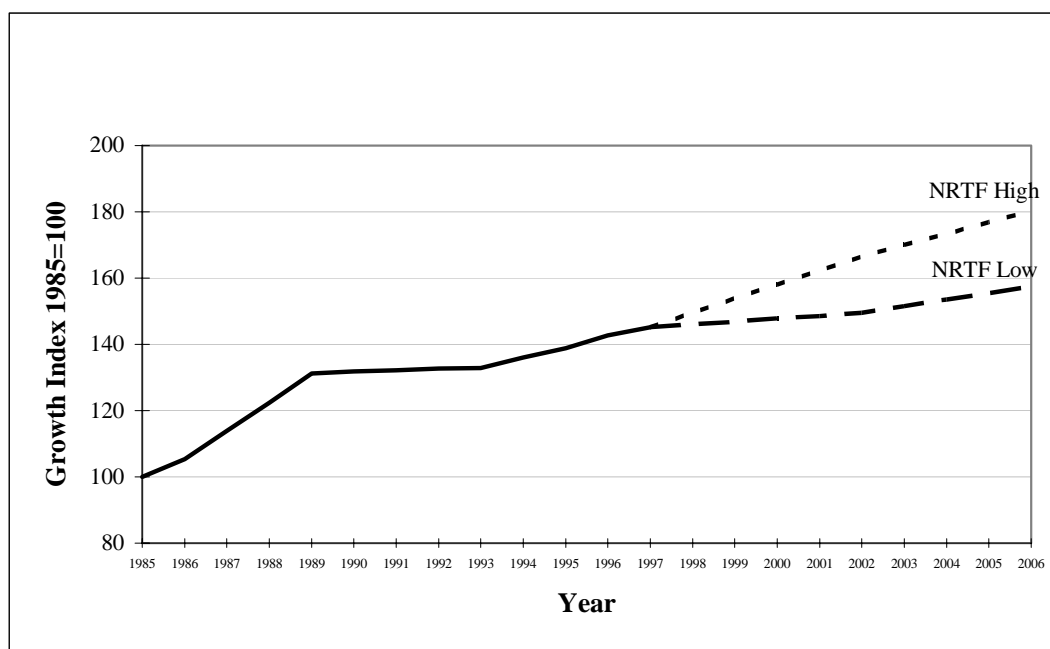
Source: Hertfordshire County Council Transport Policies and Programmes. NRTF stands for National Road Traffic Forecast.

28.   Surface travel to and from Stansted and Luton airports is significant. Substantial increases in the number of passengers using Stansted Airport is putting significant strains on roads in the east of the County. Heathrow airport is also close by, to the west along the M25.

29.   Traffic generation is also created by the County's neighbouring settlements. Hertfordshire borders London to the south, and the major towns of Luton and Harlow to the west and east respectively. The main routes into and out of the County are shown on the Key Diagram.

30.   Hertfordshire's proximity to London and good radial transport links means that many commute to work. Of the 471,000 County residents in employment at the time of the 1991 Census, 137,000 (29%) worked outside the County. About 99,000 of these commuted to London, while about 85,600 people commuted into Hertfordshire to work, mostly by road.

31.   Hertfordshire is well served by radial rail services from London and there is substantial commuting along these lines. However there is no east-west rail link through the County. The County has a total of 52 railway stations. There are four major railway lines, supported by a number of branch lines and operated by 7 rail franchises. The major lines are used in parallel by both InterCity and local train operators. Most InterCity traffic consists of through journeys between London and the rest of Britain (i.e. the Midlands and the North/Scotland). Access to the InterCity network is only available at Watford Junction and Stevenage stations within Hertfordshire, and just outside the County at Luton in Bedfordshire. The majority of stations in the County are served by local train operators which are heavily used in the peak hours, predominantly by commuters to and from London. The London Underground extends into south-west Hertfordshire.

32.   Hertfordshire is served by the Grand Union Canal and the Lee/Stort Navigations, which are navigable to narrow boats. Although originally built as commercial waterways they are now predominantly used by leisure craft. The length of major navigable waterways in Hertfordshire is approximately 55 km.

The Economy and Employment

33.   Hertfordshire's economy is characterised by three key features. The first feature is the relative importance, in employment terms, of a small number of large firms (1% of companies employ 30% of all employees). The decline of several of the largest manufacturing companies has somewhat reduced this dominance, but it remains a feature of the County's economic structure. The second feature is that, conversely, 76% of all companies in Hertfordshire are 'micro firms' which employ 10 people or less. The third feature is the relative importance of higher order functions such as headquarters and research and development facilities. Research in 1993 suggested that half of the companies surveyed described themselves as headquarters and a further 25% of companies in Hertfordshire had only one site.

34.   The key economic sectors in terms of output and employment in Hertfordshire are financial and business services, distribution, hotels and catering and other services. Together, they account for 60% of output. Other important sectors to the Hertfordshire economy, as they are fast growing and high value added businesses, include bio-technology and pharmaceuticals, information technology, film, TV and other creative media.

35.   The best performing sectors over the next three years in terms of output growth are forecast to be transport & communications, and construction.

36.   About 404,000 people were employed in Hertfordshire in 1995, in addition to which there were a substantial (but difficult to estimate) number of self-employed. Figure 9 shows the percentage of employed persons in each of the main economic sectors in 1995. Only about 21% of the total were employed in manufacturing, agriculture and construction combined, the rest in various forms of service sector employment. As elsewhere in the Country, there has been a long term increase in the proportion of people working in the service sector and a corresponding decline in the proportion employed in manufacturing.

Figure 9: Employees in Employment in Hertfordshire in 1995, by Industry Groups
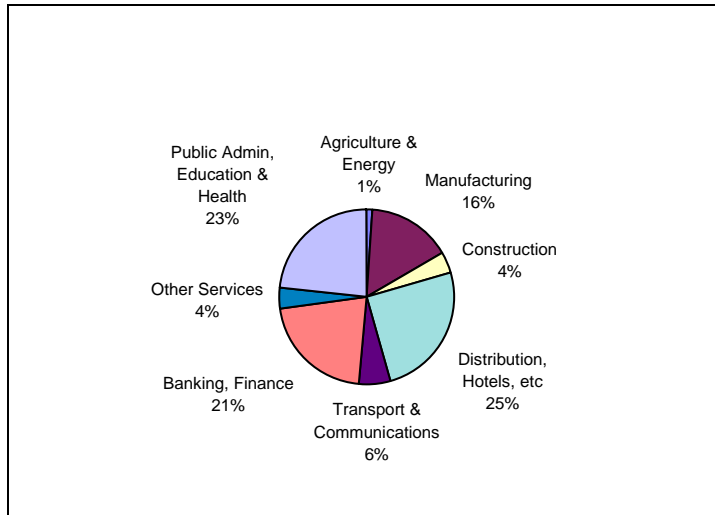
Source: ONS 1995 Annual Employment Survey

37.   Unemployment since 1994 has been falling more quickly than in the UK, the rest of the South East and the Eastern Region. In July 1998, unemployment in Hertfordshire stood at only 10,600 (2%), the highest rate within the County being in Stevenage (5.6%) and the lowest in St Albans and East Hertfordshire (both 1.4%). The corresponding UK rate at this time was 4.7%, in London 5.5%, in the Eastern Region 3.4% and the South East 2.7%. However, there are local pockets of severe unemployment of up to 10% in certain wards of Stevenage, Borehamwood, Watford, Waltham Cross and Hitchin.

38.   Projected growth in the working age population in Hertfordshire is shown in Figure 10. This is projected to rise from about 613,000 in 1991 to about 642,000 in 2016, corresponding to the expected increase in overall population during this period. About 86% of the working age population make up the 'economically active' labour force (those who are either in work or are registered as actively seeking work).

Figure 10: Working Age Population in Hertfordshire
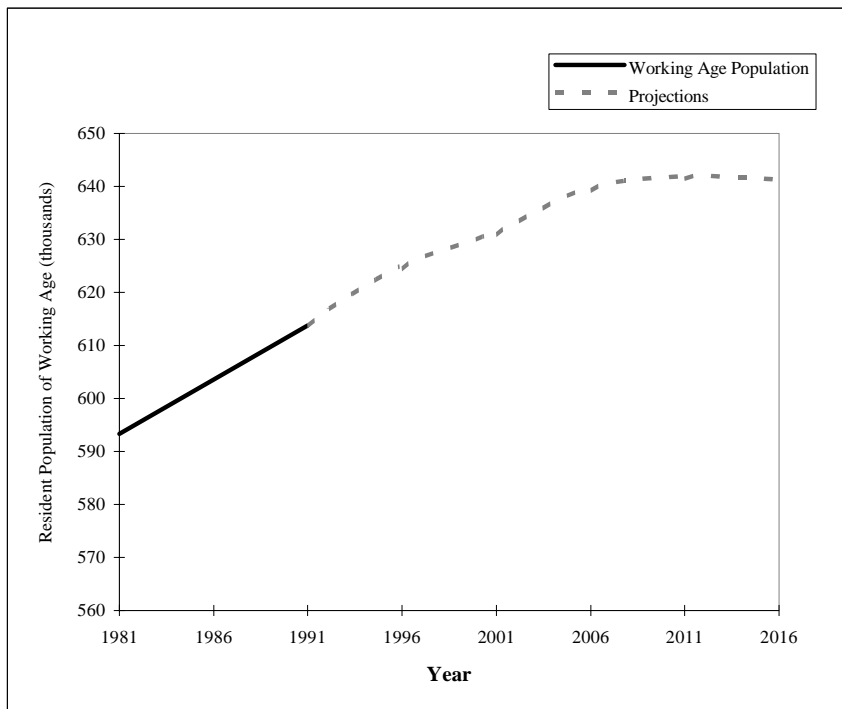
Source: ONS 1996-based Sub National Projections (Consultation figures which are yet to be confirmed)

Environmental Assets and Designations

39.   Woodlands now occupy about 7% (12,260 hectares) of Hertfordshire's land area, of which 5,410 hectares (3.3% of the County) are ancient woodland (continuous woodland since before AD 1600). Of this, 3,280 hectares are still semi-natural. The remainder consists of new plantations on open land or on former ancient sites. Hertfordshire has some 11,548 hectares of grassland which retain at least some nature conservation interest, of which only 1,465 hectares are of special importance, while only 113 hectares of marsh or swamp remain, together with rivers, streams and more recent flooded gravel pits. There are over 4,000 sites of at least some importance for wildlife, of which about 1,600 are defined as Wildlife Sites, 41 are legally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 1 a National Nature Reserve, 47 are Countryside Heritage Sites, and 13 are designated Local Nature Reserves.

40.   The present landscape of Hertfordshire is the result of thousands of years of human activity and it is particularly rich in archaeological remains. The County's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) contains almost 10,000 records of archaeological sites, findspots and structures. Of these, less than 2% are afforded statutory protection as Scheduled Ancient Monuments as designated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. However, the Monuments Protection Programme currently being undertaken by English Heritage will result in the designation of more of the County's archaeological sites as Scheduled Monuments.

41.   Hertfordshire has a diverse and important archaeological heritage including prehistoric settlements and land boundaries, Roman villas and towns, medieval castles and

field systems. Other more recent examples of the County's heritage are industrial archaeological remains including maltings, paper mills and evidence of the film and aerospace industries.

42. All of Hertfordshire's towns and villages are of archaeological significance. Many of them date from the medieval period although the 'new' towns of the twentieth century should equally be considered as important cultural assets.

43. Many of the County's ecological assets, including grasslands, hedgerows and woodlands, are considered to be 'semi-natural' as they are, in their current form, the result of human activity over many centuries. These features and sites are, therefore, often of archaeological interest as well and they demonstrate the importance of adopting a holistic view of the environment, as advocated by the principles of sustainability.

44. A further element of the historic environment is Hertfordshire's rich heritage of buildings of architectural and historic significance. Hertfordshire has some 8,000 Listed Buildings, the greatest number and density per total dwellings being in the north and east of the County, with Hitchin, Hertford and Ware possessing high concentrations. In addition, there are other buildings of local interest which are not covered by statutory legislation but which have been identified by local authorities and included within local lists.

45. Many of the more important groups of buildings of architectural and historic merit are already afforded special protection within designated Conservation Areas. There are currently 170 Conservation Areas in the County. The scale of Conservation Areas varies from large parts of town centres to small areas of villages.

46. Considerable tracts of Hertfordshire are subject to land quality designations of national, regional or local importance. The Green Belt now covers approximately 63% of the area of the County outside built-up areas. The Chiltern Hills in the west and north west Hertfordshire are of national landscape importance and are designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Landscape Conservation Areas also cover significant portions of the County. The coverage of various types of land designation in Hertfordshire is tabulated below.

Designation	Area in Hectares
Green Belt	81,317
Special Protection Areas	97
Special Areas of Conservation	561
National Nature Reserves	238
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	2,065
Sites of Nature Conservation Interest	7,702
Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	11,650
Agricultural Land, Grades 1 and 2	30,245
National Trust Land	1,012
Common Land	1,778
Areas of Archaeological Significance (includes Scheduled Ancient Monuments)	13,726
Registered Historic Parks and Gardens	4,062
Landscape Conservation Areas	67,543
Areas at Flood Risk	3,973
Conservation Areas	2,124
Regional Parks (Lee and Colne Valleys)	1,895
Country Parks	71

Source: Hertfordshire County Council Environment Department Information Service

Wider Policy Context and the Sustainability Agenda

47.   The planning system operates within a wider environment influenced by decisions, policy direction and initiatives at the international, national, regional and local levels. This section of the Plan outlines some major recent and emerging policy trends which have influenced its preparation. The text concentrates particularly on those trends relating to sustainability, reflecting the importance which the Plan places on this.

International Policy Framework

48.   Increased competition within the European and global economies as a result of the new Single European Market (SEM) and the revised General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) are likely to have particularly profound implications for the use of land and other resources at the local level. For example, the European Union's document 'Europe 2000' examines the potential effects of the Single European Market on the prospects for land-use and development across the territory. It highlights the tensions which could be created between the traditional economic heartlands of the Community, beset by problems of congestion with higher labour and property costs and the less congested, cheaper (but less accessible) peripheral areas as competition intensifies. Already a new southerly axis of development has been identified, away from the traditional heartlands.

49.   The European Union's draft 'European Spatial Development Perspective' (ESDP) shows that long term economic, social and spatial development trends in the European Union will be substantially influenced by three factors:

- the consequences of the gradual economic integration of Europe, and of a more intensive political co-operation between member States and with other interested parties;
- the growing role of the local and regional authorities and their spatial development functions;
- the likely enlargement of the Union as well as the development of relations with its neighbours.

50.   All three phenomena have to be seen within the broader context of the globalisation of the economy and accompanying technological changes, and in the light of the major demographic, economic and environmental trends which characterise the development of the Union. The ESDP identifies three fundamental goals:

- economic and social cohesion;
- sustainable development;
- balanced competitiveness of the European territory.

51.   The history of the concept of 'sustainable development' is by now well known and documented. First coined by Barbara Ward in her report to the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (of which the Earth Summit in June 1992 was the twentieth anniversary), this concept was taken forward initially through the pioneering work of the International Institute for Environment and Development.

52.   The concept of sustainable development was brought firmly onto the international agenda by the World Commission on Environment and Development, which was set up by

the United Nations in 1983 and headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Prime Minister of Norway. It came about as a response to concern that development was increasingly damaging the environment. Sustainability was also central to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), popularly known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Sustainable development was defined by the World Commission (the 'Brundtland definition') as *'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and aspirations'*.

53. The Earth Summit developed five agreements which are summarised below.

i) The *Rio Declaration* comprises 27 principles for guiding action on environment and development. Many address development concerns, stressing the right to and need for development and poverty alleviation. Others relate to trade and the environment and the rights and roles of special groups.

ii) *Agenda 21* is a document of 40 chapters outlining an 'action plan' for sustainable development, covering a wide range of specific natural resources and the role of different groups, as well as issues of social and economic development and implementation. It effectively integrates environment and development concerns and is strongly oriented towards 'bottom-up', participatory and community-based approaches in many areas.

iii) The *Framework Convention on Climate Change* establishes principles that climate change is a serious problem; that action cannot wait upon the resolution of scientific uncertainties; that developed countries should take the lead; and, that they should compensate developing countries for any additional costs incurred in taking measures under the convention. It indicates that industrialised countries should aim as a first step to return greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2000 and establishes a strong process by which governments must submit reports on their relevant policies and projections, and meet regularly to evaluate progress and if necessary amend the commitments.

iv) The *Convention on Biological Diversity* aims to preserve the biological diversity of the planet, through the protection of species and ecosystems, and to establish terms for the associated uses of biological resources on their territory, the fruits of which should, however, be shared in a 'fair and equitable' way on 'mutually agreed terms'. Countries must develop plans to protect biodiversity and submit some information on them.

v) The *Forest Principles* emphasises the sovereign right to exploit forest resources along with various general principles of forest protection and management.

European Policy Framework

54. The European Union has developed a strategy for sustainable development which is set out in the Fifth Environmental Action Programme (1992), 'Towards Sustainability', recognising that the implementation of the strategy set out in the Programme would require a considerable change in almost all major policy areas in which the Community is involved.

Sustainability is described as *'continued economic and social development without detriment to the environment and the natural resources on the quality of which continued human activity and further development depend.'*

55.   The Union has also placed sustainable development as one of the three fundamental goals of the recent 'European Spatial Development Perspective'.

National Policy Framework

56.   The United Kingdom set out its first comprehensive strategy for the environment in 1990 with the publication of the White Paper on the Environment, 'This Common Inheritance'. The document states that:

> *'The Government therefore supports the principle of sustainable development. This means living on the earth's income rather than eroding its capital. It means keeping the consumption of renewable natural resources within the limits of their replenishment. It means handing down to successive generations not only man-made wealth (such as buildings, roads and railways) but also natural wealth, such as clean and adequate water supplies, good arable land, a wealth of wildlife and ample forests.'*

57.   Following the Earth Summit, in 1994 the Government set out its response to Agenda 21 in the 'UK Strategy for Sustainable Development'.

> *'Sustainable development does not mean having less economic development: on the contrary, a healthy economy is better able to generate the resources to meet people's needs, and new investment and environmental improvement often go hand in hand. Nor does it mean that every aspect of the present environment should be preserved at all costs. What it requires is that decisions throughout society are taken with proper regard to their environmental impact.'*

58.   Within the framework of this national strategy, in 1996 the Government has set out its proposals for improving the quality of life in cities, towns and villages in its report to the United Nations Habitat II conference entitled 'Sustainable Settlements and Shelter'.

> *'Sustainable development is about meeting today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the context of Habitat II, it means human settlements which meet the economic and social needs of their inhabitants and visitors while reducing damage to the environment to levels that do not endanger longer term viability. On the one hand this means a good healthy environment with adequate shelter for all. On the other hand it means places where the use of non renewable resources is minimised; where renewable resources are used sustainably; where waste recycling is encouraged; and where the remaining waste is kept within levels that can be safely absorbed by local and global systems or sinks.'*

59.   As well as the development and adoption of national policy statements, the Government introduces the principles of sustainability into specific areas where it performs a guiding or steering role. The principle mechanism through which it does this in relation to the planning system is through the guidance it gives in its Planning Policy Guidance Notes,

Mineral Planning Guidance Notes and Regional Planning Guidance Notes. PPG12 on 'Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance', for example, states:

> *'The Government has made it clear its intention to work towards ensuring that development and growth are sustainable. The planning system, and the preparation of development plans in particular, can contribute to the objectives of ensuring that development and growth are sustainable'.*

60. The UK Strategy recognises the important role of the planning system in regulating the development and use of land in the public interest. National Planning Policy Guidance states, in PPG1 on 'General Policy and Principles', that a sustainable planning framework should:

- provide for the nation's needs for commercial and industrial development, food production, minerals extraction, new homes and other buildings, while respecting environmental objectives;
- use already developed areas in the most efficient way, while making them more attractive places in which to live and work;
- conserve both the cultural heritage and natural resources (including wildlife, landscape, water, soil and air quality) taking particular care to safeguard designations of national and international importance; and
- shape new development patterns in a way which minimises the need to travel.

61. In February 1998 the Government issued a consultation paper on a revised sustainability strategy for the country, entitled 'Sustainable Development: Opportunities for Change - Consultation Paper on a Revised UK Strategy'. This contains a vision of sustainable development based on four broad objectives, as follows:

i) *Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone.* It is not enough to focus on economic and environmental policies if whole groups in society, or parts of the country, are excluded. We have to reduce the harm to health caused by poverty, poor housing, unemployment and pollution. The objective must be for everyone to live in a clean and safe environment, although that should not mean adopting policies which would prevent people from being able to afford the basic services they need. Nor should our needs be met by treating others elsewhere in the world unfairly.

ii) *Effective protection of the environment.* This means acting to limit global environmental threats, such as climate change; to protect human health and safety from hazards such as poor air quality and toxic chemicals; and to protect things which people need or value, such as wildlife, landscapes, and historic buildings.

iii) *Prudent use of natural resources.* This does not mean denying ourselves the use of non-renewable resources like oil and gas, but we do need to make sure that we use them efficiently and that alternatives are developed to replace them in due course. Renewable resources, such as water, should be used in ways that do not endanger the resource or cause serious damage or pollution.

iv) *Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment,* so that everyone in Britain can share in good living standards and greater job opportunities.

Britain is a trading nation in a rapidly changing world. For our country to prosper, our businesses must produce the high quality goods and services that consumers throughout the world want, at prices they are prepared to pay. To achieve that, we need a workforce that is equipped with the education and skills for the 21st century. We need businesses ready to invest, and an adequate infrastructure to encourage this.

Regional Policy Framework

62.   Figure 11 illustrates that Hertfordshire falls into three overlapping regional planning areas. From a European perspective, the County is part of the European Union's 'Centre Capitals Region'. This large area includes the areas surrounding Paris, Amsterdam and Brussels, as well as South East England.

Figure 11: Regional Planning Areas
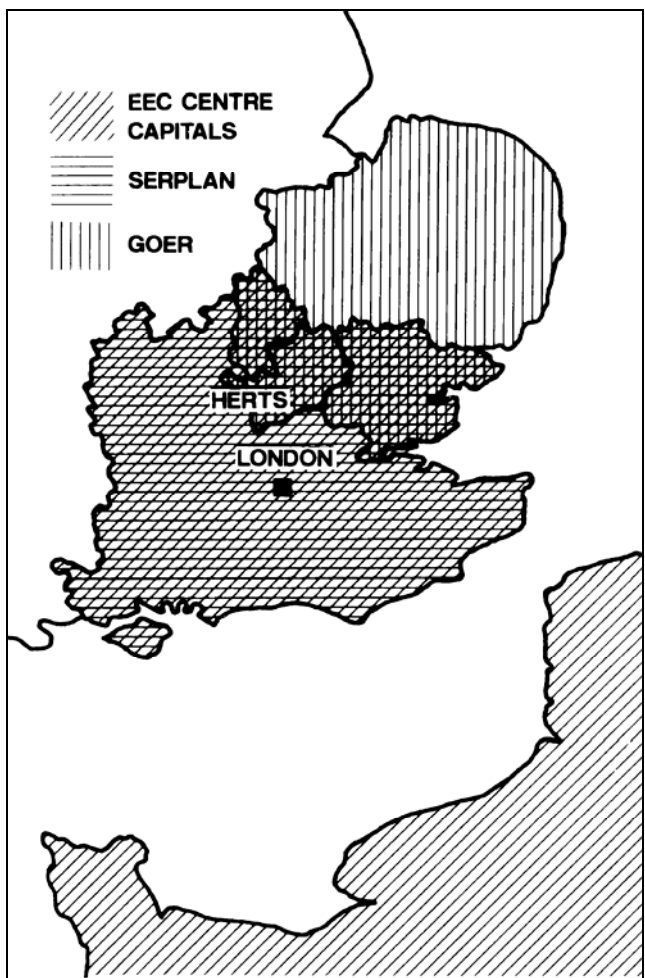
Source: Hertfordshire County Council Environment Department

63.   From a UK regional perspective, Hertfordshire is part of the area covered by the South East Regional Planning Conference of local authorities (SERPLAN). The county, district and unitary councils which co-operate for planning purposes under this umbrella

organisation include those in 12 counties together with Greater London. The Government's Regional Planning Guidance for the South East Region (RPG9) applies to the SERPLAN area, within which Hertfordshire is in the northern sector. However, England is divided differently for the purposes of Regional Governance. There is a Government Office for what is known as the Eastern Region (GOER), which includes Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire and the rest of East Anglia. Hertfordshire is therefore on the southern edge of this Region.

64. The Government's current Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) states that planning policies should be directed towards several broad objectives. These are enhanced economic performance, sustainable development and environmental improvement, opportunity and choice.

65. The South East Regional Planning Conference of local planning authorities (SERPLAN) is currently reviewing its Regional Strategy. This will take the form of draft Regional Planning Guidance for the South East and is due to be considered by the Government in 1999. The emerging Strategy covers the period up to 2016 and is based on a set of sustainability principles which bring together the goals of environmental protection and economic growth:

> *'In effect, the main goal of sustainable development for the South East must be the maintenance of an acceptable standard of living for the region's people, not just in terms of their economic well being, but also embracing all those environmental, social and cultural needs which affect their quality of life.'*

66. Within the broad sustainability principles, four key themes are identified, as follows:

- concentrating development;
- urban 'renaissance';
- reducing the need for movement and influencing modal choice;
- encouraging economic success.

67. The Government is expected to publish new Regional Planning Guidance for the South East in 1999 or 2000 and this will set the regional framework for making the first alterations to this Plan.

County Policy Framework for Hertfordshire

68. The 1992 Earth Summit recognised that local government would be actively involved in two thirds of the actions identified in Agenda 21 and called upon it to initiate Local Agenda 21 processes and partnerships for sustainable development at the local level. Agenda 21 states:

> *'.....because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and co-operation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives. As the level of government closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilising and responding to the public to promote sustainable development.'*

69.   Sustainability and Local Agenda 21 in Hertfordshire are being taken forward through a range of different mechanisms. These include the development of plans and strategies produced by a variety of organisations to tackle specific issues or range of issues, through to education and awareness campaigns and demonstration projects and general development based on sound sustainability principles. The following mechanisms are all important:

- *plans and strategies* - e.g. the Structure Plan, the ten local plans produced by district and borough councils, the Minerals and Waste Plans, Thames 21 and Local Environment Agency plans produced by the Environment Agency, Transport Policies and Programmes, the 'Bright Green' Industrial Strategy and 'Green County'[TM], produced by the County Council;

- *physical development* - a range of exemplary 'flagship' projects which demonstrate best practice in sustainable development - including housing and other forms of redevelopment on previously developed sites in urban areas, waste management facilities, renewable energy projects, etc;

- *education and awareness raising campaigns* - campaigns raising public awareness in particular topic areas - e.g. 'TravelWise' and 'WasteAware';

- *stakeholder and community-based Local Agenda 21 forums* - such as environment forums and other groups which may contribute to the preparation of comprehensive settlement appraisals (Policy 2) and whole settlement strategies;

- *monitoring* - of development trends, the environment (e.g. State of the Environment Report produced by the Hertfordshire Environmental Forum), social and health matters, the economy and employment, etc.

70.   The Structure Plan, therefore, is one element of one of a range of mechanisms being employed in Hertfordshire with the aim of making the County more sustainable. Inevitably, in having the same or similar overall objectives, any one mechanism is likely to overlap with others and so cannot be viewed in isolation. The importance of the Structure Plan is in setting a consistent strategic framework for local planning and co-ordinated action based on sound sustainability aims.

SUSTAINABILITY VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

71.   Building on the context outlined in the Introduction, the fundamental themes in preparing the Structure Plan Review 1991-2011 have been the principles of sustainability and Agenda 21.

72.   The Plan has taken over 5 years to prepare. This reflects both the complexity and sensitivity of the issues and the significant amount of stakeholder and public consultation and participation that its preparation has involved. Community involvement has involved numerous mechanisms. These included a 'soundings exercise' with residents and various interest groups, traditional public consultation on various documents, exhibitions, leaflets, talks, debate in the local and national press, and a public inquiry (termed an 'examination in public') chaired by an independent panel appointed by the Government. The box opposite illustrates the key stages in Plan preparation.

73.   The Plan has entailed a considerable amount of technical work by the County Council, working in partnership with the district councils and a wide range of other interested organisations. Joint working has been particularly significant in relation to the more complex and sensitive issues, notably housing provision and strategic scale developments.

Main Stages of Plan Preparation

1993
Initial Discussion Document and soundings with Hertfordshire residents and other stakeholders

1994
Consultation Document

1995
Joint working with district councils on development strategy

July 1996
Draft ('Deposit') Version of Plan

March 1997
Examination in Public

1997/98
Modifications to Deposit Version

April 1998
Adoption of Modified Plan

74.   Environmental and wider sustainability appraisal of draft policies and proposals have played an important role to informing decisions at key stages in plan preparation.

The Way Forward - A Vision for Hertfordshire

75.   The initial soundings exercise revealed that many people felt that despite an increase in our standard of living over the last thirty years, our quality of life has deteriorated. Hertfordshire, they believed, is now busier, dirtier, more dangerous, has fewer local facilities, and has less sense of community. A principal aim of this review has been to identify how the Structure Plan can play as full a role as possible in ensuring that similar concerns are not being made in the future and that we start to make progress immediately. This can only be achieved by integrating principles of sustainability into the Plan and developing a 'vision' for the kind of County in which we want to live in the future. A vision has emerged throughout the process of developing the Plan, through the involvement of residents and key stakeholders and by undertaking sustainability appraisals at crucial stages of Plan preparation. This vision, the key strands of which are outlined below, forms the basis on which the subsequent sustainability aims, land use objectives and detailed policies are based.

The Vision

A more sustainable Hertfordshire and one which the Plan should play its role in seeking to achieve, is one where:

- Everyone has access to shelter, employment, education, health, social, leisure and other needs within a safe and pleasant living environment.

- The most efficient use is made of all natural resources, minimising use of green field land, water, energy and fossil fuels, and maximising the use of renewable resources.

- The natural and historic environment of the County and its assets would be protected from development and where appropriate managed and enhanced.

- The environment is protected and enhanced, with limited or minimal noise, water, air and other pollution, creating healthy living environments.

- Towns would be vibrant and convenient places in which to live with centres regaining their social and cultural focus.

- Rural areas will continue to remain attractive and viable living and working environments with less dependence on urban areas for everyday needs. Rural communities would not have to rely on the private car for access to urban facilities.

- Development would be concentrated in Hertfordshire's main urban areas and directed to previously used or redundant land and space, thereby protecting greenfield land. Urban concentration would not be to the detriment of local characteristics and distinctiveness and urban assets would be protected and enhanced.

- We would live in distinct and diverse communities, each with their own separate physical, social and cultural identity and sense of community.

- Communities and stakeholders would be involved in looking to the future of their living environments, assessing options and playing an integral element in decision-making processes. Individual responsibility and accountability would be prevalent.

- Population and employment in each settlement would be balanced to allow people more chances of working close to where they live.

- The close proximity of everyday needs and facilities would reduce reliance on the private car.

- An integrated transport system would be dominated by effective, viable and attractive public transport options, enabling fast connections between Hertfordshire's town and countryside, adjoining counties, London and further afield.

- Roads would not be congested and road traffic pollution would be significantly reduced.

- Diversity of development in rural areas will be vital to maintain their viability, providing for local needs, generate employment opportunities and enabling the rural economy to flourish. Development would enhance, not detract from the rural environment.

- In the short term, commuting to work from our homes by car would reduce and commuting by passenger transport will increase. In the longer term, there would be a reduction in the need to commute, either because of local employment opportunities, technological developments enabling work at home or other means.

- Traffic passing through Hertfordshire would be encouraged to use the primary routes only.

- Through commuters to London would be encouraged to use trains with improved services (frequency, speed and capacity) and the provision of improved more accessible car parking at suitable stations at the outer edges of the County or even further afield, with the provision of parkway stations where suitable. The same would apply to people commuting from within the County.

- Unemployment would lose its traditional meaning of not being in permanent employment. Instead, people would do a variety of work: full-time, part-time or contract work in the public or private sector, home-work, work providing for their own needs, voluntary work and so on.

- Well maintained and diverse open spaces would be within easy reach of most people. Streets would not necessarily be routes for cars or goods vehicles. They would be greener, tree-lined places in which communities could interact and in which children could play. The towns on our doorsteps would be safe, pleasant and healthy places in which to live.

- A network of 'green corridors' would link open spaces in the town with the surrounding countryside, giving easy access to these areas, and aiding and enhancing biological diversity.

From Vision to Action - Sustainability Aims and Objectives

76.   To help translate the vision into a useable framework for the Plan, an important element in its preparation has been the development of a set of broad sustainability aims and corresponding land use planning objectives. The aims and objectives have formed an integral element of environmental and wider sustainability appraisal which has underpinned many of the decisions on which the Plan is based. The aims draw out clear messages from the vision, whilst the objectives translate them into issues which can be more readily applied and addressed by land use and transportation planning. The aims and objectives which follow, therefore, are the main basis on which the policies of the Plan have been formulated.

Aims for Sustainability

A) Reduce overall demand for resources (including land and water);

B) Make the most efficient use, including re-use and recycling, of renewable and non-renewable resources (including land);

C) Increase the use of renewable resources where this would not be detrimental to other aims;

D) Maintain and enhance biological diversity;

E) Mitigate the possible causes and effects of climate change;

F) Increase the rate of carbon fixing;

G) Reduce pollution and the effects it has on ecosystems and human health;

H) Maintain 'critical' national and local environmental assets, which would be impossible or very difficult to replace;

I) Maintain and where possible increase stocks of less critical environmental assets (of which no one example is critical but whose overall spread and frequency are important for the environmental character and quality of an area);

J) Improve the overall quality of life, meeting housing, employment, health, education, recreation and other human needs within a safe, healthy, diverse and pleasant environment;

K) Increase community awareness and involvement;

L) Improve equality of opportunity in economic and social terms;

M) Apply the precautionary principle where the potential damage to the environment is uncertain and significant.

Objectives for Land Use Planning

1. Make adequate provision for development to meet housing, economic and other human needs during the Plan period;

2. Maintain the settlement pattern of small to medium sized towns through the location of development and maintenance of a Green Belt;

3. Concentrate development within existing urban areas;

4. Make our towns and villages pleasant and convenient places to live in, work in and use;

5. Locate and mix land uses and activities to increase accessibility and reduce travel need;

6. Reduce the adverse effects of movement, particularly through reducing private car use and encouraging other modes of transport;

7. Protect existing plant cover (particularly trees) and seek to increase it;

8. Protect critical elements of the historic environment;

9. Protect critical natural habitats and the green corridors linking them together, and aim to create new habitats;

10. Support the rural economy and rural life;

11. Protect and enhance the air and water environment;

12. Increase the level of energy efficiency in our towns and villages;

13. Reduce the gap between energy used and energy generated in the County;

14. Maximise the benefits from, and minimise the environmental damage caused by, waste;

15. Minimise the effect of mineral operations on the local environment and quality of life while making proper contribution to the minerals needs of the nation;

16. Improve the sport and recreational opportunities available;

17. Support these objectives, and improve quality of life, through improved design and careful control of development;

18. Through planning, encourage a sense of place and community;

19. Encourage maximum community participation in reviewing and implementing the development plan.

Monitoring

77.   An important element in assessing whether or not Hertfordshire is becoming more sustainable, is how we monitor change. A significant amount of monitoring is already undertaken. The Hertfordshire Environment Forum, for example, produces a State of the Environment Report each year, currently taking the form of monitoring a set of key indicators of Hertfordshire's environment. Other organisations undertake monitoring, also sometimes in the form of indicators, on a whole range of issues, including the economy and employment, health, population, housing, habitats, species, air and water quality. For many years the County Council has produced an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) on the implementation and effectiveness of policies in the Structure Plan.

78.   An approach to monitoring which has recently become prevalent is the use of 'indicators'. Amongst other matters, indicators can be used to track trends over time, to monitor the success of policies, reflect local circumstances, establish links to other sets of indicators, provoke change, educate and lead to the setting of targets and thresholds. One methodology is the use of the 'Pressure-State-Response' approach. 'Pressure' indicators are those which monitor the source of the pressure creating need for action, 'state' are those which create a picture or describe the current situation, and 'response' indicators are those which monitor the actions carried out.

79.   It is not the role of the Structure Plan to establish a definitive set of all indicators and monitoring work to be undertaken in the County. Rather, this Plan needs to be viewed in the context of much wider action and monitoring on the part of many agencies. In particular, 'pressure' and 'state' indicators developed through other mechanisms, such as through the State of the Environment Report, may result in a 'response' through policies in the Structure Plan. For example, pressure and state indicators which monitor and track air quality are an important justification for the 'response' in the Structure Plan transportation policies which aim to reduce traffic, resultant vehicle emissions and air pollution.

80.   In other cases, the Structure Plan may be the prime mechanism to identify and monitor pressures, states and responses. An important example is in regard to housing need and demand (pressure), total dwelling stock and its composition (state) and provision of additional dwellings in Hertfordshire (response). The response to this indicator chain can itself become a pressure, as additional dwelling requirements may increase pressure for development of green field sites. A state indicator in this context is green field land being used for housing development, whilst response indicators relate mainly to policies aimed at enabling more dwellings to be provided through regeneration of previously developed land.

81.   The County Council will continue to monitor emerging issues and trends, and indicators of importance to planning and sustainable development. The content of future AMRs will complement that of monitoring outputs by other organisations and its content and format will be kept regularly reviewed. Where feasible, appropriate targets and benchmarks will be set in order to help assess the success of policies. The first and any subsequent alterations to this Plan will need to be informed by monitoring of key indicators at district, county and regional level.

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POLICIES

FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

82.   Policy 1 gives an indication of the broad implications of the principles of sustainable development for planning in Hertfordshire. This framework policy translates the aims and objectives of the Plan into one overarching statement setting out the sustainability priorities which underpin all the detailed policies.

POLICY 1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The policies of this Plan, together with those of local plans, will seek to enable activities and development in Hertfordshire to be carried out consistently with the principles of sustainable development. Those aspects within the ambit of the Structure Plan and local plans will be subject to monitoring and review in the light of evolving policies and concerns at national and international levels, and new information as it comes forward. Where feasible, appropriate targets and benchmarks will be set.

The general aim will be to:

i)   **encourage economic growth consistent with environmental constraints, with the main emphasis on promoting the knowledge economy rather than mass industrial production;**

ii)   **make provision for the housing and social needs of people in ways which minimise the need to travel and otherwise exploit the sustainability advantages of urban concentration, with the prime emphasis on regeneration in the County's main towns;**

iii)   **improve people's quality of life, both in town and country, in ways which do not prejudice the quality of life of people in the future or threaten the environment;**

iv)   **avoid pollution in all its forms, in particular pollution of ground and surface water resources;**

v)   **contain road traffic growth, particularly in the main towns, and encourage walking, cycling and greater use of passenger transport in preference to the private car, in particular through development of new and improved bus and rail services;**

vi)   **conserve the County's critical capital and other important environmental assets, including its landscape, ecological, built and archaeological heritage, and safeguard the County's area of Green Belt;**

Continued ....

vii) **conserve natural resources, in particular the County's best and most versatile agricultural land;**

viii) **minimise resource depletion and make the most efficient use of land, minerals, buildings, energy, water and waste.**

Design and Provisions of Development

83.   All development, regardless of its type, size or location, should make a positive contribution to achieving the sustainability aims and objectives of this Plan. Good design will be essential to this, requiring a more co-ordinated approach to be taken by all those involved in bringing forward development. Policy 2, along with the other policies in this Plan, sets out the strategic framework for the review of local plans to provide detailed policies and, as appropriate, supplementary guidance on design matters. Local plan preparation will be able to draw on a wealth of information on design which has been published by many organisations. The requirements of good design need to be considered right from the start in the preparation of development briefs and proposals, and at all stages of development control.

84.   The principles of sustainability mean, among other things, that development proposals should include 'planning benefits' designed to compensate for any 'planning losses' likely to result from the proposals. This is an important way of addressing environmental concerns. It can be appropriate for existing resources to be protected or even enhanced and where negative impacts are permitted then appropriate mitigation measures should be secured. These may involve creating new resources to replace or otherwise compensate for loss. Equally, it is important that development does not adversely affect existing built infrastructure and services, including education, community facilities, and transport provision. In some cases entirely new facilities are needed so that developments can function properly.

85.   In many cases, the adverse effects of development can be mitigated by planning benefits related to the circumstances of particular proposals. As far as possible these benefits should be secured through the design process and appropriate conditions attached to planning permissions. Other benefits will be secured by 'planning obligations' in accordance with Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

86.   Planning obligations will also be the means by which other planning objectives can be secured, including the provision of affordable housing, major transport infrastructure such as the Central Herts Passenger Transit System and other needs related to the proper planning of an area. The County Council wishes to encourage the use of planning obligations in appropriate circumstances.

87.   Local plans should indicate, wherever possible and as precisely as possible, the likely requirements for planning obligations, particularly where projects or proposals have wide ranging effects. Account will need to be taken of the potential cumulative impact of development.

POLICY 2 DESIGN AND PROVISIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

The design and provisions of development will be expected to help achieve the sustainability aims and objectives of this Plan.

Development will be required to make provision for environmental works, infrastructure and community facilities, services and other needs that are directly related to it and necessary to the grant of planning permission. Local plans will provide an indication of the requirements after consultation between the County and District Councils, other service providers and other relevant bodies, such as the regulatory authorities.

Developers will be required to provide or to finance the cost of all such provision which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, including off-site impacts.

Planning obligations will be sought prior to the issue of planning permission. Provisions will cover those necessary to serve the development, to mitigate its impact or to offset the loss of or impact on an existing resource, or otherwise are necessary in the interests of comprehensive planning and sustainable development.

SETTLEMENT PLANNING

Comprehensive Settlement Appraisals

88.   Achieving more sustainable development and activity in a densely populated county such as Hertfordshire will depend crucially on what happens in the towns, where most people live and most development and activity take place. Local communities need to be fully involved in identifying what needs to be done and contributing to the review of local plans.

89.   National planning policy and law already require public consultation to inform the preparation and review of development plans. The Government is now committed to engendering more active community involvement local planning process under the aegis of Agenda 21, recent PPGs and the 1998 White Paper entitled 'Modern Local Government - In Touch with the People'[1]. Policy 3 in this Plan encourages what are termed 'comprehensive settlement appraisals' (CSAs) as a means to improve the way in which communities are engaged as part of the ongoing process of local planning. CSAs are defined as a process through which the local community is consulted on and involved in a technical audit of their town. CSAs will focus on the land use and related transportation implications of the needs and aspirations of residents, community groups and both public and private sector organisations, with the purpose of these being taken into account in the review of the local plan.

90.   CSAs are optional in form and procedure and could take place either as an individual comprehensive exercise or a running form of community audit. The former approach could be instigated as a one-off exercise to inform the next review of the local plan. The latter could provide a means by which emerging and on-going issues are discussed in order to inform preparation of alterations to the local plan, supplementary planning guidance, planning briefs for major developments and subsequent local plan reviews.

91.   CSAs focus only on the land use and related transportation implications of community needs and aspirations, not the provision of services or other issues which are beyond the scope of the local plan. It is expected that CSAs will seek community views on some or all of the following issues facing a settlement, together with other topics which the relevant district council may consider appropriate for consultation:

i)   the particular physical, social and economic characteristics of the settlement;
ii)   its role in relation to surrounding villages and neighbouring settlements;
iii)   the role of the town centre and neighbourhood centres as foci of activity;
iv)   the need to accommodate appropriate development in line with other policies of this plan and in a way which enhances the characteristics of the settlement;
v)   the need to consider the historic development of the town, to preserve the physical integrity of the most important elements of its environment and to protect the characteristics which give the town its local distinctiveness;
vi)   the reuse of vacant and underused land and buildings, including the potential for restoration and reuse of contaminated or otherwise damaged land and the potential implications of future dereliction;

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[1] Cm 4014, July 1998, HMSO

vii)   opportunities for increasing the overall density of development in the settlement in a planned way and without this leading to inappropriate incremental over-development;

viii)   opportunities for the promotion within the settlement of areas of mixed land uses and having a distinctive sense of place;

ix)   opportunities for development to utilise combined heat and power;

x)   opportunities to relocate uses to more sustainable locations, e.g. high generators of heavy goods traffic to locations which do not require journeys through the settlement, and uses which attract many trips to sites which are easily accessible by passenger transport;

xi)   the potential for defining areas where traffic is restricted and other measures for managing the effect of traffic on the local environment, including changes in the provision and management of space used for car parking;

xii)   provision of appropriate sporting, recreation and community facilities, including the potential for more efficient use of land and buildings through the dual or multiple use of facilities;

xiii)   provision of appropriate open space in terms of its diversity, location and accessibility, including recognition of the value and protection of urban 'green spaces' for nature conservation as well as amenity purposes; and

xiv)   having regard to Green Belt policy, in exceptional circumstances the use of the zone surrounding the settlement for sport and other recreation needs, 'park and ride', waste management facilities or other uses required in the day to day operation of the settlement but which it may be most sustainable to locate directly outside the built-up area.

92.   CSAs are not intended to be a separate, additional consultative commitment. The CSA approach differs from past forms of consultation in its emphasis on enabling different organisations and interests to engage in dialogue together and so come to a better understanding of each others' needs, problems, resources and aspirations, thereby facilitating a more shared vision for what the local plan should seek to achieve. Existing points of contact between organisations, for example through environmental forums and other standing consultative frameworks, can provide useful channels to stimulate such communication between groups.

93.   Past approaches to local plan consultation usually involved inviting comment on already formulated draft policies and proposals. This allowed for negative feedback, but generally did not stimulate creative thinking among community groups about the full range of possibilities for action. In contrast, the CSA approach can engage community groups at an earlier and so potentially more influential stage, enabling their ideas to be more fully taken into account in the initial preparation of policies and proposals.

94.   CSAs should not require new survey or other technical information in addition to that which local authorities and other service providers should in any case gather and make publicly available to inform the review of local plans. Rather, CSAs will complement available technical information by effectively tapping the rich sources of local knowledge and intuition which already exist within communities.

95.   Whilst the County Council will encourage progress with the preparation of CSAs, these are not a mandatory requirement in terms of local plan conformity with the Structure Plan. What is sought is a long term commitment on the part of all local authorities to

improve the processes and outcomes of community involvement in local planning. District councils will decide on the detailed approach and priorities for resources which will be best suited to achieving this aim in their particular circumstances.

POLICY 3 COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT APPRAISALS

Comprehensive settlement appraisals, affording positive opportunities for public involvement and contribution, will be encouraged for all towns listed in Policy 6, and where appropriate other settlements, to assist the process of reviewing or amending local plans. Settlements may be grouped, where appropriate, for this purpose and appraisals conducted on a periodic or ongoing basis. Proposals in local plans should take account of the results of all such appraisals.

Whole Settlement Strategies

96.   The County Council considers that achieving a more sustainable future will require land use planning to become more effectively integrated with much wider action. This will necessitate a more co-ordinated approach and strong commitment at corporate level on the part of local authorities and other service providers, such as those providing transport, health, higher and further education, policing, water and other utilities. The term 'whole settlement strategy' has been coined by the County Council to describe this more holistic approach to the future planning of Hertfordshire's towns. The concept of a whole settlement strategy encompasses the entire scope of a CSA but goes much wider and so enables consultation on all the inter-related issues of concern to a community. Thus a whole settlement strategy can be defined as a process that enables local communities, working in partnership with local government and other service providers, to fully participate in shaping a sustainable future for their town.

97.   Viewing each town as a complete system is central to the concept of whole settlement strategies. These will look at the role and function of a town, how it operates, what makes it work and what problems it has. They will also consider the whole range of activities carried out within the town and the interactions between them, as well as the resources the town uses and its linkages to the surrounding area. Such strategies can then provide a framework to inform service planning and community action on a wide range of Agenda 21 matters, not just land use and related transportation planning.

98.   The following five key themes will underpin the preparation of whole settlement strategies:

i)   the development of a shared vision of the future of the town;
ii)   the generation, through consultation and participation amongst a wide group of people, of consensus and agreement on the desired way forward for the town;
iii)   the generation of widespread commitment for the process and outcome of the whole settlement strategy, as well as commitment from the key agencies to implementing the resulting programmes and actions;
iv)   the impetus this process gives to co-ordination of technical analysis relating to the operation of the town, from a range of sources and agencies, with specialist technical input as necessary; and

v)   the development of a process which will endure, sustaining local input, monitoring the implementation mechanisms of the various agencies and reviewing progress.

99.   The County Council intends to engage in and give practical support for the preparation of a programme of whole settlement strategies. The process will have much in common with that for CSAs and it will be possible and advantageous for such strategies to be developed out of CSAs. Indeed, there may be a desire for this to happen as local communities seek to create more sustainable lifestyles and to make progress on other issues of concern which are related to, but beyond the scope of, the local plan process.

Town Centres

100.   Town centres are part of the County's cultural and civic heritage. Securing their health helps to foster civic pride and local identity, which are critical factors in defining the character of a community. The centre is also generally the most accessible part of a town by modes of transport other than the car. Consequently, to locate appropriate development at the centre will reduce the need to travel, dependency on the private car and associated road congestion and pollution, and thereby contribute to more sustainable lifestyles.

101.   In recent times there has been increasing competition from out-of-town centre shopping on the retailing function of town centres. The damaging effect that this has had on the viability of town centres has been recognised by the Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (PPG6) on 'Town Centres and Retail Developments'. PPG6 defines the term 'town centre' as generally to cover city, town, and suburban district centres which provide a broad range of facilities and services, and act as a focus for both the community and for public transport. It excludes small local parades of shops.

102.   The vitality and viability of town and district centres is recognised in PPG6 as depending on:

- retaining and developing a wide range of attractions and amenities;
- creating and maintaining an attractive environment;
- ensuring good accessibility to and within the centre; and
- attracting continuing investment in development or refurbishment of existing buildings.

103.   The role of the planning system, as reflected in PPG 6, should be to provide a positive framework to encourage appropriate investment in town centres. Of particular note is the role of local planning authorities in promoting town centre strategies, as reflected in Policy 4 overleaf. These strategies may need to be promoted through town centre management schemes. In addition, local authorities will wish to be involved in assessing the health of town centres by using criteria which are set out in PPG 6.

104.   Although in general shopping has become less important to town centre, retailing will continue to underpin them and so new retail investment should be encouraged to locate within or adjacent to them. However, changes in the pattern of retail use should not allow town centres, or parts of them, to become underused. This would reduce the vitality of centres and would be an inefficient use of towns' existing resources. Restaurants, leisure and other community uses can all make an important contribution to the vitality and viability of

town centres, particularly during the evening. Likewise, residential and employment uses as part of mixed development can be beneficially located in town centres.

105.   Urban regeneration in its widest sense forms a major element of the overall approach outlined in Policy 1 on Sustainable Development, and realising the opportunities presented in town centres is essential if regeneration is to be successful. Enhancement schemes can play a role in this, but town centre regeneration should seek to achieve more than just improving existing uses and facilities.

POLICY 4 TOWN CENTRES

Town centres should be the preferred locations for developments that attract many trips. Their vitality and viability will be maintained and strengthened and the priorities will be to:

i)   secure an appropriate range of shopping and service facilities;

ii)   improve accessibility to those facilities, recognising the particular role that passenger transport can make with the centre as a hub;

iii)   improve security and safety;

iv)   encourage housing and mixed-use development;

v)   provide for a range of cultural, leisure and social facilities;

vi)   provide a high quality environment.

Appropriate uses which provide for a diverse range of activities throughout the day and evening will be encouraged, subject to other policies of this Plan. Measures to mitigate the impact of traffic will be encouraged.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Green Belt

106.   A Metropolitan Green Belt around London was first proposed in 1935 and the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act enabled Green Belt proposals to be incorporated in the first development plans. Government policy on Green Belts was first published in 1955 and its current stance is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 on 'Green Belts' (PPG2), last revised in 1995. More than any other planning policy, the maintenance of Green Belts has engendered public respect and support for the system of town and country planning in the United Kingdom.

107.   There are five purposes of including land in Green Belts:

i)   to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
ii)   to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
iii)   to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
iv)   to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
v)   to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other land.

108.   The original Green Belt in Hertfordshire was based on proposals in Abercrombies's Greater London Plan of 1944, and covered a ring around the Capital south of a line roughly from Hemel Hempstead to St Albans and Hertford. Successive Structure Plan Reviews have extended the Green Belt in the County outwards along the main communication corridors radiating out of London. The last major extension was approved in the 1986 Review, adding about 5,000 hectares along the Stort corridor as far as Bishop's Stortford. All but one of the 29 main settlements listed in Policy 6 are now tightly constrained by the Green Belt. In 1997 the Green Belt in Hertfordshire covered 81,300 hectares, about 60% of the County excluding urban areas.

109.   The first part of Policy 5 deals with the extent of the Green Belt. Hertfordshire has complete local plan coverage and detailed Green Belt boundaries are defined in all the local plans. It is therefore no longer considered necessary to describe the boundary in Structure Plan policy as it has in the past, though the general extent of the Green Belt is shown on the Key Diagram.

110.   An essential characteristic of the Green Belt is its permanence and its protection in Hertfordshire must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead, with the Structure Plan providing the strategic policy framework for planning at local level. There will be no Countywide review of either inner or outer Green Belt boundaries.

111.   The general extent of Green Belts should be altered only in exceptional circumstances taken into consideration when the relevant structure or unitary plans are reviewed. Exceptional circumstances in Hertfordshire were demonstrated at the 1997 Examination in Public. These concerned the level of additional housing development which is required in the County, but which cannot all be provided through the main strategy of planned regeneration within existing urban areas. Consequently Policy 5 makes provision for limited

peripheral development in accordance with criteria in Policy 7 and to allow for strategic developments west of the A1(M) at Stevenage and at Hemel Hempstead (Policy 8).

112.   Policy 5 also allows for minor adjustments to the Green Belt boundary to secure a more sustainable pattern of development and activities within towns. Any adjustments of this kind would have to be justified by exceptional circumstances and the number of sites released is expected to be low. Further context is provided in the text introducing Policy 7 on the main development strategy.

113.   Policy 5 makes provision for an extension of the Green Belt to contain development west of the A1(M) at Stevenage in line with Policy 8. This will have the effect of designating as Green Belt the whole of the area south of the A505 to the existing Green Belt boundary. Elsewhere, provision is also made for a more limited extension of the Green Belt in the Markyate area, up to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This will contain any development at Markyate, minimise coalescence between Luton and settlements in Hertfordshire, and aid the regeneration of Luton and Dunstable. The AONB provides protection for the area further west.

114.   The combined area of the Green Belt extensions west of the A1(M) at Stevenage and at Markyate is about 5,600 hectares, subject to detailed definition in local plan reviews. The general extent of these extensions is indicated on the Key Diagram. The net effect of the extensions and the much more limited Green Belt releases linked to Policies 7 and 8 will be to increase Green Belt cover from 60% to about 63% of the County, excluding urban areas.

115.   The last part of Policy 5 deals with development control and priorities for the use and management of land in the Green Belt. The priorities are mostly as set out in PPG2, but with the addition of the reference to support for the objectives of Watling Chase Community Forest (Policy 51). Policy 5 has been worded so as to be entirely consistent with national policy guidance as contained in PPG2. For this reason there is no reference in Policy 5 to the various kinds of circumstances which, exceptionally, may justify development that would not normally be permitted within the Green Belt.

116.   Local plans have already addressed the scope for redevelopment of some major existing developed sites within the Hertfordshire Green Belt, including most of the former psychiatric hospitals. Annex C of PPG2 and other relevant national policy guidance provide criteria to assess, through the review of local plans, whether there may be potential for appropriate redevelopment at any of the remaining major developed sites in the Green Belt.

POLICY 5 GREEN BELT

A Green Belt will be maintained in the south of the County as part of a Green Belt about 12-15 miles deep around London with limited extensions along the main radial corridors and around the towns, as indicated on the Key Diagram. The Green Belt will also be maintained in the County to the east of Luton, as part of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt. The precise boundaries of the Green Belt, as modified in accordance with the following provisions of this policy, shall be as defined in district local plans.

Boundary Reviews linked to Policies 6 and 7

Boundaries of the Green Belt around towns may be reviewed in local plans to identify land at settlements listed in Policy 6 for the purposes of limited peripheral development under Policy 7. In addition, minor adjustments may be considered in reviews to secure a more sustainable pattern of development and activities within these settlements.

Individual adjustments linked to Policies 6 and 7 will need to be fully justified by reference to the criterion of exceptional circumstances indicated in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 'Green Belts' (PPG2). Proposals should demonstrate that they contribute to sustainability objectives, and must be part of a comprehensive planning approach to deliver these objectives. In particular, housing, employment and retailing development will only be appropriate as part of this comprehensive approach, and where it can be clearly demonstrated that the relevant needs can best be accommodated by development as proposed.

Boundary Reviews linked to Policy 8

Green Belt boundaries will be reviewed with an eye to exclusions to allow for the strategic housing developments for which provision is made under Policy 8. In the case of development west of the A1(M) at Stevenage the review will take account of the long term possibility of a total development of 10,000 dwellings. The following provisos apply to areas for exclusion:

i.   the limits of that west of the A1(M) at Stevenage shall be set north of Langley and Newton Wood, east of the B 656 and south of St Ippolyts, and be defined so as to preclude coalescence with nearby settlements;

ii.   those in Dacorum shall be on the periphery of Hemel Hempstead, subject to possible limited exclusions at Berkhamsted and Kings Langley; coalescence with Redbourn, Potten End and other nearby settlements is to be avoided.

Safeguarded Land

Any land released from the Green Belt in accordance with this policy but not planned for development during the period of the local plan should be safeguarded in that Plan, and generally referred to as 'safeguarded land' or as an 'area of special restraint'.

Green Belt Extensions

The Green Belt will be extended to include the following areas as indicated on the Key Diagram:

i.   an area in the neighbourhood of Markyate bounded by the existing Green Belt to the east, the Chilterns AONB to the west and the County boundary to the north;

ii.   an extension designed to contain development west of the A1(M) at Stevenage and bounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt to the south, the Luton Green Belt to the west and the A505 to the north.   Continued ....

Development Control and Priorities

In the Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development and permission will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for purposes other than those detailed in PPG2. Local plans may list settlements within the Green Belt where infilling will be permitted under the guidelines contained in PPG2 and in accordance with Policy 6 of this Plan. Subject to compliance with the criteria in paragraph 3.8 of PPG2, re-use of existing buildings within the Green Belt is not an inappropriate form of development, though the acceptability of re-use in any particular case will also fall to be considered in the light of other relevant policies and considerations, in particular traffic impact.

Throughout the Green Belt priorities for the use of land are to:

i)   provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;

ii)   provide opportunities for outdoor sport, and outdoor recreation near urban areas;

iii)   retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes near to where people live;

iv)   improve damaged and derelict land;

v)   secure the nature conservation interest;

vi)   retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses; and

vii)   support the objectives of Watling Chase Community Forest.

Development which is permitted within the Green Belt, and management of land and activities within it, should aim to contribute to these priorities.

Settlement Pattern, Urban Concentration and Planned Regeneration

117.   The settlement pattern of Hertfordshire is characterised by a number of small to medium sized towns, each with a range of facilities and surrounded by accessible open countryside. In parts of the County, notably the south and west, the bands of countryside between towns are narrow and are only maintained by strict implementation of Green Belt policies. None of the County's towns are completely self-sufficient in terms of providing a full range of employment, social, leisure and shopping facilities for its residents and there are high levels of interaction, and therefore movement, between the towns. Nevertheless, most of Hertfordshire's settlements have managed to retain some individual character. It is this pattern of distinct and diverse communities, each capable of supporting an appropriate range of housing, employment, leisure and shopping facilities, on which the development strategy in this Plan seeks to build.

118.   The strategy aims at broadly maintaining the general settlement pattern in Hertfordshire, while making the best use of the developed resource which our towns represent.   This approach will take account of the major changes which could arise in activities and land use over the next twenty years and seeks to bring forward development within the context of an integrated, planned and long-term approach, with development being used as a positive agent of change.   The principal element of the strategy is to continue to concentrate development within the main existing urban areas through a process of 'planned regeneration'.   The main urban areas are listed in Policy 6.   All of these have a population greater than 7,000.

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119.   Policy 6 also allows local plans to identify smaller settlements within and beyond the Green Belt where limited development may be appropriate to maintain the vitality of the area, but taking account of whether such development is in accordance with sustainability principles.

120.   In other small settlements and in rural areas beyond the Green Belt generally, development will be accommodated to support the facilities and services needed and meet the employment and housing needs for that settlement and its surrounding area only.   Such genuinely local needs may include re-use of suitable buildings and other appropriate development to support rural enterprise, tied dwellings for those engaged in rural businesses such as farming, and affordable housing under rural 'exceptions' policies.

POLICY 6 SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND URBAN CONCENTRATION

Development will generally be concentrated in the following settlements and in accordance with local plans:

Abbots Langley	**Letchworth**
Baldock	**Potters Bar (including Little Heath)**
Berkhamsted	**Radlett**
Bishop's Stortford	**Rickmansworth**
Borehamwood	**Royston**
Bushey	**Sawbridgeworth**
Cheshunt	**South Oxhey, Carpenders Park and Eastbury**
Chorleywood	**St Albans**
Croxley Green	**Stevenage**
Harpenden	**Tring**
Hatfield	**Waltham Cross**
Hemel Hempstead	**Ware**
Hertford	**Watford**
Hitchin	**Welwyn Garden City**
Hoddesdon	

Other settlements may be selected in local plans within and beyond the Green Belt where limited development may be appropriate to maintain the vitality of the area. The identification of these settlements should demonstrate that sustainability objectives will be met by development which will take place. Within the Green Belt these settlements should be specified as inset (that is excluded from the Green Belt), where development

will be limited to that which is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of their character and the maintenance of their Green Belt boundary.

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Development in smaller settlements, and in rural areas beyond the Green Belt, will be accommodated only to support the facilities and services needed and meet the employment and housing needs for that settlement and its surrounding area only.

Planned Regeneration - the Main Development Strategy

121.   The main element of the County's development strategy is planned regeneration and this is covered by Policy 7. The term 'planned regeneration' can be understood quite simply as bringing about development and other physical changes within existing urban areas in order to provide for changing human needs, in line with the sustainability objectives of this Plan. Physical regeneration of the structure of urban areas will be gradual and renewal needs to respect existing built heritage and other valued environmental assets in towns.

122.   Planned regeneration is regarded as the most sustainable approach to meeting most development needs. It is part of a wider process of what has been termed 'urban renaissance', which is now being pursued across the United Kingdom. As well as concentrating the energy of new investment in development within existing urban areas, 'renaissance' also encompasses equally important social and economic action necessary to improve the overall quality of urban life. In turn, making towns much more attractive places in which to live and work can be expected to relieve the long standing pressures for green field development.

123.   Planned regeneration involves far more than just dealing with the needs for additional housing development. Whilst adequate housing is vitally important, this is only one among many types of development for which provision needs to be made within the existing urban areas.   Regeneration must also take into account the development needs of business, education, health services, various forms of institutional care, leisure, shopping and community uses, as well as transportation, other infrastructure needs and improvements to townscape and public open space.

124.   **Planned** regeneration implies both shaping of development that would happen in any case, including so called 'windfall' opportunities for housing, and also acting to help bring forward development which might otherwise not happen. The regeneration process must avoid the potential negative effects of urban intensification and, positively, make the most of the benefits which can accrue from development. Thus opportunities will be sought to bring into productive use land and buildings which are currently under-used or derelict, avoid development which results in a net loss of open space and manage the conversion or redevelopment of larger houses and other suitable buildings to dwelling types which most closely match changing household needs. The creation of new open spaces, improvements in circulation patterns and encouragement of multiple use of sites and buildings at accessible locations should be aimed for.

125.   An important element of the regeneration process will be community involvement in the local plan process, including inputs though comprehensive settlement appraisals. At a more detailed level there will need to be more community participation in shaping individual

development briefs and proposals for specific sites. The intention will be planned evolution of different areas in line with a shared framework for progressive change. Regeneration will not involve wholesale redevelopment that would require forced removal of residents or businesses to allow demolition of whole neighbourhoods.

126. The regeneration strategy will involve several elements:

i) review of local plans, preferably informed by comprehensive settlement appraisals, with planning briefs providing a more detailed development framework for certain areas or particular sites;

ii) involvement of all sections of the community in formulating proposals, including landowners, local businesses and developers as well as residents;

iii) assembly by developers of viable parcels of land in different ownerships to enable development to proceed, normally through voluntary agreements;

iv) recognition that all developments should be integrated within the local plan framework, but that:
   - some developments will come forward as a result of the market;
   - some developments will be viable but have blockages (such as infrastructure constraints or access problems) which could be overcome through co-ordination and pump-priming with public sector support;
   - some developments will be desirable or indeed vital, but will not happen directly through the market and so will require some form of public subsidy (for example affordable housing provided through a registered social landlord);

v) a more integrated and planned utilisation of the property holdings of public bodies, which would be a useful catalyst in the process and which will also need to take into account service delivery benefits which could result.

127. The County Council considers that substantial progress with planned regeneration will be greatly facilitated by comprehensive settlement appraisals or, preferably, the much broader whole settlement strategy approach. It is also recognised that the information required, the detailed local plan policies and the implementation mechanisms needed to ensure planned regeneration brings forward high quality development in an acceptable manner will all take some time to mature. Structure Plan Policies 1 to 7 together provide the strategic planning framework for these processes to be taken forward. Progress with key aspects of planned regeneration will be carefully monitored.

Limited Peripheral Development

128. As part of the overall development package for a town, Policy 7 allows for the review of local plans to include proposals for limited peripheral development providing that three important criteria in this policy are satisfied. These criteria are to ensure that any peripheral development is absolutely necessary and planned as an integral part of the overall regeneration process.

129. It will be for the district councils to decide what scale of development is 'limited', having regard to local circumstances and the scale of any development needs which are in accordance with this Plan but which cannot be provided satisfactorily within existing urban areas.

130. In reviewing local plans, the choice of sites for any limited peripheral development should be informed by comparative appraisal of the respective sustainability advantages and disadvantages of different options.

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131.   The review of local plans may also consider whether minor adjustments to the boundary of urban areas could help secure a more sustainable pattern of development and activities within them.   For example, in exceptional circumstances this might involve relocation of an existing urban land use to an appropriate peripheral site to enable the vacated site to be re-used in a way which makes a substantial contribution to fulfilling the sustainability aims of this Plan.

132.   All but one of the 29 main settlements listed in Policy 6 are tightly constrained by Green Belt.   Therefore, providing exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, limited reviews of the inner Green Belt boundary around some towns will form part of the overall approach set by Policy 7, in accordance with the corresponding provision for this in Policy 5 on the Green Belt.

POLICY 7   MAIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Development will be brought forward mainly through planned regeneration in the towns listed in Policy 6.   Ways to increase the potential for high quality development through regeneration will be advanced and kept under continuous review in local plans.

Limited peripheral development will only be acceptable:

i)   where planned regeneration opportunities have been fully explored;   and

ii)   where this can provide demonstrable sustainability benefits to the town;   and

iii)   where this development is planned within the context of the town as a whole.

All proposals will be brought forward through the local plan process.   Proposals will be demonstrably practicable, based on the sustainability aims and land use objectives set out in this plan and include wide community involvement in the planning process.

HOUSING

Background

133.   One of the basic sustainability objectives of this Plan is to provide adequate and suitable development to meet the County's housing needs.   Statistical projections of population change and household formation provide a starting point for considering what provision the Plan should make for housing development.

134.   The most recent Government projections indicate that Hertfordshire's population will grow from around 976,000 in 1991 to about 1,079,000 in 2011, an increase of about 10%. (See Figure 5 in Introduction.) The main reason for this growth is increasing life expectancy rather than any increase in the birth rate. In the longer term, the total population is expected to stabilise and possibly to fall slightly after 2021.

135.   If current trends in household formation and the long term decline in average household size continue, then the percentage growth in the number of households is likely to be markedly higher than percentage growth in population.   The continuing growth in the number of households, particularly single person households, is due to a number of trends which have been evident for some time. These include an increase in the proportion of young people wishing and able to live away from the parental home, divorce, an increasing proportion of people who do not marry or cohabit but choose to live alone, and the increasing number of older people continuing to live independent lives and therefore who occupy homes which otherwise would be passed on sooner to others.

136.   Both the Government and the County Council have produced statistical projections of the growth in the number of households expected during the Plan period and beyond. (See Figure 7 in Introduction.) All such projections need to be treated with considerable caution, as they depend on making a number of difficult assumptions about a range of complex technical issues. An increase of about 71,500 households between 1991 and 2011 has been projected on the basis of the latest demographic information. This assumes close to nil-net migration between Hertfordshire and other areas. Theoretically, this level of household growth would equate to about 74,000 additional dwellings (i.e. both houses and flats). The calculations take into account the small proportion of households who share a dwelling with one or more other households, and assume that because of moves, renovation, etc, about 3.8% of dwellings would remain vacant at any one time.

137.   The level of dwelling provision which should be made during the Plan period 1991 to 2011 was considered in detail at an 'Examination in Public' (EIP) into the draft Structure Plan Review during 1997. The latest household projections were clearly an important consideration at the EIP. However they were only one of the factors considered, other particularly important issues being:

- doubts about the technical reliability of the assumptions on which demographic projections are based;
- the Government's most recent Regional Planning Guidance, which includes guidance on the rate of housing provision in each County on the basis of a number of considerations in

addition to household projections (such as employment trends in different parts of the Region);

- environmental and other constraints on development in Hertfordshire, notably the extent of the Green Belt;
- the fact that many households are not expected to be able to afford to rent or purchase suitable housing on the open market without an element of public subsidy. Because of the scale of 'affordable housing' needs and concern as to whether there will be sufficient subsidies, it is unclear what proportion of households in need will be able to gain access to a home of their own in Hertfordshire.

138. In the draft Structure Plan Review which was published in 1996, the County Council proposed provision of a net increase of 65,000 dwellings during the 20 year period 1991 to 2011. This equates to an average annual rate of construction of about 3,250 new dwellings per annum. An increase of 65,000 is some 9,000 less than the 74,000 indicated, in the absence of all other considerations, by the latest household projections.

139. The independent Panel which held the EIP concluded that the current Regional Guidance implies a figure of 66,660, but considered that even this would pose significant environmental implications. The Panel recommended that a better approach for the time being would be to work on the assumption of reducing the vacancy rate in line with a change in Government policy since the current Regional Planning Guidance was published. The Panel concluded that provision of 65,000 more dwellings combined with a reduction in the vacancy rate from 3.8% to 3.5% would result in the accommodation of approximately the same number of households as would an increase in dwellings in line with Regional Guidance and assuming a vacancy rate staying at the current, higher rate of 3.8%. Having taken into consideration all the available evidence, the EIP Panel endorsed provision for a net increase of 65,000 additional dwellings during the period 1991 to 2011.

140. The EIP Panel has pointed out that the assumption of a slight decline in the vacancy rate achieves nothing in itself, and that the actual rate will largely reflect the operation of the market. However, given that adoption of the 65,000 figure will represent a figure at the lower end of the range of possible demand, the resulting pressures on the housing market in the county will tend, other things being equal, to reduce the vacancy rate.

141. District councils are the local housing authorities and through their Housing Strategies they already monitor the vacancy rate in council and housing association owned stock. The districts also take action to reduce vacancy in council-controlled housing stock. However, it is central rather than local government which needs to take the initiative on key actions to further reduce vacancy in owner-occupied and private rented housing. The County Council intends to monitor changes in the overall vacancy rate during the Plan period, in both the market and social/affordable housing sectors.

Planned Dwelling Requirement, 1991 to 2011 and Beyond

142.   Policy 9 in this Plan makes provision for the same dwelling requirement as that proposed in the deposit version and subsequently endorsed by the EIP Panel, i.e. development of a net increase of 65,000 dwellings during the 20 year Plan period 1991 to 2011.

143.   Figure 12 shows the actual annual rate of house building (net completions) since 1968, compared with horizontal lines which show the *planned* average annual rate of provision in the original 1976 Structure Plan, the previous Plan (1991 Alterations) and this Plan. The graph shows that the actual rate of house building has fluctuated strongly with changes in economic circumstances and market conditions. However, on average the annual rate of house building has exceeded the planned annual rate of provision. During the first seven years of the current plan period, 1991 to March 1998, the average rate of completions has been about 3,800 per annum compared with the 3,250 per annum average which is implied by a requirement of 65,000 over 20 years. This implies that, allowing for market fluctuations, the average annual rate of house building should continue on a gradual downward trend if planned provision is not to be exceeded during the Plan period. The County Council will encourage the review of local plans to include phasing policies which seek to ensure that an appropriate supply of housing land is released for development during the later years of the Plan period.

Figure 12: Annual rate of house building in Hertfordshire
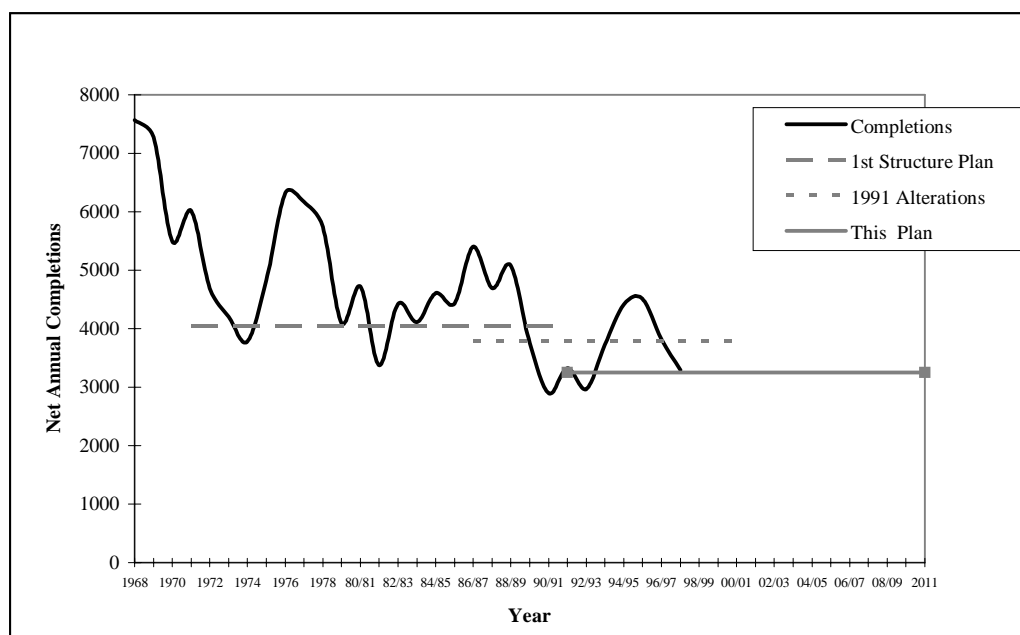
Source: Hertfordshire County Council Environment Department Information Service

144.   Before considering the development strategy to provide the 65,000 during the Plan period to 2011 and the resulting distribution of these between districts, it is important to be clear about the wider and longer term regional planning context. SERPLAN is currently preparing advice to the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, in the form

of a new Regional Strategy for the South East for the period to 2016. Following consideration of this, the Government is expected to issue new Regional Planning Guidance during 1999 or 2000.

145. The new Regional Guidance for the South East is expected to require increased housing provision in the South East Region as a whole during the period up to 2016. The increase will take into account social, economic and environmental considerations as well as new household projections which are being prepared. The Regional increase in housing development to 2016 will need to be apportioned between counties and unitary authority areas and at present it is uncertain how much more housing Hertfordshire will be asked to provide. The County Council envisages a continuing reduction in the annual rate of development in the years after 2011.

146. When it becomes clear how much additional housing the Government wants to be provided in Hertfordshire during the period to 2016, the County Council in partnership with district councils and other interested organisations will need to consider the planning implications and what action is to be taken. Therefore, as stated in Policy 9, the County Council will review the need for alterations to the Structure Plan Review when new Regional Planning Guidance for the South East is issued. Work will probably need to begin around the year 2000 on alterations concerning dwelling provision to 2016.

147. The total of 65,000 additional dwellings during the Plan period to 2011 can be misleading. This is because a substantial proportion of this total requirement has already been built since 1991 (termed 'completions'), while sites for many more either already have planning permission or are allocated for housing development in adopted local plans (these sources, together, being termed 'commitments'). The County Council publishes a Structure Plan Annual Monitoring Report which tracks the numbers of dwelling completions and new commitments each year, and the outstanding number of remaining commitments at the end of each year.

148. When the development strategy in the Structure Plan Review was being prepared during 1995 to 96, information was available for completions during the first four years of the Plan period and for outstanding commitments as at 31 March 1995. At that time, 44,000 out of the 65,000 dwelling requirement had either already been completed since 1991 or had sites identified. This left a shortfall of 21,000 dwellings still to be planned in order to provide a total of 65,000 during the Plan period.

Additional Dwelling Provision Through Planned Regeneration

149. A substantial proportion of dwelling completions and new commitments which have come forward since 1991 have been within existing urban areas, as had been the case throughout the 1980's. Urban housing sites have included both those which had been identified in local plans and many previously unforeseen 'windfall' opportunities. As the main development strategy is planned regeneration, there needs to be a continuing and reinvigorated emphasis on seeking more opportunities to provide quality homes on appropriate sites within existing urban areas.

150. The main opportunities for additional dwelling provision through planned regeneration are:

- conversion of larger houses into flats;
- house extensions, e.g. for 'granny annexes' or to enable smaller houses to be converted to flats;
- redevelopment for housing or mixed use of old industrial and other business areas which will no longer be needed for employment purposes;
- redevelopment for housing or mixed use of other 'windfall' opportunities where the present use of a site is no longer required or is to be relocated;
- finding space for more flats in and on the edges of town centres, for example over shops, by converting vacant offices and by redevelopment of other sites which become available
- sites outside centres where proximity to good passenger transport may enable high density development coupled reduced provision for car parking;
- conversion to housing of attractive older buildings for which new uses need to be found;
- continuing the process of 'infilling' on appropriate sites in established residential areas, providing the standard of design is high and the resulting residential environment is acceptable for both existing and new residents;
- where appropriate and with the agreement of residents, the comprehensive redevelopment at higher density of existing residential sites and perhaps whole neighbourhoods, providing that a high quality residential environment can be secured;
- more generally, encouraging design innovation and changes in public attitudes, e.g. in regard to development density, basement parking and possibly some 'car free' residential environments close to good passenger transport.

151. The County Council's original intention in 1995 was to provide most of the 21,000 shortfall through the main strategy of planned regeneration within existing urban areas. This approach would have required little further housing development on green field sites.

152. Though supportive of planned regeneration in principle, all ten district councils and the Government Office for the Eastern Region felt that for a number of reasons it would not be practicable to provide more than about 10,000 of the 21,000 dwelling shortfall within existing built-up areas by 2011. Consequently the County and district councils have worked jointly, and intend to continue to do so, with the aim of coming to a better and shared understanding about dwelling potential though planned regeneration.

153. The level of dwelling potential through regeneration up to 2011 was the subject of research studies[2] jointly commissioned by the County and District Councils in 1995 and the subject was one of the main issues debated at the EIP in March 1997. In the light of all the evidence and the aspirational element of Government policy to promote redevelopment of previously developed land, the EIP Panel concluded that it would be reasonable to plan on the basis of achieving about 14,000 through regeneration in the remaining period up to 2011. This left a balance of about 7,000 which the Panel considered would need to be found on green field sites in order to make up the 21,000 shortfall. The County Council broadly accepted this conclusion and the dwelling distribution in Policy 9 is on the basis that by 2011 it will be possible to provide at least 14,000 and possibly up to about 16,000 more dwellings

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[2] '*Dwelling Provision through Planned Regeneration*', by Chesterton Consulting and Urban Initiatives, and '*Long Term Employment Land Needs*' by Pieda Consultants.

through planned regeneration. Districts will have flexibility, if absolutely necessary, to make up small shortfalls in their allocations through limited peripheral development in accordance with Policy 7.

154. Whilst planned regeneration is the main element of the development strategy, the County Council recognises that there are barriers to pursuing such an approach through the current planning process and in the context of existing national planning guidance. The implementation tools available to local authorities and others are also somewhat lacking. For these reasons it is not possible to predict exactly how many dwellings it will be possible to provide through regeneration by 2011. It is therefore the County Council's intention to continue to challenge the Government to provide a stronger policy and financial framework to support regeneration, and to continue to seek make practical progress in partnership with other organisations involved in planning and development processes.

155. Several strands of work will be taken forward, in particular:

i)   continue joint working with the district councils and other local partners in order to study urban development capacity, identify more regeneration opportunities, support and publicise best practice, and thereby seek to increase the contribution which regeneration makes to dwelling provision;

ii)   following the Government's encouraging policy statement 'Planning for the Communities of the Future' published in February 1998, press the Government to tackle obstacles in the way of promoting planned regeneration, particularly by making the national, regional and local planning processes more supportive;

iii)   promote partnerships with developers and other organisations, e.g. to overcome obstacles to implementation in such matters such as land assembly to bring forward practical development schemes.

iv)   closely monitor dwelling completions and new commitments, broken down by development type, previous land use and other relevant criteria, to inform ongoing assessment at regional, county and district level of how much more potential there will be for dwelling provision within existing built-up areas during the rest of the Plan period to 2011 and thereafter. This will be a key issue when the first alterations to this Plan are prepared, as the greater the provision through regeneration the less will be the need, if any, to release more green field land for housing development in the period up to 2016.

156. At the time of publication of this Plan, the County Council estimates that about 60% of the 65,000 dwellings to be provided during the overall Plan period, 1991 to 2011, will be achieved through regeneration within the main existing built-up areas. However, this takes into account the significant areas of green field development which were already allocated in local plans when this Plan was prepared. Of the remaining shortfall for which sites have yet to be identified by district councils in order to reach 65,000 by 2011, it is estimated that it should be possible to provide about 68% on previously developed land of all kinds. This compares with a national target set by the present Government in 'Planning for the Communities of the Future' that at least 60% of future housing development should be on previously developed land.

157.   The first three years' monitoring data for Hertfordshire since 1995 are encouraging. About 78% of new dwelling commitments (2,796 out of 3,579) arising during this short period are within the main Policy 6 towns. Only 4% (155) are on green field sites on the periphery of these settlements. About 18% (628) are in other areas, and in fact some of these are on previously developed land (e.g. redevelopment sites within villages). The results of this monitoring are illustrated in Figure 13.

Figure 13: New Dwelling Commitments, April 1995 to March 1998
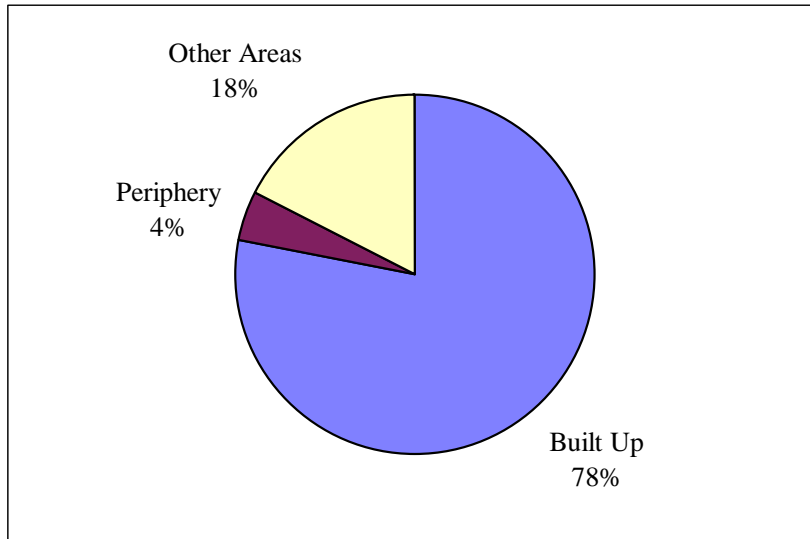
Source: Hertfordshire County Council Environment Department Information Service

Strategic Green Field Locations for Supplementary Housing Development

158.   Whilst the main focus of the development strategy is planned regeneration with limited peripheral development, the County Council reluctantly accepted the need to identify strategic green field locations to make up the gap between the shortfall of 21,000 identified in 1995 and the estimate of the number of additional dwellings it will be realistic to provide through the main strategy (Policy 7).

159.   In January 1996 the County Council approved general principles to guide the location of strategic scale housing development. ('Strategic' is defined loosely as any broad location at which at least 500 or more dwellings would be provided in addition to existing commitments in the locality.) The principles, which were based on the Plan's basic sustainability aims and had the general support of the district councils, were as follows:

i)   Protect critical natural and cultural assets of national importance
ii)   Enlarge existing towns rather than create new settlements
iii)   Choose locations close to good access onto main roads and railways
iv)   Avoid aggravating congestion in the worst affected areas
v)   Maintain the form and functions of the Green Belt
vi)   Follow Regional Planning Guidance
vii)   Meet local housing needs
viii)   Minimise depletion of natural resources

ix)   Minimise damage to natural and cultural assets of local importance
x)   Provide contingency for development needs beyond 2011
xi)   Contribute to achieving strategic or local planning objectives
xii)   Avoid hazardous installations

160.   Different types of possible location for strategic development were considered against each of the principles as part of the environmental appraisal work in preparing the Structure Plan Review. It was concluded that:

- The principles point strategic development away from the Chilterns AONB, its fringes and all rural locations where development would be 'free-standing' rather than an expansion of an existing town.
- Considered together, the principles do not point convincingly to any one type of location as indisputably the most appropriate for strategic development. Indeed there are conflicts between some of the principles. In particular, any location which satisfies Principle 5 in regard to the Green Belt (and in that respect also satisfies Principle 6 on Regional Guidance) will be bound to be unsatisfactory in regard to at least some of the other principles.
- Principle 4 points strategic development away from the south and south west of the County and guides it to New Towns which have relatively well planned modern road systems.
- On balance, the principles suggest the expansion of large New Towns to be preferable to the expansion of other towns. Whilst New Town expansion would conflict with Green Belt policy, this would be less damaging to the form and functions of the Green Belt than would be Green Belt severances elsewhere, particularly across the south of the County.

161.   On the basis of this assessment, the County Council published a public consultation document in March 1996 which put forward two provisionally preferred locations. After considering responses to that consultation, the preferred locations were confirmed as expansion of Hemel Hempstead and a location west of the A1(M) at Stevenage. Part of the latter location is within Stevenage Borough but much of it is within North Hertfordshire District, so responsibility for planning the development is shared.

162.   The merits and demerits of these and other locations put forward by landowners and developers were debated at length at the EIP in March 1997. The EIP Panel endorsed the choice of Hemel Hempstead and, on a much larger scale of development, west of the A1(M) at Stevenage. The Panel considered that the proposals for west of the A1(M) at Stevenage represent the best way forward to meeting the bulk of the remaining requirement not provided elsewhere and that none of the alternatives put forward come near, individually or collectively, to matching the advantages of this location.

163.   Subsequently, in 1998, the Government confirmed that it was content that the proposals for Hemel Hempstead and west of the A1(M) at Stevenage had been sufficiently justified, that the exceptional circumstances to justify Green Belt changes had been demonstrated, and that the Plan represents the best balance for achieving an adequate supply of housing land whilst retaining and protecting the countryside and other environmental assets.

Hemel Hempstead

164.   At Hemel Hempstead there is considered to be scope to provide about an additional 1,000 dwellings spread between several sites around the periphery of the town, all within Dacorum Borough. This overall level of expansion could be achieved without damage to natural and cultural assets of national importance. It will be for the Borough Council through its Local Plan Review to decide which sites will be most appropriate and how many dwellings will be provided on each. One area being considered is land on the north east side of the town, at Three Cherry Trees Lane, which is not in the Green Belt. Currently this land is all allocated for employment development. However a mixed development including some housing is now considered appropriate. Elsewhere on the town's periphery, land will have to be released from the Green Belt and so a limited inner Green Belt review will be needed. Provision for this is made in Policy 5.

West of A1(M) at Stevenage

165.   Whereas the scope for expansion of Hemel Hempstead is limited, it would be possible to concentrate large scale strategic development west of the A1(M) at Stevenage. Up to about 10,000 dwellings and associated facilities could be accommodated here within a broad location north of Langley and Newton Wood, east of the B656 and south of St Ippolyts, with the urban boundary defined so as to preclude coalescence with nearby settlements.

166.   A community of this scale would be self supporting in terms of neighbourhood facilities which would be provided as part of the planned package, such as schools, local shops, local leisure and recreation facilities and some employment, but would be close to the higher order functions in the rest of the town. Despite being on the other side of the motorway from the rest of Stevenage, this location is closer to the town centre, main employment areas, main leisure facilities and railway station than other potential locations on the edge of the town, and thus will result in shorter journeys and encourage more journeys by means other than the private car. Furthermore, the development will have excellent rail access to the South East Region and beyond, particularly as a result of the ThamesLink 2000 service improvements.

167.   Access to Stevenage town centre and then the primary road network will be via crossings of the A1(M). A new junction onto the A1(M) would be undesirable and will not be required. However, due to a number of highway engineering and environmental constraints, it will be necessary to fundamentally reappraise how the road network operates in the Stevenage area, how it can be modified and improved, and therefore what engineering works will be required as an integral part of the development.

168.   The planning of development west of the A1(M) will be brought forward through the review of the Stevenage and North Herts Local Plans. This will require a master strategy and planning brief to be prepared and negotiated with the developers by a joint local authority partnership. The partnership will need to consist of North Hertfordshire District Council and Stevenage Borough Council, which are the local planning and housing authorities, and the County Council which takes the lead in transportation matters as well as the planning of other services, notably education, social services, libraries and fire and rescue, provision for which at this location will need to be considered carefully. Other service providers and local

authorities will also need to be involved, including the East & North Herts Health Authority and Welwyn Hatfield Council, the latter having particular interests in transport and employment issues in the A1(M) corridor.

169.   The master plan for development west of the A1(M) will proceed on the basis of an initial phase of 5,000 dwellings, of which this Plan makes provision for about 3,600 to be built by 2011. About 1,000 of these will be in Stevenage Borough and 2,600 on adjacent land in North Hertfordshire District. However, providing that 3,600 dwellings are planned to be built at this location during the current Plan period to 2011, the detailed dwelling split here between North Herts and Stevenage may be varied from 1,000 / 2,600 and is to be determined in the relevant local plans. Policy 9 makes provision for this and the precise split will be informed by the detailed planning work to establish what will be the most sustainable form and layout of development.

170.   A lead in time of several years will be needed for consultations, detailed design, and all the attendant negotiations which have to be completed before construction of infrastructure can begin. Consequently the first dwellings are unlikely to be ready for occupation before 2004.

171.   The master plan will also provide for a possible second phase of another 5,000 dwellings in the longer term. If this were to go ahead, a total of about 10,000 homes would be provided at this location by around the year 2021.

172.   Thus the opportunity has been taken in this Plan to provide scope for some of any green field development which may be needed after 2011, while also ensuring this would come forward as part of a package which is comprehensively planned from the outset. In line with this far-sighted approach, Policy 5 provides for the forthcoming review of both inner and outer Green Belt boundaries to take account of the long term possibility of a total development of 10,000 dwellings.

173.   A decision as to the appropriate scale of development beyond 2011 will be taken when the first alterations to the Structure Plan Review are brought forward around the year 2000. A key consideration will be the content of new Regional Planning Guidance about the level and distribution of housing development in the South East to 2016 and beyond.

174.   The long term limits to development west of the A1(M) at Stevenage will be contained by a Green Belt boundary in accordance with the provisions of Policy 5. The precise boundary will be defined through Reviews of the North Hertfordshire District and Stevenage Borough Local Plans. A substantial area is likely to be needed for the development of a possible 10,000 dwellings together with all the ancillary development and open space which will be needed within the developed area. Consideration will also need to be given to tree planting and open space provision around the edges of development. These measures will complement the new Green Belt boundary in defining the extent of development and protecting the separate identity and character of existing hamlets around the margins of development.

175.   Provisional survey of the broad location involved has identified a number of ecological, landscape, archaeological, architectural and other features of both national and local importance. Therefore a high quality of design in regard to the overall form, layout and

details of the development will be vital in seeking to prevent or mitigate and compensate for adverse environmental impacts.

176.   Negotiations with developers will have regard to all relevant Structure Plan policies. Policy 2 on the design and provisions of development is particularly important. It states that development will be required to make provision for environmental works, infrastructure and community facilities, services and other needs of sustainable development that are directly related to it and necessary to the grant of planning permission.   It also stipulates that developers will be required to provide or to finance the cost of all such provision which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, including off-site impacts.

177.   Development on the scale which is planned west of the A1(M) at Stevenage should enable significant economies of scale for the developers, making it reasonable to require them to finance a high quality living environment which encourages more sustainable lifestyles and includes a substantial amount of affordable housing to meet identified local needs. (See Policy 10.) Likewise, they will be expected to finance related and necessary off-site works, notably transportation improvements to cope with the increased traffic while enabling a shift away from car use to more sustainable forms of transport in the Stevenage / Hitchin area.

POLICY 8   STRATEGIC LOCATIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Land suitable for strategic housing allocations, together with necessary associated development, will be identified in the following locations indicated on the Key Diagram and excluded from the Green Belt.

District or Borough	Location	Dwellings	
Dacorum **land**	**Hemel Hempstead**	**1,000**	**(at more than one location on the town periphery including at North East Hemel Hempstead which is not Green Belt)**
Stevenage	**West of A1(M)**	**1,000**	
North Hertfordshire	**West of A1(M) at Stevenage**	**2,600**	

The planning of these developments will be brought forward through the review of the relevant local plans.

Master planning briefs will be prepared and negotiated with the developers. This shall be done by a joint local authority partnership of the relevant district and borough councils where more than one is affected. In the case of development west of the A1(M)

at Stevenage, the partnership will include the County Council. Negotiations will have regard to Policy 2 in this Plan and all other relevant development plan policies.

In the case of the development west of the A1(M) at Stevenage, the master plan will provide for:

i)   an initial phase of 5,000 dwellings, some of which to be completed after 2011;

ii)   in the longer term, a possible second phase of a further 5,000 dwellings.

Providing that 3,600 dwellings in the initial phase are planned to be built by 2011, the detailed dwelling split at this location between North Hertfordshire District and Stevenage Borough will be determined in the relevant local plans, informed by agreed master planning work to establish the most sustainable form of development.

District **Dwelling** Distribution

178.   The overall development strategy which has been described and set out in Polices 6, 7 and 8 leads to the dwelling distribution between districts in Policy 9.

POLICY 9 DWELLING DISTRIBUTION, 1991 TO 2011

Local plans will make provision, in accordance with the development strategy as set out in Policies 6, 7 and 8, for a net increase in the period 1991 to 2011 of about 65,000 dwellings distributed as follows:

Broxbourne	**5,400**	
Dacorum	**7,200**	**Includes 1,000 at more than one location on the periphery of Hemel Hempstead in accordance with Policy 8.**
East Hertfordshire	11,100	
Hertsmere	**4,600**	
North Hertfordshire	10,400	**Includes 2,600 west of the A1(M) at Stevenage.**
St Albans	6,300	
Stevenage	5,700	**Includes 1,000 west of A1(M).**
Three Rivers	4,000	
Watford	4,700	
Welwyn Hatfield	5,600	
HERTFORDSHIRE	65,000	**Of which 4,600 at strategic locations identified in Policy 8.**

The exact dwelling allocations for North Hertfordshire and Stevenage may be varied between these two districts, depending on the dwelling split at the location to the west of the A1(M) in accordance with the provisions of Policy 8.

The County Council will review the need for alterations to this Plan when new Regional Planning Guidance for the South East is issued.

179.   By way of clarification, the figures in Policy 9 include substantial housing provision on sites which had already been identified in local plans when this Structure Plan Review was prepared. These sites include north east Stevenage (mostly in North Herts District), part of the former BAe Airfield at Hatfield and safeguarded 'areas of special restraint' at Bishops Stortford and Welwyn Garden City.

180.   Further clarification about the dwelling distribution is provided in the following paragraphs, which outline the County Council's decisions on certain recommendations in the EIP Panel's Report of June 1997.

181.   The deposit draft version of the Structure Plan Review published in July 1996 had proposed it would be possible to build about 5,000 dwellings at the strategic location west of the A1(M) at Stevenage by 2011. However, subsequently the County Council accepted a recommendation of the EIP Panel that 3,600 represents a testing target and is the maximum which it would be prudent to plan to be completed at this location by 2011. Policy 9 reflects this decision, which left a shortfall of about 1,400 (i.e. 5,000 minus 3,600) for which provision needs to be made elsewhere in order to achieve the Countywide requirement of 65,000 dwellings by 2011.

182.   The dwelling allocation to Stevenage Borough has been increased to 5,700 in recognition of potential for some limited additional provision at north Stevenage, in the vicinity of Stevenagebury, though not on a scale to warrant identification in Policy 8. Expansion of Stevenage here would necessitate a local review of the inner Green Belt boundary and would be preferable on sustainability grounds to any further development on the east side, in East Hertfordshire District. The Structure Plan leaves the Borough Council discretion in deciding the precise balance between dwelling provision through planned regeneration and on green field sites. It is hoped that additional regeneration opportunities not foreseen at the time of the EIP will mean that little if any further green field development will be required in the Borough apart from at the location west of the A1(M).

183.   The dwelling allocation to North Hertfordshire District has been increased to 10,400 in recognition of some potential for limited peripheral development in line with Policy 7. The Structure Plan leaves the District Council discretion in deciding the precise balance between dwelling provision through regeneration and on green field sites, and at which settlements any further peripheral development should be located. Again, it is hoped that additional regeneration opportunities not foreseen at the time of the EIP will mean that little if any further green field development will be required in the District apart from at the location to the west of the A1(M) at Stevenage.

184.   The EIP Panel recommended that the dwelling allocation to the City and District of St Albans be increased to 6,700 on the grounds of potential for further dwelling provision in the Napsbury / London Colney area. However, the County Council did not fully accept the EIP Panel's analysis on this matter because of transportation constraints on further development at this general location. Accordingly, the St Albans District allocation was increased only to 6,300. The Structure Plan leaves the District Council discretion in deciding the precise balance between dwelling provision through regeneration and on green field sites, and at which settlements to locate any limited peripheral development in line with Policy 7 which may be necessary. It is hoped that additional regeneration opportunities not foreseen at the

time of the EIP will mean that little if any further green field development will be required anywhere in the District.

185.   Dwelling allocations have also been increased marginally in East Hertfordshire, Three Rivers, Watford and Welwyn Hatfield Districts in order to make up the remainder of the 1,400 for which provision needs to be made. Again, it is hoped that additional regeneration opportunities not foreseen at the time of the EIP will mean that little if any further green field development will be required anywhere in these districts.

186.   Policy 9 supposes that 3,600 dwellings will be built at the strategic location west of the A1(M) at Stevenage by 2011. However it is not completely certain that this will prove possible. This is because any large scale development of this nature requires complex issues to be negotiated and, consequently, unforeseen difficulties might arise which either delay the start of construction or, once started, check the build-up in momentum in the rate of house building. Any significant slippage in progress with development would be likely to affect the North Hertfordshire part of the location more than the smaller part which is within Stevenage Borough.

187.   The County Council considers that it would be unreasonable to expect North Hertfordshire District to make up for any significant under-provision in the event that less than 2,600 dwellings can be constructed in its part of this location by 2011. If this possibility starts to appear likely, then it will be important that North Hertfordshire does not come under pressure (either in its next Local Plan Review or through speculative planning applications) to make up for it by releasing unsuitable sites for housing elsewhere in the District. Therefore, if by about the year 2001 it appears likely that there will be a significant shortfall in planned dwelling provision west of the A1(M) by 2011, then a decision on how this should be made up elsewhere would need to be taken as part of the first alterations to this Plan. However, looking beyond 2011, any unforeseen delays in development west of the A1(M) would not affect the need for master planning and the review of Green Belt boundaries to take account of the long term possibility of a total development of 10,000 dwellings at this location.

Affordable Housing

188.   One of the aims of the Structure Plan is to ensure that housing needs are met. The level of provision and its location are not the only factors in determining this. Housing costs in Hertfordshire are amongst the highest in Britain. While this is not an issue for many Hertfordshire households, there is a substantial number for whom an inability to find suitable and affordable accommodation is a problem. As a consequence many households including families with children are forced to occupy too cramped or otherwise inadequate accommodation. This commonly involves involuntary sharing of a dwelling by more than one household and in some instances the difficulties lead to homelessness.

189.   Circular 6/98 on 'Planning and Affordable Housing' defines the term 'affordable housing' as encompassing both low-cost market and subsidised housing, irrespective of tenure or ownership, that will be available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy homes generally available on the open market.

190.   However, in relatively high cost housing areas such as Hertfordshire, 'low cost' market housing is generally considered to be either inadequate in terms of space standards and/or out of the reach of the majority of low income households which are identified in housing needs assessments carried out by district councils. These identify the main need in Hertfordshire as being subsidised housing for rent though a housing association or other 'registered social landlord'.

191.   The term 'social housing' is widely used to mean the same as 'affordable' housing. However social housing is best understood as a slightly wider term, encompassing any housing which is provided to meet a particular housing need, as opposed to 'general needs'. Social housing therefore includes affordable housing but it also includes other accommodation provided to meet particular needs, which may or may not be provided at below-market cost. Social housing needs may include those of students, elderly persons, people with learning difficulties or physical disabilities, and employees who need to be provided with accommodation at their workplaces.

192.   Construction of 65,000 additional dwellings during the Plan period 1991 to 2011 will result in the total housing stock in Hertfordshire rising to about 461,000 dwellings. A recent study[3] indicates that about 28% of this total housing stock will need to be provided as affordable housing, mainly for rent, if all local housing needs are to be met. However, in 1996 only about 21% of the overall housing stock comprised housing for rent from local authorities and housing associations (a proxy measure for 'affordable' housing). The study indicates that approximately 40,000 more affordable homes would need to be provided in order to meet all local needs for affordable housing in Hertfordshire during the remaining period 1996 to 2011. Increasing the stock of affordable housing need not necessarily be achieved through development. For example, funding could be provided for housing associations to purchase suitable existing owner-occupied housing on the open market. It is important to recognise, however, that measures such as 'Right to Buy' serve to reduce the stock of affordable housing under the control of social landlords. This could exacerbate future shortages if subsidies for additional supply, by whatever means, prove to be inadequate.

193.   The extent to which the forecast shortage of affordable housing can be made up will depend crucially on the level of Government housing subsidies. At present, the main form of 'bricks and mortar' subsidy is Housing Association Grant. This may be provided to enable housing associations to purchase existing housing (either recently built or older stock), as well as to subsidise construction of new affordable housing as part of the 65,000 additional dwelling requirement.

194.   Only about 17% of new dwellings built between 1991 and 1997 were in the affordable housing category. Nevertheless, the planning system is now playing an increasingly important role in the supply of new-build affordable housing, mainly through the negotiation of Section 106 planning agreements in line with Government policy (particularly PPG3 on 'Housing' and Circular 6/98 on 'Planning and Affordable Housing'). It would be unreasonable and unrealistic to expect anything like 40,000 out of the 65,000 dwelling requirement to be provided as 'affordable' as opposed to open market housing. However, it will be reasonable to seek to negotiate a substantial proportion of affordable housing in all new market sector-led developments above the minimum size indicated in Circular 6/98.

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[3] *'Affordable Housing Need in Hertfordshire, 1996 - 2011'*, by Aldbourne Associates, 1996

195.   Circular 6/98 stipulates that in settlements with a population over 3,000 it will be inappropriate for local planning authorities to seek to negotiate any affordable housing as part of developments of less than 25 dwellings (or less than one hectare in area irrespective of the number of dwellings). The County Council is concerned that this threshold size will make it much more difficult to provide affordable housing through the main development strategy of planned regeneration. This is because opportunities to provide housing on previously developed land in existing urban areas will generally be small scale schemes, mostly less than 25 dwellings. However, Circular 6/98 indicates that where exceptional local constraints can be demonstrated it may be appropriate for local planning authorities to seek to adopt a lower threshold in local plans, of between 15 and 25 dwellings.

196.   The basis for local plan policies and negotiations on affordable housing will be fully researched assessments of housing need and the related housing strategies which are prepared and regularly updated by each of the ten district councils in Hertfordshire. The proportion of affordable housing which the district councils will wish to negotiate in market sector-led new developments is likely to vary from district to district on the basis of their individual needs assessments. In taking forward Structure Plan Policy 10 on affordable housing in relevant local plan policies, a figure normally between 25% and 40% affordable housing is considered appropriate for most market sector-led developments. Major green field development sites, including the strategic developments west of the A1(M) at Stevenage and on several sites at Hemel Hempstead, are considered to be key locations for the provision of a substantial proportion of affordable housing for rent.

197.   The approach in Policy 10 towards affordable housing in rural areas, including 'exception sites', is consistent with the Government's advice and more detailed guidance to local authorities in Annex A of PPG 3.

198.   The County Council will closely monitor trends in the provision of affordable housing and will encourage district councils to update local needs surveys and housing strategies on a consistent basis across Hertfordshire.

POLICY 10 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The type and level of need for affordable housing will be identified from local authority housing needs surveys and housing strategies, and targets will be indicated in local plans. Apart for rural exception sites, provision for affordable housing is included in the total level of provision for each district.

In rural areas beyond the Green Belt, local plans should include policies to support small scale affordable housing to meet local needs on land within or adjacent to settlements that is not otherwise proposed for residential development. In rural areas within the Green Belt such development should be within settlements.

Accommodation for People with Physical Disabilities and other Special Needs

199.   Nationally, approximately 1 in 10 of the population has some sort of disability. Most prevalent are people with mobility disabilities. The majority of these people live in their own dwellings rather than other forms of accommodation, something which is likely to become more common place with the 'Care in the Community' initiative and increased life expectancy. Most people with disabilities are over retirement age and many are home-owners.

200.   The national position is mirrored in Hertfordshire, where the 1991 Census found that about 95,900 residents (9.8%) had a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limited their daily activities or the work they could do. Almost 60% were over retirement age, accounting for over a third of that age group. Over 90% of those with a limiting long-term illness lived at home, and 19% of all households had at least one such member.

201.   It is important to ensure that appropriate housing is provided which meets the needs of people with physical disabilities and other special needs. However, only too often the housing market fails to meet these special needs.

202.   Government guidance requires local authorities to have regard to the impact of policies on different groups or members of society, including elderly persons and people with disabilities. The guidance recommends an accessible living environment for all, including wheelchair users and those with other disabilities, and states that developers should consider whether the internal design of housing and access to it can meet the needs of people with disabilities - both residents and visitors.

203.   Mechanisms are already in place for the provision and allocation of a proportion of affordable housing built to an appropriate mobility standard. However, mobility or wheelchair standard and 'lifetime' dwellings (which are constructed for ease of use by all persons, able-bodied or infirm, with ready adaptability for changing needs) are rarely offered in general needs housing for market purchase. The Building Regulations 1991 do not apply adequately to market housing in this regard, although the Government intends to introduce new provisions coming into force in October 1999 so that private homes are built with level entrance and other improvements such as wider doorways. This will improve homes to at least 'visitability' standards which ensure ease of access for all. Encouragement should therefore be given in local plans for developers to provide such housing where demand can be demonstrated. In the external environment, particular attention needs to be given to kerbs, width of car parking spaces and gradients encountered in access arrangements.

204.   Surveys of housing needs which are carried out by district councils need to identify housing purchase requirements for different groups, including the frail elderly, and others with particular or multiple disabilities. Such surveys therefore need to cover the general population as well as council tenants and those on waiting lists, so that market sector as well as affordable housing needs are identified. An initial marketing period, when a house builder advertises locally the availability of plots for construction of dwellings for disability or other special needs purchase, should be required on certain sites.

205.   Ideally, all houses would be built to an equivalent standard to ensure ease of access for habitation and visitors. Where practicable, one or more 'model estates' should be sought where all dwellings are constructed to the same 'lifetime' standard, so that people with and without disabilities can mix easily.

206.   There are strong social reasons for improving the accessibility of housing, but also economic ones. This is because initial construction of buildings and access arrangements to appropriate mobility standards, or for ready adaptation should the need arise, will generally be cheaper than making the necessary alterations to already constructed developments.

POLICY 11   ACCOMMODATION FOR PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL
DISABILITIES AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS

Support will be given in local plans to proposals which would secure housing and other accommodation designed to be suitable for people with physical disabilities and other special needs. The provision of such accommodation should be considered in both market and affordable housing proposals.

Gypsy Sites

207.   Circular 1/94 on 'Gypsy Sites and Planning' sets out Government guidance on the planning aspects of gypsy caravan sites. It requires local planning authorities to assess the need for gypsy accommodation in their areas and make suitable locational and/or criteria-based policies against which to determine planning applications.

208.   County councils no longer have a strategic duty to provide accommodation for gypsies following the passing of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. Hertfordshire County Council's most recent detailed policies and approach were published in November 1995 in its 'Guide to Policy on Gypsies and Travellers'. This contains the principles for providing and maintaining adequate accommodation for gypsies who reside in or resort to Hertfordshire and for dealing with unauthorised encampments.

209.   Policy 12 provides the broad strategic policy and general framework for the preparation of detailed policies in local plans. These will need to take into account the guidance in Circular 1/94. Among other matters, this states that 'as a rule it will not be appropriate to make provision for gypsy sites in areas of open land where development is severely restricted, for example, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and other protected areas'. It goes on to state that 'gypsy sites are not regarded as being among those uses of land which are normally appropriate in Green Belts. Green Belt land should not therefore be allocated for gypsy sites in development plans'. Much of Hertfordshire is constrained by protected area and Green Belt designations.

POLICY 12 GYPSY SITES

Provision will be made for gypsies who reside in or resort to the County. This will be achieved through support for the development of permanent gypsy caravan and transit sites in satisfactory locations.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

210.   Life-long learning is one of the foundations of human well being and economic prosperity. It is no coincidence that this section of the Structure Plan precedes the section on the economy, as the County's 'Bright Green' Economic Strategy places great emphasis on developing a 'knowledge economy' for which a highly educated, skilled and innovative workforce will be essential if Hertfordshire is to maximise its particular strengths and opportunities in an increasingly competitive world economy.

211.   At present Hertfordshire is a net 'exporter' of students. However, the expected increase in the proportion of young people participating in full-time higher and further education, coupled with reduced financial support for students, may result in more students wishing to study in Hertfordshire - with a higher proportion of them living at home.

212.   Education itself employed about 41,000 people in Hertfordshire in 1991 and this is projected to rise to about 46,000 by 2016. As well as being crucial to the County's economic success, education is a major land use with about 3,000 hectares (an area bigger than the whole of Stevenage Borough) given over to education establishments.

213.   Establishments for life-long learning include nursery, primary and secondary school provision in both state-funded and private sectors, colleges of further education and the campuses of the University of Hertfordshire. Numerous adult and business education and training centres also make an important contribution to the overall provision for learning, as do public libraries. Moreover, there are many community, leisure and institutional premises used for multiple purposes which regularly include education and training activities.

214.   Education and training are very significant generators of movement. In recent years a number of factors have led to a considerable increase in car usage for journeys between home and school or college and this now accounts for a substantial proportion of traffic at peak hours. However, distance learning in the home has increased in importance and improved telecommunications could encourage this trend.

215.   Development control relating to schools which are still controlled by the County Council remains a 'County matter', with planning applications determined directly by the County Council. Similarly, the County Council will be responsible for provision of Aided School sites. However development control relating to all other schools, colleges and other education and training establishments is a district council matter. Consequently district councils now determine planning applications in regard to private nurseries, independent and grant maintained schools, colleges of further education and the University of Hertfordshire, all of which are independent of County Council control.

216.   Education and training raise a wide range of land use, development and related transportation issues. These include the following:

i)   Needs for new premises or major extensions to existing premises, including more playing fields as well as buildings. New land allocations for education and training purposes should be considered for identification in local plans wherever future needs

can reasonably be expected. In particular, land allocations to provide for new or extended education premises will usually be necessary in conjunction with large scale residential development, such as west of the A1(M) at Stevenage.

ii) Closure of entire premises or parts of them as a result of organisational restructuring. Land and buildings currently in education uses but which are declared to be surplus to requirements and therefore potentially available for release and reuse or redevelopment for other uses should be considered in local plans.

iii) Potential for dual and shared uses of education premises (e.g. sports facilities, parkland footpaths and meeting rooms which could be used by other organisations and/or the public), thereby making more efficient use of land and buildings and so reducing development or open space needs which otherwise would have to be accommodated on other sites.

iv) Needs for student accommodation, either on or off campus. Provision will include both purpose-built accommodation and the conversion or refurbishment of housing, redundant offices or other suitable buildings to flats, halls of residence or other shared accommodation suitable for multiple occupancy by single person households engaged in full-time education.

v) Needs arising from education for transportation measures to ease peak hour road congestion, improve road safety for all modes of travel and encourage modes other than the car.

vi) Changes in national or County Council education policies (e.g. on secondary school admissions) which can have a major impact on both long term property needs for education and the amount and type of travel between school and home.

217. The previous Structure Plan incorporating the 1991 Alterations did not include a policy on the land use requirements of education. As a consequence, there is little reference in Hertfordshire's adopted local plans to the land and development needs of education. This has meant that whilst development proposals relating to education needs and sites have been considered on their individual merits, it has not been possible to judge most proposals against relevant local plan policies which have been the subject of public consultation and debate as part of plan preparation. Policy 13 sets the strategic framework for this to change. It gives support for development to ensure the continued success of educational and training institutions of all kinds, emphasising that wherever possible new facilities should be well located in terms of the aims to reduce travel need and car usage, and to encourage walking, cycling and use of passenger transport.

218. In bringing about a stronger focus on education in land use planning, Policy 13 also sets a framework to ensure that proposals for education sites are not considered in isolation, but in terms of their contribution to the wider objectives of planned regeneration in existing urban areas. In so doing, it will be important to take into account of the results of any comprehensive settlement appraisals and whole settlement strategies. For example, the identification of local needs for more public open space, sports facilities, managed workspace, meeting rooms, day nursery provision, etc., should be important considerations in determining the future of education buildings and playing fields which become surplus to

education needs. Housing may sometimes be a possibility too, but would only be one of several options for consideration.

219.   Education-related land use and development proposals cannot always be foreseen in advance of local plan preparation. However most probably can, at least in broad terms, and so it is important that education providers enter into dialogue with district councils at the earliest opportunity. In this context the preparation by education providers of long term property management, development and staff/student transportation strategies is to be encouraged. These can greatly assist in the process of comprehensive settlement appraisal and the preparation of local plans and transportation improvement packages.

220.   The County Council recognises that it has an important and influential role in the successful implementation of Policy 13, as it is:

- the statutory Local Education Authority responsible (jointly for secondary provision with the Funding Agency for Schools - subject to pending legislation) for the long term planning of its education services and, in so doing, its extensive educational premises;

- the statutory Transportation Authority, with education-related transport issues being a top priority for action, e.g. in reducing peak road congestion, promoting the 'TravelWise' initiative and improving road safety;

- actively supporting district councils and local communities to consider education and training needs in the preparation of comprehensive settlement appraisals and wider whole settlement strategies, with the aim to bring about more sustainable patterns of activity and development in towns.

POLICY 13 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Development for education and training needs will be supported subject to the other policies of this Plan. Wherever possible new facilities will be located with particular regard to the aims of reducing travel need and car usage, and encouraging walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport.

New land allocations for these purposes will be considered for identification in local plans where future needs can reasonably be expected. Land and buildings currently in these uses but which are declared to be surplus to requirements and therefore potentially available for other uses will also be considered in local plans.

Proposals at Policy 6 towns shall be considered in terms of their contribution to planned regeneration and should take account of the results of comprehensive settlement appraisals.

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Development for Employment Needs

221. A healthy economy is an essential and integral element of the strategy for sustainability. Many of the aims of this Plan cannot be achieved without economic growth and the challenge is to ensure that the impact of this growth is within levels which the environment can sustain. The emphasis on a good environment and improved quality of life, which are central features of the overall strategy, are equally critical to supporting the wealth creation we need. Within this overall context the Structure Plan should ensure that development provision is sufficient to enable full employment and satisfactory conditions for wealth creation.

Recent Trends

222. During the early 1990's, Hertfordshire's economic prosperity was severely affected by the effects of recession, the defence rundown, and the relocation of business to lower cost areas. In addition there have been changes in the way that companies operate which will continue to have a profound effect on the County. These include:

- 'downsizing' of functions to shed spare capacity through redundancies, natural wastage, early retirements, etc;
- development of the 'core-periphery', or 'clover-leaf' workforce, whereby a small core of highly paid executives control the work of a much larger and perhaps occupationally flexible workforce. This involves greater use of part-time workers (many hired as necessary on a 'just-in-time' basis), home-workers, self-employed individuals or separate companies on contract, and so on;
- 'up-skilling' of the labour force in some sectors, with a growth in the proportion of the workforce engaged in management functions;
- cost-cutting strategies by companies, such as the relocation of lower order functions such as production, clerical and technical support operations to areas with lower land and staff costs and where recruitment of staff is less problematic;
- adoption of 'just-in-time' production and inventory techniques and the development of new process and product technologies in the face of intensified competition;
- a rapidly evolving, but maturing, communications technology will enable companies greater flexibility in where and how they carry out their business;
- worker/floorspace ratios appear to be stabilising, against previous expectations that they would continue to rise. Modern manufacturing techniques have enabled production to be undertaken within a smaller area and the 'just-in-time' techniques enable less floorspace to be given over to storage. In the service sector, evolving working arrangements such as teleworking, desk-sharing and the sort of flexible employment practices referred to above may significantly reduce property requirements.

'Bright Green' Vision for Hertfordshire's Economy

223. In the light of these trends a vision for the recovery and long term development of Hertfordshire's economy was needed. To create such a vision, the County Council has recognised that Hertfordshire's strengths and opportunities can be maximised through a

'Bright Green' Industrial Strategy[4] to develop the long term competitiveness of the knowledge based economy in a sustainable environment. It is against this background that the County Council and partner organisations concerned with the economic regeneration of Hertfordshire have developed the County Economic Development Strategy[5] and Action Plan based on the Bright Green vision. They have made formal commitments to the new strategy and contributions to the action plans through a partnership, the Hertfordshire Prosperity Forum.

224.   Economic Prosperity for all in a green environment is a key priority for the County Council and the Countywide strategy sets out an ambitious agenda for the quality of life, the environment, education, training and employment, and business competitiveness. The Bright Green Industrial Strategy assumes that:

- restructuring will continue to dominate all sectors;
- smaller workforces will predominate with command and control functions remaining in the County;
- firms will continue to 'outsource' specialists and support functions; and
- relocation of low 'added value' functions away from Hertfordshire and the South-East will continue.

225.   The Strategy also indicates that demand for a more highly educated, better trained and flexible workforce will increase (in Hertfordshire's case with 80% in knowledge based activities). It takes the view that the environment and quality of life will play a key role in Hertfordshire's knowledge economy. Hertfordshire can compete on knowledge-based economic activity in the areas of research and development, high technology manufacturing (and delivery of goods), and the production of high quality specialist products.

226.   The components of the Bright Green Strategy were defined for the County as a 'KISS' approach with four component parts: Knowledge, Innovation, Skills and Services.

- The *knowledge* elements suggests that Hertfordshire needs to compete by adding value to industrial products and services as it cannot compete on cost alone.
- The *innovation* element suggests that constant innovation will be the key to future economic success.
- The *skills* component indicates that the acquisition of a particular skill which will serve for a lifetime is no longer enough. Life-long learning, reskilling and learning for pleasure will become paramount, and the dividing line between training and education needs to be examined.
- The *service* component means that most employment in the future will be in the service sector, with the emphasis on knowledge and information activities and also personal services.

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[4] *'Bright Green: Developing a knowledge-based and environmentally aware industrial strategy for Hertfordshire into the 21st Century'*. A consultant study by Spatial and Economic Associates prepared for Hertfordshire County Council and published December 1994.

[5] *'Economic Development Strategy for Hertfordshire'* Published by the Hertfordshire Prosperity Forum, September 1997.

227.   The net effect of all these trends will be even more of a tendency towards so called 'jobless growth', where the number of people in employment, as given by traditional employment statistics, cannot be used as a reliable indication of the state of the economy. An example of this is the decline in manufacturing employment. While undoubtedly there has been a loss of manufacturing jobs over the last decade, some of the apparent shift to the service sector will be a result of activities (e.g. public relations, training, cleaning and so on) being 'outsourced' to separate companies or individuals, rather than being carried out within manufacturing companies themselves.

228.   A second effect of these trends will generally be to lead towards reduced property needs by companies in Hertfordshire, for a given level of output. This will be evident from the stabilising of worker/floorspace ratios in general, changing working arrangements, and in the geographical restructuring of companies.

229.   As well as enabling the economy to prosper, a key aim of land use planning policy will be to help in achieving a more sustainable balance between the numbers of workers and jobs in the County and, in the process, seeking to enable a reduction in need to travel and car usage. Therefore trends in the economy need to be considered against trends in resident workforce (termed 'economically active', i.e. those of working age who are employed, self-employed, unemployed or actively seeking work), unemployment, forecast growth in employment and patterns of commuting.

Resident Workforce

230.   The number of 'economic participants' (people in work or actively seeking work) living in Hertfordshire is forecast to rise, but only marginally, from about 511,400 in 1991 to 525,900 in 2011. Most of this increase is forecast to take place in the period 1996 to 2006, as shown in the table below:

Economically active population in Hertfordshire - projected change between 1991 and 2011

Period	1991-1996	1996-2001	2001-2006	2006-2011	1991-2011
Change	-4,700	9,000	8,900	1,300	14,500

Source: Hertfordshire County Council Chelmer Model, using same data sets as those used in the 1993-based national population projections, except for assumption of nil-net migration and use of ONS 95-based composite economic activity rates.

Unemployment

231.   Unemployment in Hertfordshire rose more sharply during the recession than in the UK as a whole, the rest of the South East outside London (called 'ROSE') or the Eastern Region. However, since peaking in 1993, unemployment has been continually falling and at a faster rate in Hertfordshire than in the UK, ROSE or the Eastern Region. Unemployment in the County was only 10,947 at April 1998 (a year-on-year fall of 29%), having fallen significantly from its peak of 44,000 at the beginning of 1993. Unemployment at around the 11,000 level is only 2.2% of the total workforce, which is not much more than a minimum 'frictional' vacancy rate of 1.5 to 2% which reflects normal turnover in the labour market and below which unemployment is unlikely to fall. In fact, the rate in parts of the County, notably East Hertfordshire and St Albans Districts, was recorded as being as low as 1.5% at April 1998. Changes in unemployment are graphed in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Unemployment rates 1990 to 1998 in Hertfordshire, ROSE, Great Britain and Eastern Region
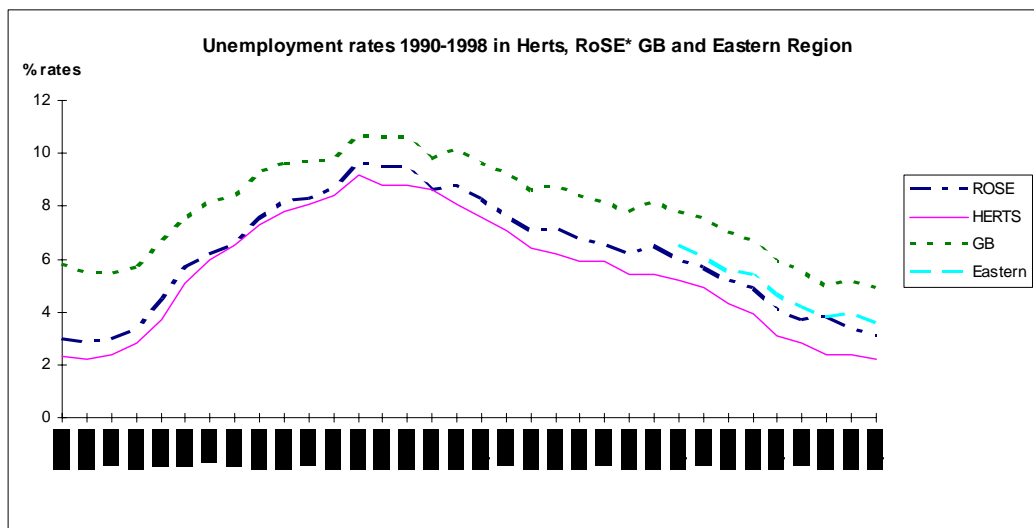
Source : Unemployment rates are derived from claimant count unemployed. Before October 1996 the benefit count included Unemployment Benefit, Income Support or National Insurance Credits. This has now been replaced by Jobseeker's Allowance.

'ROSE' (Rest of South East England) is the Standard Statistical Region, which includes Hertfordshire. 'Eastern Region' is the Government Office Region which also includes Hertfordshire, along with Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk.

232.   Whilst in Hertfordshire as a whole the average unemployment is currently low, not all its population benefit from the County's relative prosperity. There are several pockets of relatively high unemployment, such as in certain wards in Stevenage and Broxbourne Boroughs, and in parts of Three Rivers District.

Forecast Employment Growth to 2011

233.   An independent forecast[6] of growth in employment in Hertfordshire suggested that if the 'Bright Green' strategy is taken forward successfully, then total employment in Hertfordshire could increase by about 63,000 in the period 1996 to 2011. However any such forecasts are speculative and need to be treated with caution.

Commuting

234.   Hertfordshire needs to be considered as part of a much wider labour market area. The County is an important part of the London commuter belt and a net exporter of workers. Figure 15 overleaf illustrates the relative size of net commuting flows in and out of the County from surrounding areas.

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[6] By Cambridge Econometrics, as part of a study commissioned from Pieda Consultants in 1995 entitled '*Hertfordshire Long Term Employment Land Needs*'.

Figure 15: Net commuting flows between Hertfordshire and surrounding areas
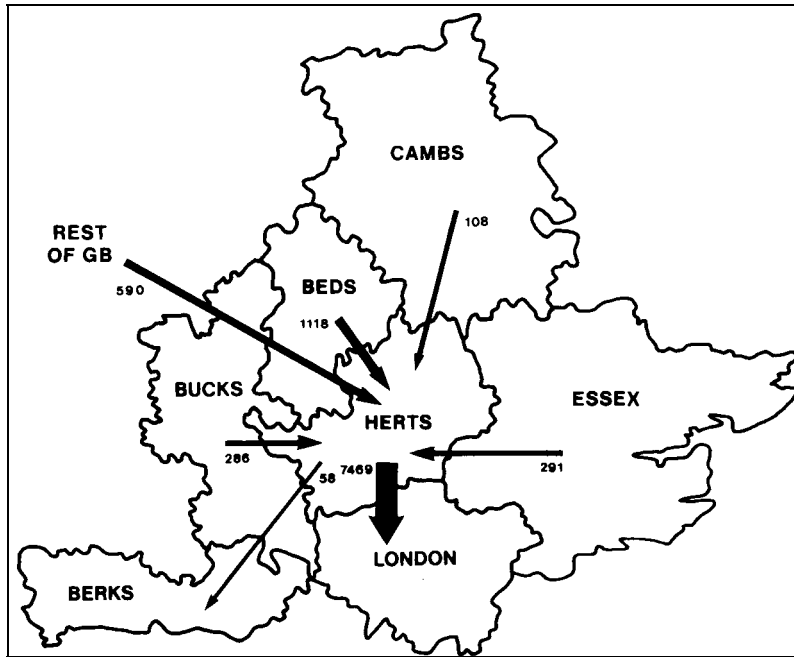
Source: 1991 Census. Figures show 10% sample data, so multiply by 10 to obtain actual figures.

235.   Commuting flows are summarised in the table below. Net commuting from the County into London in 1991 was almost 75,000, equivalent to 14 per cent of Hertfordshire's resident workforce. Total cross boundary commuting journeys both in and out of the county increased over the period 1981 and 1991 (the last Census) and is probably still the trend. This reflects the greater distances which workers are prepared to travel in an increasingly insecure and flexible labour market. It also reflects the ability to travel longer distances more easily because of improvements to the primary road network, particularly with completion of the M25. However, total <u>net</u> commuting out of the county appears to have decreased, and in 1991 stood at 51,520 compared with 55,860 in 1981.

Commuting in to and out of Hertfordshire, 1981 and 1991 compared

Hertfordshire - number of commuters:	1981	1991
to London	93,740	98,920
from London	18,590	24,230
net <u>to</u> London	75,150	74,690
to elsewhere	26,890	38,020
from elsewhere	46,180	61,390
net <u>from</u> elsewhere	19,290	23,170
net out-commuting	**55,860**	**51,520**

Source: 1981 and 1991 Census

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236.   As with other counties adjoining London, Hertfordshire will remain a source of workers for the capital. Much of the commuting into London, particularly its central area, is by rail and this long established pattern of rail travel is set to continue. However, unemployment in London has been consistently higher than in Hertfordshire and the rest of the South East in recent years and strategic planning for London seeks to enable Londoners to meet labour market requirements more effectively and equitably, through improved training, transport, housing and other measures within London. To the extent that this approach is successful, it will increase the proportion of London's workforce which is resident in the Capital. In consequence, this may result in a continuing gradual reduction in the level of net in-commuting from Hertfordshire into London.

237.   Rail travel is clearly more sustainable than commuting by car, but no form of commuting is intrinsically desirable and a decrease in all forms of commuting would be in line with the sustainability aims of this Plan. Land use planning cannot make people choose to work close to their homes. However, a better balance between jobs and homes in each part of the County would enable more people to choose to live and work in closer proximity, thereby reducing overall travel to work.

Balance Between Employment Growth and Resident Workers

238.   In seeking a better balance between homes and jobs, it will be important to reconcile the forecast of 63,000 growth in employment, 1996 to 2011, with the much lower projection of only 19,200 growth in the resident workforce during the same period. Superficially, this trend-based extrapolation implies an increasing imbalance between jobs and workers, with either a corresponding increase in commuting into Hertfordshire, inevitably much of it by car, or else a corresponding need to increase housing provision in the County.

239.   However, any apparent mismatch between job growth and the resident workforce needs to be set against other considerations. First, there is no policy intention to seek to provide employment floorspace in line with any particular forecast of employment growth - all such forecasts and their underlying economic assumptions being prone to error. Second, the 'Bright Green' approach is mainly directed to fostering the more sophisticated, higher order 'knowledge-based' forms of employment growth in preference to an open-ended encouragement or accommodation of all potential employment growth. This plays to the County's economic strengths and allows for economic growth on a sustainable basis while being consistent with the need to conserve the County's environment. Moreover, the following factors can be expected to narrow the gap between the changing level of employment and size of resident workforce in the County:

- net out-commuting from Hertfordshire may gradually decrease, particularly the level of commuting into London;
- recent demographic trends suggest that the proportion of residents actively seeking work may increase to a higher level than that assumed in the most recent projections, in which case the gap between jobs and resident workforce will diminish;
- whilst unemployment is now relatively low in Hertfordshire, there is still a severe unemployment problem in some areas and remedying this will further reduce the gap between jobs and residents actually in work in the County;
- it is likely that the first alterations to this Plan will make provision for some further housing development in the period to 2016 (though this is expected to be at a much lower

annual building rate than in the years up to 2011), which will also narrow the gap between jobs and resident workforce in the County.

Implications for Employment Land Provision

240.   Taking into account all the relevant considerations, the County Council believes that there is already more than sufficient land and floorspace currently in employment use, together with the Key Employment Sites and other allocated employment land, to enable:

- full employment, coupled with a modest reduction in net out-commuting, and therefore a higher proportion of the resident workforce employed within the County;

- economic growth of the kinds being promoted through the County Economic Development Strategy.

241.   Therefore the Structure Plan does not make provision for further land allocations for employment development on quantitative grounds.

242.   The basic premise of Policy 14 is to set a positive approach to providing for changing business and employment needs. It therefore provides a criteria-based approach against which proposals for employment development are to be considered. The policy enables new land allocations to be considered only in exceptional circumstances, taking account of qualitative considerations including the aim to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development, e.g. through mixed land use.

243.   Policy 14 reflects the countywide Economic Development Strategy, the Bright Green Industrial Strategy and Planning Policy Guidance Note 4 on 'Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms'. It recognises the need for a balanced supply of employment floorspace and an economy based on environmental sustainability, emphasising quality of life and looking beyond mass production. Many of the other policies of the Structure Plan also support this approach.

244.   The development of 'Key Employment Sites' is recognised as being particularly important in securing sustainable economic growth and in meeting the needs of national and international companies at the forefront of the 'knowledge economy'. Key Employment Sites are listed in Policy 15.

Release of Existing Employment Land and Floorspace for Other Uses

245.   The total stock of office, industrial and warehousing floorspace (i.e. that falling in B1-B8 use classes) in Hertfordshire in 1997 was estimated to be approximately 7,960,000 square metres. A vacancy rate of about 5% is reasonable to allow for normal stock turnover in the context of a vigorous local economy. On this basis, at least 400,000 square metres of floorspace would have been vacant during 1997.

246.   Figure 16 illustrates changes in business, industrial and office floorspace on the market since 1988. (Floorspace on the market at any one time is a proxy measure for vacant floorspace and the sum of these marketing categories equates to the sum of B1 to B8 uses.) It shows the decline in vacant floorspace since 1993, which has been closely correlated with

strong economic growth and a corresponding increase in employment during this period. About 953,000 square metres of B1 to B8 floorspace were estimated to be vacant in December 1997. This indicates a persisting large surplus of existing floorspace, over and above that needed to allow for normal stock turnover, at a time when unemployment is very low.

Figure 16: Commercial floorspace on the market, 1988 - 1997
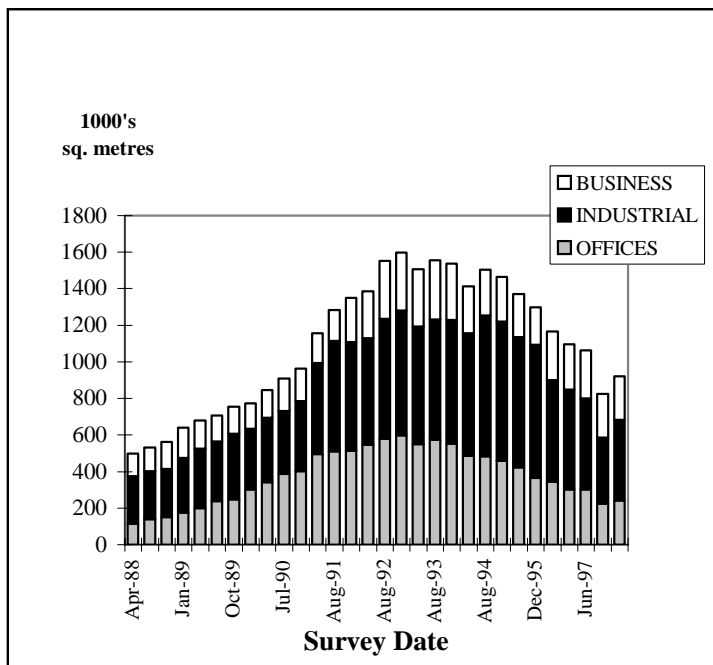
Source: County Council Environment Department Information Service

247. In addition to the over-supply of vacant existing floorspace, Hertfordshire has a considerable capacity of planning permissions which are yet to be implemented together with other land which is identified in local plans for employment development. In 1997, the sum of additional B1 to B8 floorspace commitments 'in the pipeline' in Hertfordshire was estimated to be approximately 1,600,000 square metres.

248. It remains to be seen whether and at what rate the overall over-supply of B1 to B8 floorspace will be taken up as a consequence of forecast growth in employment. Although in the longer term the overall balance of supply and demand for employment land and floorspace is far from certain, it seems reasonable to proceed on the assumption of a surplus and therefore that some land and buildings either currently in employment uses or allocated for these may be released for other uses. A discriminating approach will be required and careful monitoring of a number of related supply and demand trends will be undertaken to enable district councils to reach judgements about what types and quantities of existing employment provision will no longer be required for employment purposes and so may be released for other needs. Qualitative as well as quantitative issues will need to be taken into consideration.

249. Particular priority is to be given to identifying suitable opportunities to provide more dwellings on appropriate sites as part of planned regeneration. This will include housing as

part of mixed use redevelopment schemes. The Panel which held the Examination in Public in 1997 concluded that, in the period 1995 to 2011, it should be possible to provide at least 3,800 dwellings through the redevelopment and reuse of surplus employment land and buildings which are yet to be identified. This figure is in addition to new homes already built on former employment land in the period 1991 to 95 and dwelling commitments on existing employment land which had already been identified in 1995. The significant contribution which surplus employment land and buildings are expected to make in achieving the overall dwelling requirement of 65,000 has been taken into account in the district dwelling distribution in Policy 9.

POLICY 14 DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

In order to foster economic growth in accordance with the Bright Green Industrial Strategy, while providing for an appropriate mix of economic activities in particular areas, employment development (normally that categorised as B1, B2 and B8) will be permitted subject to the other policies of the Plan and their detailed expression in local plans. Particular regard will be given to ensuring that development is sustainable in terms of its impacts on traffic generation and its environmental implications.

Development will take place mainly in areas allocated for such purposes in local plans, and key employment sites and existing prime employment areas will be identified in them where employment development will be promoted. Exceptionally, new land allocations may be identified for such purposes.

In considering development proposals regard should be had to the following criteria and their expression in local plans:

i)   **the need to ensure an adequate and balanced supply of employment floorspace, based on joint monitoring and periodic forecasting by the County and District Councils of trends in:**

    a.   **the overall stock of floorspace (including reductions due to the reuse of employment land and buildings for other purposes, notably dwelling provision as part of planned regeneration);**

    b.   **the levels of vacant floorspace and any derelict land formerly used for employment;**

    c.   **the supply of permissions and land allocations still to be realised.**

ii)   **assessments of the implications of local and regional economic restructuring, and emerging technological developments particularly for employment densities and operational requirements;**

iii)   **assessments of the balance between employment opportunities and the labour market in particular areas;**

iv)   **regional, county-wide and local economic development strategies;**

v)   the special advantages and opportunities in encouraging particular types of business development at Key Employment Sites, and in designating other specific locations for them, especially to promote the knowledge economy;

vi)   the needs of local people and businesses as identified in any comprehensive settlement appraisals;

vii)   the desirability of encouraging small scale employment development to achieve an appropriate mix of uses in urban areas;

viii)   the aims of securing planned regeneration, particularly the need to protect sites best suited to housing or mixed use.

Existing employment land and buildings may be identified in local plans as part of a planned regeneration package for an area, to be re-used for either new employment provision, housing or mixed use. Such proposals must be acceptable in terms of other policies. In so far as re-use for employment purposes is proposed, regard should be given to the criteria above. Only types and quantities of existing employment provision which are no longer required to meet future employment requirements and business and community needs may be re-used for other purposes, notably dwelling provision on appropriate sites as part of planned regeneration.

Key Employment Sites

250.   An important element in the economic development strategy for the County is to ensure that the most effective use is made of the major development opportunities which have arisen. These 'Key Employment Sites' require co-ordinated action from the County and district councils, the landowners and others, to resolve access and infrastructure problems, to ensure satisfactory planning guidelines are in place and to market the opportunities to investors, developers and employers. The sites at Three Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead and at the M25/A10 in Broxbourne represent the only significant green field allocations, and are identified in the relevant local plans to form a long term reserve for the needs of firms concerned with specialised technological activities or other activities which are in the national or regional interest. In accordance with Policy 14, uses other than employment may be appropriate on Key Sites as part of an employment-led mixed development package. This is likely to be more appropriate on the larger Key Sites. It is a matter for local plans to specify the areas involved.

251.   Additional Key Employment Sites may be identified in due course, as development on existing sites begins. In particular, there may be scope for a new Key Site in conjunction with development to the west of the A1(M) at Stevenage.

POLICY 15 KEY EMPLOYMENT SITES

Key Employment Sites have been identified to play a major long term role in the Hertfordshire economy, where employment generating activities will be encouraged and where co-ordinated activity and investment programmes are required to realise their

full potential. The County Council may from time to time identify further Key Sites on these criteria. The following are identified as Key Sites on the Key Diagram:

Leavesden Studios
British Aerospace, Hatfield
Essex Road, Hoddesdon
Centennial Park, Elstree
Three Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead
Park Plaza, Waltham Cross

The land at Three Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead and Park Plaza, Waltham Cross has been identified where priority will be given to specialised technological activities or other activities which are in the national or regional interest.

Retailing and the Location of New Retail Development

252.   Hertfordshire offers a complex retail environment with its 29 main settlements and numerous smaller towns and villages, all located within relatively close distance of each other. At the same time, Hertfordshire is located close to London and has a number of sub-regional and regional shopping centres, such as Harlow, Luton and Enfield, close to its borders. This makes for a competitive retailing environment.

253.   In recent years, the County has experienced considerable change in the amount and character of both 'comparison' and 'convenience' retailing facilities, and there is little evidence that the County is currently under-provided in quantitative terms. Some new facilities have been located within town centres, but many have been located off centre or on the edge of towns. A consequence of this retail expansion has in many cases been facilities poorly served by public transport and a diminution in the vitality and viability of certain town centres.

254.   Growth in turnover during the Plan period is expected to arise largely from an increase in spending per head (particularly on non-food comparison goods) and to a lesser extent because of population growth. This, coupled with the changing requirements of retailers and shoppers, will justify a limited amount of new development and generate opportunities for new forms of retailing and the improvement of existing shopping areas.

255.   These changes will need to be assessed within the context of a number of the policies of this Plan. Of particular concern will be how development fits in with the urban form, taking into account the results of any comprehensive settlement appraisals, and how the quality of shopping, as opposed to the quantity of floorspace, is to be improved in each town. Policy 4 on Town Centres and Policies 16 and 17 on Retailing recognise that the long term health of town centres is important for the future of the County and the fundamental objective of this Plan that development should become more sustainable.

256.   Policies 16 and 17 adopt the broad approach to retailing which is taken by Government in PPG6 on 'Town Centres and Retail Developments', published in 1996. It is recognised that the Structure Plan has a role to play in creating the strategic context for the future and in particular identifying an appropriate hierarchy of town and local centres in the

County. This hierarchy ranges from the largest centres of regional and sub-regional importance which have a wide range and choice of shops and serve a wide area, down to district and the smallest local neighbourhood centres. The latter have a correspondingly small range and choice of shops, which provide mostly for the needs of local people.

257. The Countywide retail hierarchy is outlined in Policy 16 while more detailed local hierarchies, to include all the 29 settlements referred to in Policy 6, will be determined through the review of local plans. Out of town centres are not included within the Countywide hierarchy and will be addressed in relevant local plans within the context of Policy 17.

258. Policy 16 also recognises that there are a number of town centres of particular historic importance, where retail development proposals will need to be consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of the historic core. However, all retail proposals in the County will need to be considered in the light of local environmental conditions.

259. The need for new retail facilities will be assessed and monitored in association with district councils and the private sector. In considering the appropriateness of new proposals for retail development the Government's advice on the sequential approach for site selection will be followed to ensure that town centre locations are considered as a first step in the process. The local planning authorities have a key role in assessing need and in developing local retailing strategies and development briefs. Comprehensive settlement appraisals and wider whole settlement strategies can fulfil a valuable role to better inform the local planning process about community needs and aspirations for retail provision.

260. A principal aim will be to ensure that development does not result in an increase, particularly by car, in unnecessary movement between towns over and above that which results from the role of the centre within the shopping hierarchy. Additional regional or sub-regional centres, whether as town centre or out of centre developments, are unlikely to be justifiable in the County on these grounds and would be resisted.

261. In assessing proposals the cumulative impact of new retailing development must be fully considered. Within a county such as Hertfordshire with its closely linked settlement pattern, the impact of a series of retail developments / proposals in one area can have a considerable and possibly detrimental impact on adjoining towns and villages. The loss of easily accessible town centre and other local retailing facilities will not contribute to achieving the sustainability objectives of this Plan, as summarised in Policy 1.

262. Retail Policies 16 and 17 therefore seek to:

- promote the viability and vitality of town centres;

- reduce traffic generation;

- create a viable retail hierarchy that complements the above objectives; and

- ensure that where out of town developments are permitted they contribute to the overall sustainability objectives of the Plan.

POLICY 16 RETAILING

Provision will be made for retail development through local plans in accordance with PPG6, and in particular the sequential approach indicated there. Local plans will seek to maintain and enhance the identified roles of the various town and local centres in the hierarchy set out below. Proposals should be considered in relation to potential effects on the vitality and viability of any other centres.

The hierarchy is:

i)   **the major sub-regional centres of Stevenage and Watford;**

ii)   **the minor sub-regional centres of Bishop's Stortford, Hemel Hempstead, Hitchin, St Albans and Welwyn Garden City;**

iii)   **the town centres of Borehamwood, Hatfield, Hertford, Hoddesdon, Letchworth and Waltham Cross;**

iv)   **minor town centres as identified in local plans;**

v)   **district and local shopping centres as identified in local plans;**

Within historic centres, including Abbots Langley, Baldock, Berkhamsted, Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Hitchin, Letchworth, Rickmansworth, Royston, St Albans, Tring, Ware and Welwyn Garden City, development should be consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of the historic core.

POLICY 17 LOCATION OF NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission will be granted for retail development which sustains and enhances the vitality and viability of the County's town and local centres as identified within the retail hierarchy. The preferred location for retail development will be town centre sites, where suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion are available, followed by edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres. If no suitable sites are available in these locations, or could be made available, then out-of-centre developments will be permitted where they would:

i)   **neither on their own nor in conjunction with other similar developments and associated facilities, unduly affect the vitality and viability of any nearby town, district or local centre, including the evening economy, and/or of the rural economy;**

ii)   **play a role which complements the role of town centres, and is consistent with the results of any comprehensive settlement appraisal and/or any town centre strategy formulated in accordance with the advice in PPG6;**

iii)   contribute to an overall pattern of provision which is well related to the distribution of the resident population, so as to minimise the need to travel and reduce reliance on the car;

iv)   be easily and safely accessible by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, and by cyclists, pedestrians and people with disabilities;

v)   not cause harm to residential amenity;

vi)   not conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan.

Sustaining the Rural Economy and Employment in Small Settlements

263.   Economic activity within the villages and countryside cannot be seen as detached from the economy of the County as a whole. Nevertheless, there are certain characteristics of economic activity outside towns which require more specific policies and actions. Healthy economic activity in rural areas facilitates investment to protect and improve the countryside and contributes to meeting people's social needs. PPG7 on 'The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development' sets out Government policies and guidance relating to this policy area. It recognises that it is for local authorities through their development plans to determine more specific policies that integrate these objectives in ways which reflect the different types of countryside and the economic and social circumstances found in their areas.

264.   In Hertfordshire agriculture still remains the dominant economic activity in rural areas in terms of land use. It represents two thirds of all the land in the County and three quarters of the land outside towns. There are a total of 1,375 agricultural holdings in the County, of which a third are less than 5 hectares, a further third of between 5 hectares and 100 hectares and the remaining third are of over 100 hectares. Arable cropping remains the dominant agricultural land use and is mainly represented on the larger holdings. Over half of all the holdings in the County are part-time concerns, a situation which has remained relatively unaltered over the last decade.

265.   There are a number of trends affecting the rural economy. There have been considerable technological advances which, coupled with moves towards operations (such as harvesting) being carried out by contractors, a less locally based market focus and pressures on farm incomes due to Common Agricultural Policy reforms and the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade, have resulted in a reduction in demand for manual labour and a change in farm economics.

266.   The 25% decline in the agricultural labour force over the last decade is set to continue and part-time working has increased at the expense of full-time working, creating a need for other part-time work to compensate. In an effort to maintain the viability of their holdings and stabilise their incomes, farmers are under increasing pressure to explore the potential to restructure of farm businesses, sometimes leading to the amalgamation of holdings. Restructuring may involve investigation of alternative crops, the disposal of buildings and the diversification of business to include activities such as farm shops and farm-based leisure

activities. The recent enabling of Farm Business Tenancies increases the possibility that fragmentation of the economic entity, the holding, may occur.

267. Policy 18 aims to support diversification of agricultural holdings where development would bring advantages to the holding itself and the rural economy as a whole, but only where this would not result in fragmentation or diversification which itself would harm the overall viability of the farm holding. It therefore does not apply to diversification proposals which result in the disappearance of the farm as a business. In addition to the support for development facilitating the diversification and viability of agricultural holdings, there is also considerable scope for encouraging commercial enterprises which contribute towards protecting and managing the character of the rural environment and contributing to the wider rural economy. Such projects, which can also be seen as a means for compensating for fragmentation of agricultural holdings, include those which:

- seek to encourage better management of woodland, such as the Hertfordshire 'Wildwood' project;
- provide new outlets to market local produce;
- enable appropriate renewable energy production, such as the processing of coppice wood or straw as fuel;
- contribute to waste recycling (such as composting schemes).

269. All such schemes need to recognise the importance of protecting and enhancing the rural environment and its assets, and the potential implications for the rural road network.

270. By way of context for Policies 18 and 19, 'Rural Hertfordshire, A Living Countryside'[7] provides a brief summary of the social and economic circumstances of rural Hertfordshire, and outlines what organisations in the County, including the County Council, are currently doing to encourage appropriate development in rural areas. The principal objective of Policies 18 and 19, taken together, is to maintain a healthy rural economy whilst taking account of the particular social, economic and environmental factors evident in countryside areas.

POLICY 18: RURAL ECONOMY

Appropriate development, including farm diversification, will be encouraged within rural areas under the terms of PPG7 with a view to sustaining the rural economy, and in particular the viability of farm holdings. Development involving fragmentation of farm holdings or other impairment of farm economics and management will be resisted in the absence of compensating advantages to the rural economy.

270. Another feature of life away from the towns is the general shortage of local employment, requiring people to travel further afield to find work. Government guidance in PPG7 has drawn attention to the range of industrial and commercial activities which can be successfully located in rural areas without causing unacceptable disturbance. These activities can provide local employment opportunities for those living in villages and, therefore, may

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[7] Published by the Hertfordshire Countryside Forum in 1996.

result in less need to travel to the towns for work purposes. They may also offer benefits to the firms in question and will bring life and activity to rural communities. In addition to specific firms, similar advantages will apply to the provision of telecentres and managed workspaces. Developments can often beneficially re-use or adapt existing buildings for new uses, a consideration which is acknowledged in Policy 5 on the Green Belt.

POLICY 19 EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE THE MAIN TOWNS

Development for appropriate industrial, commercial or other non-agricultural activities in villages and small towns other than those listed in Policy 6 sufficient to meet local job needs will be supported, particularly where this involves the re-use of an existing building, subject to the other policies of this Plan. In determining the suitability of the development particular emphasis will be placed on the impact on traffic generation, especially the amount and size of goods vehicles.

Tourism

271.   The tourism industry in Hertfordshire serves the County's resident population of one million, their visiting friends and relatives, and visitors from North London and the surrounding counties. Visitors and residents alike are attracted to Hertfordshire's open countryside, notably the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the west and recreational areas such as the Lee Valley Regional Park. Country houses are also important tourist destinations, as are the county's historic market towns, such as St Albans. Hertfordshire also has a strong film industry with tourism potential based in the south-west of the County, particularly at Borehamwood and Leavesden, near Watford.

272.   Tourism contributes jobs and income to the local economy and, together with associated jobs in the hotels and related services, is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Hertfordshire and in 1996 employed 15,600 people. A basic aim of Policy 20 is to meet the demand for Hertfordshire as a tourist attraction, to maximise the social and economic benefits this can bring and at the same time to ensure that environmental and other conflicts do not arise.

273.   Essential to achieving the aim of Policy 20 are the needs to maintain attractions of high value, to ensure that the industry is supported by a quality workforce facilitated by appropriate training initiatives and programmes (amongst others involving partnerships between Training and Enterprise Councils, training agencies and the Regional Tourist Board), and to make adequate provision for the range of accommodation needs of visitors. Protection of the whole spectrum environmental assets is vitally important (see Policy 38), as is accessibility to attractions by passenger transport, both in town and country. Advice and support to landowners and managers, including the formulation of partnerships, is crucial if the County is to successfully open up its countryside to additional visitors. The Hertfordshire Countryside Management Service has a particularly important role in these respects. Equally important will be to recognise and take account of the potential implications of additional traffic on rural roads (see Policy 29).

274.   Tourism development is currently promoted in Hertfordshire by the local authorities and Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire & Luton Tourism Limited. The latter is a private, non-profit making company, limited by guarantee, sponsored by the public and private sectors in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. In addition, regional promotion and support is provided by the East of England Tourist Board and for specific aspects by the Rural Development Commission. Policy 20 gives particular support to the following aspects of tourism.

Hertfordshire's Heritage and Countryside as Tourist Attractions

275.   Hertfordshire has always been both proud and protective of its rural environment and there are many important historical and architectural features which are attractive to visitors. Whilst considering new tourism sector development it will be important to ensure the continuing protection and enhancement of the county's existing natural and built heritage.

'Green' Tourism

276.   Tourism is a positive activity with potential to benefit the community, the place and the visitor, but in every case harmony must be sought between all three. Sustainable tourism encourages an approach to tourism that can be maintained in the long term, without degrading the environment in which it takes place. Recognition of the important contribution that tourism can make to both the rural and town economy must be considered in parallel with the need to safeguard the quality of life of the local residents, whilst meeting the expectations of visitors.

Tourist Accommodation

277.   Good quality accommodation is a key factor in attracting visitors to an area. Whilst the County has a good stock of quality hotels and bed & breakfast accommodation, occupancy rates are generally high and in some areas there is a clear need for additional hotel provision. However, suitable sites are not easy to find. Moreover the generally high accommodation prices, which reflect development and operating costs and the dominant business market, are detrimental to the tourism markets which tend to require more budget-priced facilities.

Conference Venues

278.   This is an important market for Hertfordshire and has seen steady growth for many years. There is further opportunity to broaden the accommodation base for business and conference tourism to include smaller establishments such as farmhouses, provided good standards can be assured. The corporate hospitality and incentive markets are also relatively strong in the County.

Film Industry-Related Tourist Attractions

279.   Hertfordshire has a strong film industry, focused mainly in the south west of the County, where current development has given Hertfordshire a unique opportunity to maximise the benefits of film investment. The development of new film industry-related tourist attractions will need to be accompanied by provision of more budget-priced family accommodation and improved passenger transport links.

POLICY 20 TOURISM

Development to meet the needs of tourism will be supported subject to the other policies of the Plan, particularly those relating to protection of assets and the Green Belt, and encouraging the greater use of passenger transport.

In particular, support will be given to:

i)   **proposals to promote Hertfordshire's heritage and countryside as tourist attractions;**

ii)   **proposals for 'green' tourism;**

iii)   **provision of tourist accommodation, including hotels and facilities for low budget visitors;**

iv)   **provision of conference venues;**

v)   **proposals for film industry related tourist attractions.**

Telecommunications

280.   Telecommunication development varies in type and scale and covers a range of different forms, including underground cables, radio masts, satellite dishes, transmitter aerials and antennae. Telecommunications are increasingly becoming an essential and beneficial element in the life of the local community and in the national economy. Much of the telephone network is, of course, long established. New communications technology is now spreading rapidly to meet the growing demand for better communications at work and home, in business and in public services. Fast, reliable and cost-effective communications can attract business to an area and help firms remain competitive, thus contributing to the achievement of other policy goals, including increased employment opportunities. This is particularly important in the development of the Single European Market and in the creation of an environment in which major national and international companies would want to expand. It is equally important for broadcasting and for small businesses.

281.   Good communications can enrich life at home and offer new choices in education and entertainment, in shopping and banking and for methods of employment, such as home working. Modern telecommunications can benefit the environment through reducing the need to travel, and thereby reduce traffic congestion, fuel consumption, vehicle emissions and associated air pollutants. As such they can contribute significantly towards a more sustainable Hertfordshire.

282.   Given the major advantages which telecommunications can bring to society it is important that the country has an adequate network of telecommunications development to deliver an appropriate range and quality of services. It is also important, of course, to protect sensitive areas, assets and sites whilst recognising the limitations imposed by the nature and technology of the telecommunications network. Amongst the issues which must be balanced are the following:

- the potential reduction in pollution, global warming and the demand for non-renewable sources of energy;
- the visual intrusion which, by their very nature, certain types of telecommunications development can cause;
- the significance of the development as part of the national network;
- the quantity of facilities - groups of masts, for example, can be much more intrusive than a single mast at one location;
- opportunities to share masts or locate apparatus on existing structures;
- sensitive siting and design - particularly the need to protect statutory designated areas including AONB, SSSIs, statutory Nature Reserves, sites of archaeological and historic importance, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas;
- where development is proposed in sensitive areas, a legitimate consideration is whether opportunities have been fully explored to locate the development elsewhere, outside or away from the sensitive location or site;
- interference to broadcasting and telecommunications signals by physical presence of proposed new buildings.

283.   All of the above considerations, and others, are relevant matters for the planning system. Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 on 'Telecommunications' sets out a full range of issues which should be considered in relation to proposed development.

284.   Given the above, Policy 21 recognises the significant benefits which telecommunications and appropriate development can bring to society and the environment. However, the policy does seek to encourage, wherever possible and feasible, the sharing of facilities and the use of existing buildings and other structures, thereby reducing potential proliferation of development and visual impact. This will be particularly important where development is proposed in sensitive and statutorily designated locations and sites. It also acknowledges that proper consideration should be given to the operational and technical considerations which apply to telecommunications development and the importance of minimising potential visual impacts through not only location, but design and landscaping, where appropriate.

POLICY 21 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The growth of new and existing telecommunications development will be supported subject to other policies in the Plan, particularly those relating to protection of critical capital including the Chilterns AONB and other important environmental assets, and where:

i)   there is no reasonable possibility of sharing existing facilities; and

ii)   in the case of radio antenna and masts there is no reasonable possibility of erecting antennae on an existing building or other structure.

Any development should be sited and designed so as to minimise its visual impact, whilst taking into account operational and technical requirements.

TRANSPORT

General Considerations

285.   The movement of people and goods is one of the critical elements to be addressed in achieving a more sustainable Hertfordshire. To assist in promoting and pursuing a change in travel the County Council has formulated and developed the umbrella campaign 'TravelWise', which has now been adopted by over 70 other authorities and has led to the formation of the National TravelWise Association. TravelWise and its associated policies and plans are about changing travel habits, encouraging fewer and shorter journeys, moving to less damaging forms of transport and minimising the adverse environmental impact of transport infrastructure. These themes are central to the Government's revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 on 'Transport' and to the 1998 Transport White Paper entitled 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone'.

286.   Minimising the need for travel and encouraging less damaging forms of transport is an essential element of the overall development strategy. Urban regeneration and the emphasis on passenger transport will facilitate reductions in car travel and therefore improvements in air quality.

287.   Demand for transport will continue to rise and likewise traffic will grow unless specific measures are used to reduce reliance upon the motor car as the primary means of transport. While the ultimate aim is to reduce traffic on a permanent basis, this will be a long process and in the short term we can only expect to slow the growth trend. This will be recognised in targets developed for the Road Traffic Reduction Act and in actions related to Local Air Quality Management. However, we also need to encourage, promote and provide more facilities for other modes of transport, particularly walking, cycling and passenger transport services of all kinds.

288.   Immediate draconian restrictions at the local level on car use on their own are unlikely to be acceptable. More attractive alternatives have to be in place, both in where people wish to travel to and from, and in how they are able to travel. This requires commitment to both 'carrots' and 'sticks' as well as awareness and education. The aim of the transportation policies is therefore not to simply restrict car use but to shift the balance in terms of attractiveness towards other forms of transport. This involves ensuring that a wider range of transport choices are available to the community whilst still ensuring that the highest levels of personal safety are met. The County Council fully recognises that the benefits of investing in alternative modes will only be maximised if the 'stick' is also applied by fiscal or restraint measures.

289.   As with other areas of policy, the County Council does not act alone and it will be critical to work together with others for success. Furthermore, a variety of factors over the years may affect car use, including increasing congestion, concerns about air quality (as recognised in the 1997 Road Traffic Reduction Act) and fiscal measures by Central Government. The transport strategy of the County Council is therefore one which is aimed at not only influencing travel patterns directly (through its own policies and by working with

others) but also ensuring that people will be able to access the places and services they require even when cars can be used with less freedom than they are today.

290.   There are several strands to the County Council's approach:

- the development strategy, which aims to direct development in such a way that fewer and shorter journeys are possible, and that passenger transport, walking and cycling are more attractive and viable options;
- programmes to increase public awareness and encourage greater use of alternatives to the car;
- a more balanced and integrated approach to all transport investment;
- programmes to improve the provision for, and the reliability, image and safety of, passenger transport, walking and cycling.

291.   New development will be considered in sustainability terms with the formulation of an appropriate sustainable access package. Larger proposals will be required to be assessed for passenger transport accessibility so that new provision can be planned and provided for as part of the development. Existing large scale employers will be expected to produce commuter plans to minimise car use and such plans will also normally be required for new developments.   Targets will also be set for passenger transport modal share at new employment sites and developers will be encouraged to make a commitment to these through the planning process, including Section 106 Agreements.

292.   Planning and investment in transport facilities will be on an integrated basis such that all alternatives are considered. New road construction will normally be limited to meeting the needs for existing levels of traffic. This integrated approach places a greater emphasis on modes other than the private car, namely passenger transport, cycling and walking, in order to meet further demand for transport.   Most of the transport policies are matched by programmes which deal with non-land use planning matters, such as information and awareness, co-ordination and provision of passenger transport and TravelWise. Linkages between land use and transport will clearly be an important aspect of comprehensive settlement appraisals.

293.   Policy 25 on Car Parking places parking measures as a major element within the overall integrated approach.   In order to reduce the traffic generated the full parking provision of a development, calculated from the demand-based county standards, will not normally be permitted, particularly for non-residential development. Instead developers will be expected to make contributions to the provision of publicly managed parking spaces elsewhere and/or to improved provision for passenger transport, walking and cycling as part of integrated area transport packages.

294.   The County Council will support and implement the strategic policies of the Structure Plan through its annual Transport Policies and Programmes (TPP) document or the proposed replacement Local Transport Plans document. The TPP sets out its transport policies in more detail together with specific proposals, including funding and timing.   The Passenger Transport Policies are also set out in more detail in a separate document[8] and are regularly

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[8] '*Passenger Transport Policies'*, published by the County Council in 1997.

reviewed and further developed in consultation with district councils, operators and other interested parties.

295.   The transport policies of this Plan seek to realise the various strands in the County Council's approach to transport. Policy 22 deals with the need to reduce travel and the use of the car. Policy 23 addresses the enhancement of alternative modes and what developers and occupiers of new developments are expected to take into consideration in this respect.

POLICY 22 REDUCTION OF TRAVEL NEED AND CAR USAGE

The aim will be to reduce the growth in private motor traffic on roads, and minimise its environmental impact, especially during peak periods and in towns. Total capacity of County roads will be stabilised at its current level, subject only to increase attributable to planned development within the County, including development provided for by this Plan and any local plans implementing it. The management of that capacity will be designed to:

i)   make the most appropriate use of routes within the roads hierarchy, in particular for freight;

ii)   create opportunities to increase the proportion of journeys made by walking, cycling or by passenger transport in the safest manner possible.

The need to travel will be reduced, mainly by locating and planning development so as to require fewer and shorter journeys to be made and where safe access is possible. The design of all development including transportation schemes should ensure the maximum degree of safety for all users of the facilities provided.

POLICY 23   NETWORKS AND FACILITIES FOR NON MOTORISED TRANSPORT AND BUSES

Pedestrian, cycle, bus and where appropriate equestrian networks will be identified and implemented, as part of integrated transport plans. Along these routes measures will be undertaken to give greater priority and safety to pedestrians, cyclists, bus users and horse riders. Regard will be had in this policy to the National Cycling Strategy.

Developments which enable provision of improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, passenger transport and where appropriate horse riders will be supported and encouraged, subject to the other policies of this Plan. In particular, improvements will be sought to passenger transport services within and between towns, including services to towns outside Hertfordshire, and services for rural areas, as well as improvements to infrastructure to ensure that access by passenger transport to towns is improved and that travel to work by passenger transport is encouraged.

Development proposals should include appropriate facilities to provide safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and passenger transport users. Passenger transport accessibility profiles will be required to assist evaluation of proposals with significant travel requirements. Developers and occupiers will also be encouraged to develop their own

transport plans or take part in wider initiatives aimed at minimising inappropriate car use.

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296.   Policy 24 is aimed at facilitating environmental improvements in areas suffering from the impact of traffic. Environmental traffic zones are seen as important tools to improve air quality and reduce traffic in vulnerable urban areas.

POLICY 24 ENVIRONMENTAL TRAFFIC ZONES

Environmental traffic zones will be encouraged. These may take the form of:

i)   Areas of complete pedestrian/cycle priority and, where appropriate, equestrian priority, where all vehicular traffic is excluded; these areas will include measures to avoid conflict between cyclists and pedestrians;

ii)   Areas where general motor traffic is excluded, but for practical reasons it is necessary to give access to particular types of vehicles at limited periods;

iii)   Areas where it is desirable to minimise the effect of traffic by management, e.g. by traffic calming, highway safety measures, removing unnecessary traffic and excluding certain types of vehicle as appropriate.

297.   Urban areas offer the greatest scope to influence travel patterns because of the wider range of alternatives available. However, the overall development pattern of Hertfordshire, the size and location of the towns and villages in the County, means that there is a significant amount of movement between settlements, both within and beyond Hertfordshire. The car is likely to continue to be the preferred mode for many of these journeys but both the bus and rail networks are planned to have an increasingly important role in meeting the demand for travel.

298.   Elements of the transport strategy are designed to encourage the use of passenger transport for travel in and between towns. Facilities which are aimed at improving passenger transport in towns (such as transport interchanges, feeder bus services and priority measures) will also clearly help inter-urban services. The provision of such facilities will form a part of the local transport plans and also of the integrated transport plans which cover wider areas of the County. However, successful inter-urban passenger transport of whatever sort will need to be especially reliable, frequent, inexpensive, and feel safe (especially at night). There will also need to be far greater promotion of routes, services and fares to inform and encourage usage.

299.   The County Council will improve and provide passenger transport in these aspects, as well as supporting major rail improvement schemes and promoting appropriate new routes. In particular, it will pursue and promote the provision of a new dedicated passenger transit system, such as a guided light rail or tram system, in central Hertfordshire (Policy 32). Measures to encourage commuters, particularly to London, to use rail from their local station, in order to discourage part-commuting by car, will also be sought.   Where major developments are proposed near either the new passenger transit system or rail lines every effort shall be made to serve the development by these modes including, where relevant, safeguarding land for new rail stations and infrastructure. The relative accessibility of different locations by these modes will be an important factor in the consideration of development proposals and subsequent planning gain agreements.

300.   New stations not related to new developments, notably 'parkway stations', should only be proposed where they form an integral part of an overall transportation strategy for an area and would result in a significant reduction in car movements. They will be assessed with regard to their contribution to improving accessibility to the rail network, their impact on road traffic on County roads, the likely relief to congestion and to other relevant planning policies such as the Green Belt.

301.   Where possible, rail users will be encouraged to use local services to access long distance services at the key interchange points of Stevenage and Watford Junction. 'Rail-heading' by which travellers drive substantial distances to park their cars before taking the train rather than using their local rail services will be discouraged. Every effort will be made to enhance access to local stations by alternative modes of transport.

302.   Passenger transport for rural areas is unlikely to ever be commercially viable and the aim of shifting the balance of different modes of transport cannot be viewed in the same way as in urban areas. However, enhanced provision of rural services is essential in rural communities where basic amenities are declining, and the recent 'Rural Boost' for rural buses will help. The provision of rural passenger transport needs to be looked at distinctly, and the use of more innovative services for those needing passenger transport, such as dial-a-ride, post buses and shared taxis, play a part in addition to normal bus services.

303.   However, whilst particular attention needs to be made to passenger transport, the overall transport needs of rural communities must be considered. This includes both movements within rural areas and the interaction with urban centres. The County Council will therefore develop rural transport plans to address these issues. Support for local services and facilities in villages to reduce the need to travel also remains an important element of the strategy.

304.   Nonetheless, it must be recognised that many rural residents will choose to continue to use cars. The provision of suitable park and ride facilities on the edge of towns can play a role in improving access to towns and is, therefore, as much part of the approach to rural transport issues as urban. Park and ride facilities must, however, be operated as part of an overall transport strategy for an area in conjunction typically with limited town centre parking and bus priority schemes and their operation should be such as to not encourage additional car travel. The location of new car parks, as with new rail stations, will need to take account of a number of policies in this Plan.

Car Parking

305.   Car Parking as a whole is dealt with in Policy 25. This policy sets out the approach to car parking provision in new developments. Supplementary planning guidance is being prepared by the County and district councils jointly to clarify terminology, set out agreed standards and assist with the preparation of more detailed policies about car parking in local plans.

POLICY 25 CAR PARKING

Car parking policies and standards shall form part of the overall policies for the management of the highway network. Provision for car parking in urban areas shall be considered in the context of district wide local plans and local transportation town plans, these taking account of the results of any comprehensive settlement appraisals.

Development proposals with potentially significant car parking demand will only be permitted where the applicant has agreed to take measures to address the problems (of traffic generation, congestion, and on-street parking pressure) likely to arise from the parking demands generated by the development.

Potential car parking demand arising from development proposals should be assessed using demand-based car parking standards.

Non-Residential Development

All non-residential development with significant parking implications should be in locations with the potential for good access to other means of travel than the private car. Such locations include the whole areas of all settlements listed in Policy 6.

The main emphasis shall be on maximum standards, on minimum provision to meet operational and customer requirements, and on catering for the travel needs of employees either by public transport or, to the extent that car usage is necessary, by provision shared with other users. Full parking provision on site in line with demand-based car parking standards will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Operational and customer parking provision on site should be kept to a minimum. Employee car parking demands should, as far as possible, not be met on site but be substituted with alternative provision for non motorised or passenger transport or publicly managed parking. The developer can achieve this by commuting the cost of meeting potential parking demands on site into financial contributions to fund these alternative measures. Where a major employment generating development is proposed, the developer will be expected to submit a 'commuter plan' as part of a traffic impact study.

Redevelopment of existing private parking areas for other purposes will be encouraged if the parking demand of existing and new development is dealt with on the basis of the principles set out above.

Residential Development

Full parking needs should be met on site except in suitable town centre and other locations with good access to passenger transport, where reduced provision may be sought associated with commuted payments as appropriate. Car free residential development may also be considered in suitable locations, subject to satisfactory site covenants, on-street parking controls and provision of alternative means of transport.

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New Off-Street Parking

Where appropriate, new off-street parking provision will be supported to alleviate existing on street parking, especially where this can be achieved in new development or redevelopment schemes.

Park and Ride

Proposals to provide park and ride facilities for access to appropriate town centres, other traffic attracting locations and the rail network will be encouraged and suitable locations will be identified in conjunction with service proposals.

Parkway Stations

Suitable locations for parkway stations may be identified, subject to the other policies in this plan, taking account of the operational requirements of the railway system and the potential to reduce commuter travel currently undertaken by road.

The Role of Local Plans

Local plans should provide detailed guidance on application of this policy in the specific circumstances of individual districts.

The County Road System

306.   The management and maintenance of the County's road system will remain of primary importance. Priority will be given to minimising the number of accidents and injuries, and traffic will be encouraged to use those parts of the network to which it is most suited.

307.   Through traffic is encouraged to use the Primary Route Network which forms part of the national network of high quality routes linking the major centres of population. The network consists of motorways, trunk roads and the more important County 'A' roads. In order to ensure this network is used it may be necessary to improve traffic capacity along these routes, provided that such improvements are environmentally acceptable. It is unlikely that the increase in provision required by the growth levels currently predicted by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) would be environmentally acceptable.

308.   Improvements to the Primary Route Network will therefore be limited to meeting the needs for the levels of traffic at the time when the decision is taken to adopt a preferred route. A capability to cater for future traffic growth, except that generated by planned development known about at that time, will not be incorporated into the design.   Proposals for improvements to the Primary Route Network are covered in Structure Plan Policies 33 and 35.

309.   Heavy goods vehicles will need to access places off the main road network in both urban and rural areas, for example to serve farms. However, vehicles not requiring direct

access will be discouraged from using local roads, and wherever possible HGV traffic will be encouraged to use the Primary Route Network.

310.   Through road traffic and the role of primary routes are dealt with in Policy 26.

POLICY 26 PRIMARY ROUTES AND THROUGH TRAFFIC

The aim will be to secure the most efficient and effective use of primary routes. Through traffic will be encouraged to use these routes and capacity improvements may be made to this end, so long as they are environmentally acceptable and in the context of a package approach designed to optimise overall use of the network without significantly increasing the overall capacity of the system. Formation of vehicular access to primary routes to facilitate development will be permitted only in very special circumstances.

Heavy goods vehicles will be encouraged to use the Primary Route Network.

311.   Highway improvements to roads other than primary routes are dealt with in Policy 27 and the construction of new roads in Policy 28. The emphasis in both cases is on achieving environmental benefits and passenger transport improvements.

POLICY 27   HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS OTHER THAN TO PRIMARY ROUTES

Other than to primary routes, highway improvements will be carried out:

i)   as part of an overall plan for the area where such improvements:

a)   enable more effective use of public transport (by allowing increased capacity, easier movement or improved accessibility), walking, cycling or horse riding; or

b)   result in significant and demonstrable environmental gains; or

c)   are required for urban regeneration, but subject to the other policies of this plan; or

d)   are needed to accommodate the requirements of planned developments; or

e)   are entirely ancillary to a scheme for improving a primary route.

ii)   for highway safety reasons.

POLICY 28 NEW ROADS

Where new roads are constructed to relieve adverse environmental conditions resulting from the effects of traffic on existing roads, these will principally be aimed at relieving these conditions and will not necessarily be designed to accommodate all projected growth on the new road.

Where new road building is undertaken every effort will be made to ensure that the physical impact of the road and its effect on the landscape and environment is minimised. The design process will be safety audited to ensure that potential safety hazards are eliminated or minimised.

Traffic and Road Safety Implications of Development Proposals

312.   The consideration of proposed developments in terms of traffic and road safety implications is the subject of Policy 29. The need to reduce traffic and the need to travel will form an important element of the consideration of proposals, as will the desire to minimise car parking on site (Policy 25).

POLICY 29 TRAFFIC AND ROAD SAFETY IMPLICATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The traffic and road safety implications of development proposals, and the related proposals for addressing them, will be assessed in the light of the aims and principles set out in Policy 22 and, in particular, any public transport accessibility profiles required. Development will be located so that traffic is discouraged from using roads, in particular local distributor and access roads, to which it is not appropriate.

In particular, development which would generate a significant change in the amount or type of traffic using rural roads will be resisted, where:

i)   there is an increased risk of accidents, especially to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users such as horse riders;

ii)   where the road is poor in terms of width, alignment or structural condition; or

iii)   where increased traffic would have an adverse effect on the rural character of the road or the residential properties along it.

Development generating particular types of heavy traffic, including distribution centres and waste and minerals operations, will be located such as to discourage that traffic from using roads other than the primary network wherever possible.

Freight Transport by Rail and Water

313.   In addition to discouraging heavy traffic on roads other than the primary network the County Council aims to encourage goods traffic onto other types of transport. Policy 30 deals with the establishment of rail and water depots and the Council will support applications under Section 139 and 140 of the Railways Act 1993 to transfer freight traffic from roads to rail or water, including the County's navigable waterways.

314.   It is recognised that local authorities have a key role to play in identifying potential sites for railfreight terminals and working with railfreight operators and Railtrack to ensure that the potential for transfer of freight movements from road to rail is maximised The County Council will support railfreight grant applications to assist with transfer from road to rail, subject to local circumstances.

POLICY 30: RAIL AND WATER FREIGHT DEPOTS

The establishment of rail and water depots for freight, including aggregates will be supported at suitable locations in the County, taking into account the suitability of the local road network for secondary collection or distribution, the relationship with employment uses and the environmental impact. Other measures to encourage through traffic to transfer from road to rail and water will be supported. Wherever appropriate, conditions will be imposed on planning permissions and planning obligations will be sought to maximise the amount of non-road borne freight.

MAJOR TRANSPORT INVESTMENT

Rail Schemes

315.   The County Council supports proposed rail schemes which improve services and the role which rail can play, benefiting both Hertfordshire and the wider region. These include the Croxley Rail Link, Crossrail, Thameslink 2000, the East Coast Mainline Capacity Review and East-West Rail Link (presently the subject of separate studies), West Coast Main Line Upgrade (PUG2), Heathrow Express, Channel Tunnel Rail Link (and the international stations at St Pancras and Stratford) and various improvements to the London Underground. Only those which are within Hertfordshire, however, can be the subject of a policy and these are covered in Policy 31. Additionally, as a response to the rail franchising process the County Council has produced a report setting out its aspirations for the rail network in Hertfordshire[9].

316.   The results of the East-West Rail Link Study will be considered positively in the light of the transport benefits that such a link at Letchworth might bring to the County and also in the light of the other wider policies of this Plan.

POLICY 31   RAIL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

The County Council supports in principle rail improvement schemes in progress or prospect. In particular, it supports the West Coast Main Line improvements as they affect the county, and the following schemes indicated on the Key Diagram:

i)   Croxley Rail Link

ii)   Crossrail

iii)   Thameslink 2000

317.   The existing passenger transport links within the County, and those improvements referred to above, are generally radial from London. East-west passenger transport links within and beyond the County are very poor. Consequently during 1995, a partnership of the County Council, Welwyn Hatfield District Council, St Albans City and District Council, Watford Borough Council and the University of Hertfordshire commissioned a preliminary feasibility study to examine the development of a high-quality passenger transit system through central Hertfordshire, through major towns, a Key Employment Site, mainline stations and potential park and ride facilities.

318.   The Central Herts Passenger Transit System, the consultants concluded, could be viable from 2005. Potential ridership is greatest for a Watford to St Albans to Hatfield / Welwyn Garden City section and significantly lower for an extension to Hertford, Ware and Harlow. A high quality guided light tram or guided bus system offers more potential than express bus or speed bus systems. The consultants suggested a preliminary alignment with the present rail network making off-road or segregated systems possible in places, while

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[9] *'A Prospectus for Hertfordshire's Rail Network'* , published in 1997.

redevelopments within towns could provide further opportunities. The scheme will be pursued through the public private partnership programme with private finance being a key element. More detailed studies are in hand to pursue the proposal and address the technical and environmental issues. The potential alignments will be taken into account in local plan reviews.

319.   The County Council's commitment to the Central Herts Passenger Transit System is shown in Policy 32. The system will be funded from various sources, including contributions made through Section 106 agreements in connection with development proposals in the general area of the scheme.

POLICY 32   CENTRAL HERTS PASSENGER TRANSIT SYSTEM

The County Council, in partnership with others, will continue to promote the Central Herts Passenger Transit System as indicated on the Key Diagram. The promotion of this scheme will be associated with measures to address its consequential traffic, safety and other implications. The County Council will also support further improvements to east/west passenger transport within and beyond the County.

Trunk Road Programme

320.   The Government has undertaken a series of reviews of its Trunk Road Programme, each of which has reduced the number of schemes in Hertfordshire. The programme existing at the time of adoption of this Plan has since been subject to further review. It is acknowledged that improvements to the trunk road network may be needed to ensure that businesses can continue to operate effectively and to encourage through traffic to use them. Inclusion of a scheme within the policy, however, does not necessarily imply support by the County Council. The County Council does not believe that road improvements alone are an adequate long-term solution for dealing with the problems of traffic growth and congestion, though improvements to particular sections, such as the Wadesmill - High Cross - Colliers End bypass on the A10, will substantially improve the quality of life for residents living on the existing road. Where the capacity of trunk roads is increased the County Council will expect measures to be taken to minimise the impact on both the local environment and traffic generation.

321. In relation to the M25 widening proposals, the County Council strongly disapproved of proposals for parallel link roads, which were subsequently abandoned in a Roads Review, and does not agree to proposals for widening the motorway to 4 lanes. Consequently the description and categorisation of schemes in Policy 33 are those of the DETR and schemes are not necessarily endorsed by the County Council.

POLICY 33   TRUNK ROAD PROGRAMME

The Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions proposes to carry out the following schemes:

1996 Trunk Road Programme

M1	**Junctions 6a - 10 widening**
M25	**Junctions 16-19 widening**
A1(M)	**Junctions 6-8 widening**

322.   The 1998 Roads Review has added the A10 Wadesmill - High Cross - Colliers End bypass to this list but has withdrawn the widening of the M25 between junctions 16-19. Both decisions have been welcomed by the County Council. The proposals for widening the M1 and A1(M) are to be subject of a further transportation study by the Government and continue to have the support of the County Council.

Motorway Service Areas

323.   The motorway service areas (MSA) at South Mimms on the junction of the A1(M) and M25 is currently the only one in Hertfordshire. That at Birchanger on the M11 just east of Bishops Stortford is within Essex, while a proposals for one at Radwell on the A1(M) just north of Baldock has been approved but not yet implemented. In addition, there are MSAs north and south of the County on the M1, and proposals for MSAs to the west on the M25.

324.   At the time of adoption of this Plan the Government considered that the minimum spacing between the MSAs should normally be 15 miles, with locations on junctions and between junctions both being acceptable. Its guidance also stated that approval should not be given for an MSA within the Green Belt except in very special circumstances. Policy 34 was prepared in the light of this guidance, but subsequent supplementary advice recommends a 30 mile interval rather than the 15 mile one. Any proposal for a new MSA in the County would need to take account of the Government's most recent policy position.

POLICY 34 MOTORWAY SERVICE AREAS

The development of motorway service areas will be subject to the provisions of this Plan relating to the protection of the Green Belt and the Chilterns AONB, the landscape and the natural environment, especially in statutorily designated areas or in the Lee Valley or Colne Valley Parks. In addition, motorway service area proposals should:

i)   be at a minimum distance of 15 miles apart;

ii)   be designed to allow safe access and operation;

iii)   for those located between motorway junctions, not include facilities which will generate traffic and trips in their own right, while the inclusion of such facilities

> **at interchanges must have regard to the capacity of the local road network to carry the additional traffic generated;**
>
> iv) **be sensitively related to existing settlement patterns and be designed so as to be unobtrusive in the landscape and allow for appropriate landscaping and screening;**
>
> v) **where feasible in line with these criteria, seek to use damaged or poorly restored land.**
>
> **Proposals for facilities on all-purpose trunk roads should have regard to broadly similar considerations within the terms of Government guidance as expressed in PPG13 and related DETR Circulars. Where appropriate, district councils should identify suitable locations for these when preparing local plans.**

325. In addition to MSAs there could be a need for similar, if more modest, facilities for access off Trunk Roads. Proposals should have regard to the planning and traffic implications outlined in the above criteria. District councils, when preparing local plans, should identify suitable locations for trunk road service areas where appropriate.

County Transport Schemes

326. Integrated transport and land use planning is actively being promoted in Hertfordshire as the most sustainable approach to meeting transport needs and a way of reducing road traffic and congestion. This will be developed through transportation studies. These may be on a sub-regional scale, such as the South West Herts Transportation Study (SWHTS) for Watford, Three Rivers and Bushey, or be based on more local town plans such as that being prepared for Harpenden. Such studies will provide the framework for transport policy, proposals and funding in their respective areas.

327. The SWHTS has been approved as a strategy and is now being implemented through package bids[10] and other contributions. It includes a comprehensive package of transportation proposals including town centre improvements, passenger transport initiatives, Green Zones, parking controls, traffic calming measures and cycling facilities.

328. Transportation studies thus provide both integrated transport plans and propose further transport schemes. Some of these schemes may be road improvement proposals, but many others will be packages of proposals which complement the County Council's TravelWise campaign and are very important to the achievement of our sustainable transport objectives. Proposals are not limited to transportation study areas and are currently detailed on an annual basis in the County Council's Transport Policies and Programme (TPP).

329. Policy 35 lists proposed improvements to the Primary Route Network (PRN) in accordance with Policy 26. These schemes are included in the 1998/99 TPP, although most

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[10]The County Council bids each year for Government grant for transport schemes. Package bids, recently introduced by the former Department of Transport, reflect the approach being taken in the Structure Plan. These bids look at an urban area as a whole and put forward an integrated package of measures, including road improvements, traffic management, public transport improvements, cycling, pedestrian measures, and so on.

remain on the reserve list, and are not listed in priority order. The County Council reviewed the PRN in 1995 and this review concluded that the network should remain as it was, with the exception of the A414 in Hemel Hempstead. This road was removed from the PRN in October 1996 though the Breakspear Way Roundabout scheme remains in the Policy and will be reviewed in the light of future widening of the M1.

POLICY 35 COUNTY TRANSPORT SCHEMES

The County Council has included the following schemes and problem areas on the Primary Route Network in its programme:

A505 Baldock bypass
A414 Hertford town centre (Gascoyne Way)
A414 Hertingfordbury Road, Hertford
A414 Breakspear Way roundabout, Hemel Hempstead
A120 Little Hadham
A120 Standon
A120 Bishop's Stortford bypass
A602 Gunnels Wood Road roundabout, Stevenage
A602 Bragbury End to Watton bypass
A602 Watton bypass to Tonwell bypass
A602 Tonwell bypass to A10, Ware

The County Council has included the following major schemes, not on the Primary Route Network, in its programme:

A 5183 Elstree bypass
Sawbridgeworth bypass

330.   Improvements to local roads and the need to achieve environmental and passenger transport benefits as a result are dealt with in Policy 36.

POLICY 36 IMPROVEMENTS TO LOCAL FEEDER NETWORKS

Improvements to local feeder networks will not be made for the purpose of accommodating any increase in traffic arising from schemes covered by Policies 33 and 35, save in so far as that increase is attributable to planned development. Assessment of each scheme will include consideration of possible alternatives and the following factors:

i)   measures to manage demand on the new or improved road and in the surrounding area;

ii)   design measures to enable passenger transport to accommodate local peak hour movement;

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iii)   environmental impact, including the impact on the landscape, ecology and the archaeological and built heritage;

iv)   the impact on relief of local problems;

v)   safety considerations.

Airports

331.   London Stansted and London Luton Airports are major civil airports lying just over the County boundary, in Essex and Luton, Bedfordshire respectively.   They are developments of regional importance which have significant impact on Hertfordshire, both economically and environmentally.   In addition general aviation is catered for at Elstree Aerodrome and various other smaller, largely private, facilities. All aviation while providing for economic and recreational demands can create environmental problems, particularly from aircraft noise.

332.   Stansted, which handled over 5 million passengers (mppa) in 1997, has planning permission for development to handle 15 mppa (although it requires Parliamentary approval to expand above 8 mppa). Current forecasts suggest that 15 mppa would be reached before the end of this Plan period (i.e. before 2011). Provision for the housing required within the County to accommodate the needs of employment growth associated with the airport's permitted capacity has been made in the East Hertfordshire Local Plan, largely on land west and north of Bishop's Stortford. These housing allocations are included within the overall dwelling requirements for the County.

333.   Sufficient land has been identified at Bishop's Stortford to meet the airport's requirements. These have been estimated as 1,000 dwellings for expansion of the airport to 8 mppa, all of which have now been built or are under construction, and another 1,500 dwellings for expansion of the airport to 15 mppa, should Parliamentary approval be given. It is not anticipated that throughput will exceed 8 mppa prior to 2001 and no further airport related housing land should need to be developed until this threshold level is reached. The total capacity of the Areas of Special Restraint at (north) Bishop's Stortford is greater than that required for airport related housing. Therefore some of this land may be brought forward, by East Hertfordshire District Council in the review of its Local Plan, for general housing purposes if required to meet the overall District provision as set out in Policy 9 of this Plan.

334.   The airport has been designed so that employment developments, both those directly related to the airport (e.g. passenger and air transport operations) and those associated with it (e.g. car parking and car hire, freight forwarding, etc.) can be located on the airport site itself. Therefore no such developments will need to take place in the surrounding towns and villages and no allocation specifically for airport related employment development has been made in Hertfordshire.

335.   Policy 37 ensures that the land identified for airport-related housing is not developed prematurely in advance of the airport's requirements thereby creating pressure for the release of other land.

POLICY 37   STANSTED AIRPORT - RELATED DEVELOPMENT IN HERTFORDSHIRE

Part of the land to the north of Bishop's Stortford excluded from the Green Belt and defined as an Area of Special Restraint in the East Hertfordshire Local Plan, has been identified to meet the residual housing needs associated with the expansion of Stansted Airport to 15 mppa. Development of this land shall only take place in the event that, and after, parliamentary approval is given for development of the airport to 15 mppa. Development of this land will be phased in accordance with the phasing of employment growth related to the Airport's development.

As provision is made for direct and associated airport employment within the Airport site itself in Essex, no employment land provision for such purposes will be made in Hertfordshire.

336.   Luton Airport has permission to expand from its current throughput of over 3 mppa in 1997 to about 5 mppa. Further proposals, including a terminal related to the new railway station currently under construction, are expected to seek to increase this capacity. The County Council will continue to view any proposal for expansion in the light of its impact on the County, particularly in terms of aircraft noise, traffic generation on local roads and development pressures, and will resist any proposed incursion of airport infrastructure into Hertfordshire.

337.   Both airports have recently installed equipment to improve the monitoring of aircraft noise and track keeping. (Track keeping ensures that departing aircraft follow set routes after take-off until they achieve set heights to minimise noise nuisance.) The County Council will seek to ensure that track keeping and noise limits are adequately monitored and enforced and that additional controls, to include landing aircraft for example, are introduced where possible. It will continue to seek improvements in both the daytime and night-time noise footprint of the airports to reduce their overall impact, working primarily through the Airport Consultative Committees.

338.   As neither airport is within the County boundary it would be inappropriate for the Structure Plan to contain policies relating directly to their on-site operations and future development. However it is expected that any major proposals for airport development should comply with the development plans of the surrounding areas and that any proposal which has an overall significant adverse affect on Hertfordshire will be opposed.

339.   Provision and control of general aviation facilities will be a matter for district councils in their local plans. Where relevant local plans should contain site specific policies relating to the operation of such facilities e.g. on building heights, noise limitations etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

340. The protection of assets, both in terms of renewable resources, and in terms of inherited environmental features, is fundamental to the aims of sustainability which underpin this Plan. Future developments need to be accommodated so as not to jeopardise irreplaceable elements of our environment to the detriment of future generations. The identification of 'environmental assets' is seen as a first step in this process.

341. Environmental assets range from essential resources such as water and ecological processes to landscape, historic and archaeological features which give a locality its unique character. The use of the term environmental asset encompasses not only those things which need to be strongly protected in their entirety ('critical capital'), but also those elements of the environment which, although amenable to some management or change, need to be protected or enhanced to avoid their degradation or where any loss would have to be compensated for by equivalent provision elsewhere ('constant assets').

342. For the purposes of this Plan all the features identified in this section are regarded as environmental assets for Hertfordshire, in that their loss or damage needs to be avoided if at all possible. It is important to note that the value of some assets relies on other characteristics of the environment in which they lie. It is also necessary, therefore, to have regard to the conservation of their environments or settings as well as the feature concerned.

343. The categorisation of an environmental asset will depend on its international, national or local status. In general, national and international environmental assets will be those identified by appropriate designations, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or RAMSAR sites. In the case of locally important environmental assets, these will be defined in line with agreed, standard criteria, according to the principles laid down in government planning guidance.

Critical Capital and Other Important Environmental Assets

344. Policy 38 takes a holistic approach in setting the scene for this section of the Plan. The level of protection that each category of assets is afforded is not identical. Rather, it is addressed within relevant legislation, planning policy guidance and local plans. Assets which are of differing importance at an international, national or local level need varying degrees of protection. Accordingly, local plans should identify features within their area and give them protection at an appropriate level.

345. In some cases it may be difficult to fully appreciate the environmental effect of a development proposal. In such instances, where there is a substantial possibility that a development may adversely affect a feature identified, or which may be identified, it may be appropriate to apply the 'precautionary principle'. In such cases, particularly where the environmental asset is of a 'critical' nature, development proposals should include comprehensive information to assist the decision-making process.

346. Where, having fully considered its environmental implications, development is permitted then appropriate mitigation or compensatory measures should be secured by local authorities through planning conditions or legal agreements.

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

347.   PPG7 on 'The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development' advises that the conservation of natural beauty should be the primary consideration of all planning decisions relating to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. AONBs are designated by the same means and under the same legislation as National Parks. The primary objective of designation is conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. There are no special statutory arrangements for the administration of AONBs although the Government endorses the practice of setting up joint advisory committees. The Chilterns AONB is the specific subject of Policy 42, as well as being included in its entirety the list of environmental assets in Policy 38.

Wildlife Habitats and Protected Species

348.   PPG9 on 'Nature Conservation' advocates a hierarchical approach to the protection of wildlife habitats according to their degree of importance. It also stresses the need to safeguard the integrity of those landscape features which are of value for wildlife habitat and movement on account of their linear continuity.

349.   Existing wildlife habitats and protected species are valuable resources. The County's habitats and wildlife stock should not be depleted. Additional wildlife features such as 'green corridors' will be encouraged.

350.   In the case of non-statutory nature reserves, wildlife sites and prime biodiversity areas, the principal source of information in Hertfordshire is the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre. Non statutory nature reserves should be those designated by formally constituted nature conservation or similar organisations. In the case of Wildlife Sites, the Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust and the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre, have identified key Wildlife Sites within each district and borough, and published the results in a series of reports.

351.   The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), produced on behalf of the Hertfordshire Environment and Countryside Forums by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, identifies key habitats and species needing conservation action, and these action plans may be used as a key to defining broader environmental features within a local area which can be identified in local plans for conservation action or enhancement, in line with planning policy guidance. The Hertfordshire BAP also identifies Prime Biodiversity Areas, following from the recommendations of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. These are referred to in Policy 38, and the areas recommended for consideration may be identified by reference to the Hertfordshire BAP technical report. In making use of these sources, it needs to be borne in mind that further information becoming available will be likely to require a review of some Wildlife Sites and Prime Biodiversity Areas over time. Local plans should therefore make provision for flexibility to account for this in their policies.

352.   Information on the occurrence of protected species, and on those identified by the UK BAP and relevant to Hertfordshire, may be obtained from the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre or from English Nature.

Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS)

353.   Information on Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites may be obtained from the Hertfordshire RIGGS Group, or from the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre.   Such sites have been identified through the application of standard assessment criteria, which are described in the Geological Strategy for Hertfordshire, commissioned by the Hertfordshire Countryside and Environmental Forums from the RIGGS Group.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Other Archaeological Remains

354.   Buildings, monuments and landscapes of historic and archaeological significance make a major contribution to the character and quality of the urban and rural environment of Hertfordshire. Many elements of Hertfordshire's historic environment are irreplaceable and are of national and international significance and as well as contributing to a local sense of identity.

355.   Man-made environmental assets comprise a broad range of features and remains and include historic buildings, structures, sites, buried deposits and landscape features of historic and archaeological interest. These assets can be appreciated through tourism, education and leisure activities, and have strong links with landscape character.

356.   The principal record of Hertfordshire's archaeological heritage is the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) which contains a wide range information. The SMR and specialist advice needed to interpret is contents will underpin any initiatives to conserve and enhance Hertfordshire's archaeological heritage.   This process will also be informed by developing intelligence on the landscape archaeology of Hertfordshire.

357.   Some archaeological sites are afforded statutory protection as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), however the majority of archaeological remains, many of which are of national importance, are not scheduled and require protection and management by other means, including the planning process. PPG16 on 'Archaeology and Planning' sets out guidance on the protection of this aspect of the historic environment and, like PPG9 on 'Nature Conservation', advocates a hierarchical approach to the conservation of remains according to their degree of importance.

Listed Buildings

358.   PPG15 on 'Planning and the Historic Environment' sets out a full statement of Government policies for the identification, protection and enhancement of historic buildings. These buildings are included on the statutory lists, published by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on the basis of their special architectural or historic interest. They make a major contribution to the historic, architectural and visual character of landscapes and

townscapes in the county. In addition they contribute to the prosperity of the local economy through tourism and leisure.

359. There are over 8,000 statutorily listed buildings in the County. A substantial number are timber-framed and date from the medieval period when Hertfordshire had an abundance of forests. Many of the listed buildings in the countryside are or were farm buildings including barns, stables, granaries and dovecotes. In order to retain their special historic and architectural character the preferred use for such structures is for them to continue in their original use, thereby providing a link with the agricultural past. Where this is not possible, conversion to small scale commercial, industrial, recreation or tourism use may be acceptable.

360. Hertfordshire contains several hundred country houses which reflect the impact of the gentry between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. They tend to occupy sites of historic importance and are important as features in the countryside. Some, like Moor Park, Hatfield and Knebworth Houses, were the country seats of the nobility and are surrounded by pleasure gardens and parks. Others, less ambitious in size, have no estate attached. The latter, with only gardens and ornamental grounds, may have served as a Dower Houses, hunting lodges, or the houses of the stewards, built and maintained from the resources of the estate. In addition, the proximity of rural Hertfordshire to London has meant that for centuries many people, having grown rich in trade or the professions, have purchased estates in the County and settled down as landowners.

361. Many country houses are under threat through demolition, change of use[11], or breaking up of the estate land as a result of economic or social changes. The paramount considerations for preservation are the aesthetic importance of these houses in their setting, and their value as part of the historical and cultural heritage of the nation. They provide physical evidence of the social history and domestic life of certain levels of society, frequently over several centuries. The buildings themselves and their attendant gates, lodges, stables and garden buildings are monuments to fine craftsmanship as well as to great architects and the development of domestic architecture.

362. The Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust provides specialist advice to assist in the preservation and well being of buildings and their surroundings.

Conservation Areas

363. Hertfordshire is well endowed with many historic towns and villages. These owe their character mainly to their historic buildings both individually, and in groups, together with the spaces that they enclose. These irreplaceable buildings are a vital part of the county's architectural heritage.

364. Many are within the 170 Conservation Areas which have been designated by local planning authorities in accordance with the duties imposed under Section 69 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990. They range in scale from the large parts of town centres to parts of rural villages. In recent years the contribution made by the pioneers

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[11] '*Change of Use of Country Houses*', published by Hertfordshire County Council in 1979.

of the Garden City Movement and the first New Towns in Hertfordshire has been marked by the designation of Letchworth, Welwyn Garden City, and Stevenage New Town.

365.   Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest. District and borough councils also have a duty to review their areas from time to time to consider whether further designation of conservation areas is required.

366.   The main responsibility for the designation, control of development within or affecting them, and the proposals for enhancing Conservation Areas also lies with the district and borough councils. The Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust offers a specialist design and conservation service to the planning authorities, designers, developers, builders and members of the public.

Historic Parks and Gardens

367.   Historic Parks and Gardens contribute to the quality of the County's landscape reflecting cultural and horticultural ideas of their time. They also offer a resource for recreation, tourism and education and often provide outstanding settings for listed buildings. English Heritage has compiled a Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest which are considered to be of national importance. Most of the 37 registered in Hertfordshire were artistically designed to complement country houses and to form their special setting. They include the work of Johannes Kip, Charles Bridgeman, Lancelot Brown, Richard Woods and Humphrey Repton. The Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust works closely with the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and Hertfordshire County Council to promote the preservation and maintenance of Parks and Gardens included on the Register and others.

368.   Following survey work a list has been compiled of historic parks and gardens in Hertfordshire which may, on further investigation, also be worthy of inclusion on the English Heritage Register. These unregistered sites still fall within the remit of Policy 38 (under category x, which is distinguished from sites on the Register which are included under category iv).

Sites with Historic Associations

369.   In addition to buildings, sites and locations which merit protection and conservation because of their integral physical architectural, nature conservation, archaeological or other interest and importance, there are others which have interest because of their historic associations.   Such associations include birthplaces or homes of famous or important individuals and sites or locations of famous or important events. English Heritage, for example, has compiled a draft Register of Historic Battlefields which will be comparable in status with the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

POLICY 38 CRITICAL CAPITAL AND OTHER IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

Critical Capital and other important environmental assets as listed below will be given protection from development or other proposals which would cause loss, permanent damage or significant and irreversible change to those particular characteristics and features that define their special quality. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to status, according to their international, national or local importance. The maintenance and enhancement, where appropriate, of these assets will be encouraged.

i) **The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**

ii) **Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest;**

iii) **Local Nature Reserves, other nature reserves and other identified Wildlife Sites and Prime Biodiversity Areas;**

iv) **Identified landscapes of high historic value, including Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historical Interest;**

v) **Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS);**

vi) **Species of fauna and flora protected by law or identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan as in need of particular conservation action;**

vii) **Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other archaeological remains of both national and more local importance, and their setting;**

viii) **Listed buildings and their settings and other buildings of architectural, archaeological or historic merit;**

ix) **Conservation Areas;**

x) **Unregistered historic parks and gardens, and their setting;**

xi) **Sites with historic associations.**

The Water Environment

370. Water is a crucial natural resource on which we rely for our drinking and other personal needs, to support business and industry, for leisure, recreation and navigation purposes. Watercourses and other water features are also integral and important elements of the landscape and valuable as habitats for wildlife. Modern society makes increasing and often conflicting demands on the water environment.

371.   The Environment Agency is the principle regulatory agency charged with the responsibility for overall policies on water resources, water quality and surface water management, including flood defence issues. Water companies are concerned with the supply of water, surface and foul water drainage and the treatment of sewage. The Agency also has duties to conserve and enhance the water environment when carrying out any of its functions, and a further duty to promote conservation and enhancement more widely.

372.   At a strategic level the Agency articulates a vision for the promotion of a sustainability strategy for the water environment in the Thames Region in its document 'Thames 21 - A Planning Perspective and a Sustainable Strategy for the Thames Region'. This stresses the importance of integrating water environment issues through the statutory development plan system.

373.   At the local level, one of the main mechanisms through which the Agency seeks to promote an integrated and sustainable approach to managing the whole environment, including the water environment, is through the production of Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPS). Figure 17 illustrates the extent of LEAP areas which include parts of Hertfordshire. The purposes of LEAPS are to:

- focus attention on the environment of a specific local area;
- involve all interested parties in planning for the future well-being of that area;
- agree to a vision for the area which guides all the Agency's activities over the next 10 to 20 years; and
- establish an integrated strategy and plan of action for managing and improving the local environment over the next five years.

Figure 17: River Catchment Areas covered by Local Environment Agency Plans.
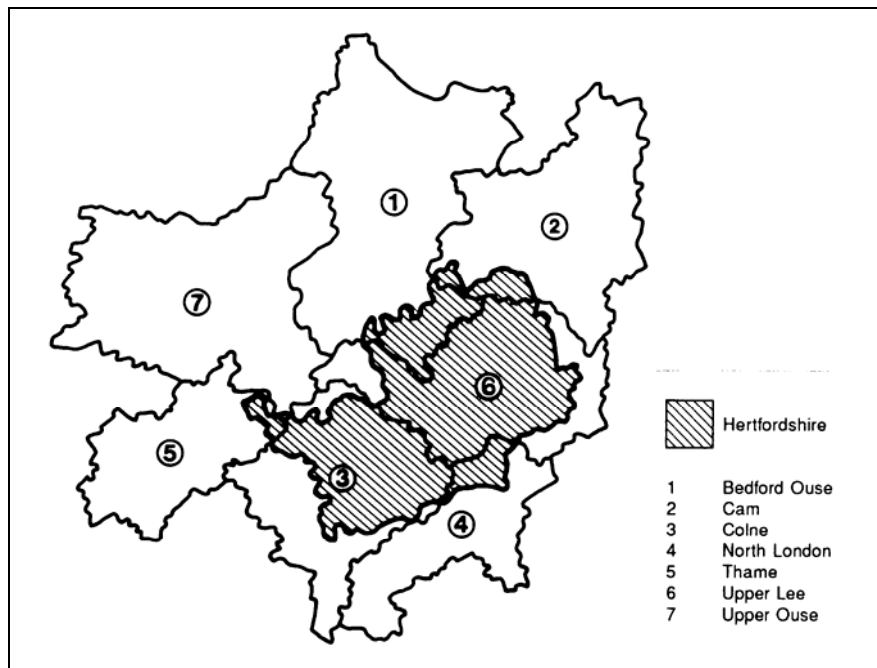
Source: Based on plans produced by the Environment Agency

374.	The planning system plays a major role in facilitating future development which is sustainable in its impact upon the water environment. PPG12 on 'Development Plans and Regional Guidance' recognises the need for the development plan to take water supply issues into account in the preparation of all development plans. Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) states that local planning authorities should ensure that proposals in development plans are realistic in terms of the likely availability of adequate water supply and will not compromise environmental objectives and that in addition development should incorporate measures to reduce demand for water, including recycling and reuse schemes, particularly where resources are short.

375.	There are a range of policies in the Plan which contribute to ensuring that development addresses issues relating to water consumption, resources and supply. Policy 1 on Sustainable Development, for example, seeks to ensure that the protection and efficient use of resources is integrated into development planning and decision-making. Policy 2 on Design and Provisions of Development, amongst other matters, can be seen as a focus for integrating efficient use of water into development design, such as minimising use and encouraging reuse and recycling.

376.	Whilst water conservation and consumption issues go beyond the scope of this Plan, Policy 39 recognises the wider contributions which the planning system can make to protecting and enhancing the water environment. The aquifer, for example, is a crucial resource on which Hertfordshire depends heavily for its water supply and which is very sensitive to pollution. The development plan has an important role to play in protecting it from the potential effects of inappropriate development and minimising risk from any new development. Policy 39 also seeks to ensure that development protects and enhances, where appropriate, all water features and uses including their habitat, landscape, navigation and recreational value.

377.	A further significant area where the planning system has a major role is in relation to land drainage. Policy 39 addresses land drainage implications of development in two ways. Firstly, it introduces the need for new development to have proper regard to the possibility of a direct threat from flooding, particularly in flood plains. Secondly, it recognises that new development itself can generate additional run-off which may be felt 'downstream'.

POLICY 39 THE WATER ENVIRONMENT

Development will be required to take full account of the need to protect and where appropriate enhance:

i)	**the aquifer**
ii)	**recreation and navigation**
iii)	**flora and fauna**
iv)	**river corridors and all watercourses**
v)	**ground and surface water quality**
vi)	**wetland land uses**
vii)	**archaeological remains**

Development proposals that would be at risk from flooding or which would be likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere to an unacceptable level will be resisted.

Agricultural Land

378.   In addition to green field development as part of the overall development strategy (Policies 6, 7 and 8), Policy 18 on the Rural Economy recognises that continuing diversification of the rural economy will inevitably bring with it associated development pressures in the open countryside. One of the most significant issues in ensuring that development proceeds in as sustainable way as possible is how land and soil for agricultural purposes is protected. Whilst not all rural land is currently be used for agricultural purposes, any that is not may well be required some time in the future for food production. As such, agricultural land and soil is a critical resource and should be protected for future generations.

379.   The Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF)'s Agricultural Land Classification system provides a framework for classifying land based on climate, relief and soil quality. There are five grades of land of which grades 1, 2, and 3a make up what is termed 'best and most versatile land'. These grades are the most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and are best suited to adapting to the changing needs of agriculture. PPG7 on 'The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development' places considerable weight on protecting the best and most versatile land. It states that if land in grade 1, 2 and 3a does need to be developed, and there is a choice between sites in different grades, then development should be directed towards land of the lowest grade. The guidance also recognises, however, the need to take into account other important factors, including the need to protect the rural environment.

380.   There are two strands to the protection afforded by Policy 40 on Agricultural Land. First, where new uses are proposed on good quality farmland the potential for reversion of the land to agriculture should be ensured as far as possible. Second, where development of a more permanent nature is proposed it should be directed to grades of land of lowest quality, thereby protecting the most valuable resource. Policy 40 recognises, however, that in some circumstances the balance of planning considerations may justify development being located on better quality agricultural land.

381.   MAFF has published 1: 250,000 scale maps which show agricultural land quality. However, these maps were produced for strategic planning purposes and are not accurate below site areas of about 80 hectares. Furthermore, they do not show sub-division of grade 3 into 3a and 3b and therefore cannot be used to assess the extent of 'best and most versatile' land (i.e. grades 1, 2 and 3a) at a scale suited to the review of local plans and determination of planning applications. More recently, maps have been produced which predict the likelihood of the best and most versatile land but again these are not at a scale suited to local planning work and, for copyright reasons, cannot be reproduced on a county-scale map in this Plan. However, in line with PPG 7, local planning authorities can request MAFF to produce detailed maps of agricultural land classification based on field survey work. Such maps will be suitable for use in local plan preparation and in determining planning applications involving green field land.

POLICY 40 AGRICULTURAL LAND

The use of the best and most versatile agricultural land for any form of development not associated with agriculture or forestry will not be permitted unless there is a reliable prospect that the land will be restored to at least its original quality, or there is a strong case for its development which overrides the need to protect such land. Where development is permitted on the best and most versatile (grades 1, 2 and 3a) land, it should, as far as possible, use the lowest grade of land suitable for development.

Tree and Hedge Cover

382.   Wood is a renewable natural resource, the increased production and use of which needs to be encouraged. Trees also contribute to sustainability by:

- removing carbon dioxide from the air;
- helping to achieve landscape, nature conservation and recreation objectives;
- providing shelter and shade to buildings, and thus reducing heating and air-conditioning requirements;
- contributing to the restoration of damaged land.

383.   Improved management of existing tree cover will be the first priority, especially for neglected woods, seeking successfully to integrate environmental objectives with economic viability. Indigenous species will be most appropriate in ancient semi-natural woodlands. Elsewhere, species and management techniques should be chosen to suit the particular physical characteristics and limitations of each site and the landscape character of the area. (See Policy 44 and the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy.)

384.   The health of trees, particularly within urban areas, is affected by development decisions. Development should therefore be designed and if necessary subject to appropriate planning conditions to avoid problems such as:

- soil compaction, typically during construction works;
- poisoning due to ground pollution or polluted water run-off because of inadequate attention to drainage issues;
- changes in ground level around retained trees which results in either drying or waterlogging of roots;
- physical damage to roots resulting from construction works, including trenching when pipes and cables are laid on and off development sites;
- an inadequate volume of rootable soil to support healthy growth as trees mature - mainly a problem on disturbed town centre and other previously developed sites, which can be rectified by importation of clean soil into excavated pits prior to planting;
- choice of inappropriate species for planting, either because they will not flourish or because a different choice would have made a better contribution to environmental objectives;
- inappropriate tree establishment techniques - typically poor soil preparation, use of large size planting stock when smaller (and cheaper) stock would be better, inadequate control of competing weeds, insufficient or inappropriate protection from animal damage and vandalism, and inadequate watering when required during dry spells.

385. Where damage to trees and hedgerows is unavoidable, the loss should be compensated for by equivalent and appropriate provision of tree and hedge cover elsewhere, which may need to be substantial if it is mature features that are being lost.

386. The second main priority will be to increase tree cover in appropriate landscape character areas through appropriately located, carefully designed and well maintained new planting schemes. The creation of Watling Chase Community Forest will do just this. Here, within the area indicated on the Key Diagram, mixed and predominantly broad-leaved woodland together with other tree cover is planned to increase from about 8% of the area at present to about 30% during the next 25 years. Throughout the County there will also be other significant opportunities to increase tree cover, e.g. through landscape planting provided wherever there are new developments and in response to investments made to meet targets set through local action plans.

387. The Countryside Management Service and others supported by Hertfordshire County Council published a revised 'Hertfordshire Woodland Strategy' in 1997. This sets out detailed policies and initiatives in regard to existing woodland, new woodlands, education and community involvement and the co-ordination of work.

388. Hedges and mature hedgerow trees provide a key habitat for wildlife, and evidence of the richness of landscape history. This has been recognised by the Government in its introduction of the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations, which are currently being revised. Local authorities now require notice to be given to allow them the opportunity to assess the 'importance' of the hedgerow before certain works are carried out. Of more importance, hedgerows have been recognised as key to the subtleties of Hertfordshire's landscape character. The Hertfordshire Countryside Forum is now examining whether or not a more strategic approach to hedgerow conservation is now required.

POLICY 41 TREE AND HEDGE COVER

Improved management of existing tree and hedge cover will be supported and proposals which would result in a net loss of cover will be resisted. Development should be designed in such a manner to ensure the healthy long-term growth of retained cover and new planting.

Appropriate proposals to increase tree cover will be encouraged, particularly in the area of the Watling Chase Community Forest.

All management and new planting proposals should accord with the other policies in this Plan, particularly in regard to the protection of irreplaceable ecological, landscape, archaeological and other cultural assets.

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

389.   The Chiltern hills, extending into west and north west Hertfordshire are of national landscape importance and an area of 800 square kilometres was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1964. A boundary change was confirmed in 1990, enlarging the area to 833 square kilometres. This designation affords special status in the control of development and establishes the primary aim as the conservation of the scenic beauty of its countryside and settlements. The AONB policy overlies other policies in the Plan such as Policy 5 on the Green Belt and Policy 38 on Critical Capital and Other Important Environmental Assets, and therefore further constrains the type of change and development that can be allowed.

390.   A completely revised Management Plan for the Chilterns AONB was commissioned by the Chilterns Conference in 1992 and published as 'The Framework for Action' in October 1994. This replaces the 1971 Plan. Policy 42 sets out more detailed guidance on the particular considerations which apply to the Chilterns AONB and reflects the Chilterns Conference's 'Statement of Intent'.

POLICY 42 CHILTERNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Within the designated Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as indicated on the Key Diagram, any development proposals which would adversely affect the special character, appearance and conservation of the AONB will not be permitted.

Proposals for mineral working will be subject to the most rigorous examination to assess the need for the mineral and the environmental effects of the proposal and, if granted, must be subject to the highest possible standards of operation, restoration and aftercare.

Major development proposals affecting the Chilterns, including waste management and road proposals, will be regarded as inconsistent with the aims of the designation as AONB, except where it is proven that the development is in the national interest and no alternative site is available.

Within the AONB the following aims and priorities will be supported:

i)   sustain the beauty of the Chilterns as the prime consideration;

ii)   secure the long-term rehabilitation of the Chiltern beech and broadleaved forest and chalk downland;

iii)   encourage agriculture to prosper whilst enhancing conservation of the landscape;

iv)   manage recreation and tourism within the capacities of each area and the overriding needs of conservation;

v)   **conserve and enhance the rich heritage of ecological, archaeological and architectural features of the Chilterns;   Continued ....**

vi)   **assure the Chilterns' long-term economic and social viability, balancing the needs of those living and working in it with the essential environmental constraints;**

vii) **resist external development pressures for major roads and mineral workings unless there is an over-riding national need, but if essential to seek the highest possible environmental standards and compensating improvements.**

Landscape

391.   There are areas in Hertfordshire which deserve landscape conservation priority because of their landscape value.   They were originally designated as 'Landscape Conservation Areas' in the 1986 Structure Plan Review and these areas were retained in the 1991 Alterations. Some additional areas have been so designated in subsequent local plan reviews.   Boundaries are defined having regard to land form, wildlife interest, natural features and the existence of settlements with special historical or cultural associations. In advance of development of a new approach outlined in the Landscape Strategy, the maintenance of existing Landscape Conservation Areas will be necessary to afford adequate protection to those parts of the County of higher landscape quality.

POLICY 43 LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AREAS

Landscape Conservation Areas are indicated on the Key Diagram and their boundaries have been defined in local plans. The future of these will be reviewed in the course of implementing Policy 44 in local plans. Particular regard is to be given to the setting, siting, design and external appearance of such development as is permitted in these areas.

392.   The Countryside Commission and English Nature have published a 'Countryside Character Map of England'. Following on from this and in line with Government planning policy guidance, Hertfordshire County Council in consultation with district councils and other interested local organisations has now published a Landscape Strategy for Hertfordshire[12]. Based on a variety of criteria, but predominantly land form and topography, soil types, vegetation, habitats and local knowledge, six Landscape Regions have been identified in the County and these are described in detail in the Landscape Strategy. These Regions are broadly consistent with the National Character Areas identified by the Countryside Commission and English Nature, but are interpreted from a Hertfordshire perspective using a slightly finer grain approach.   The six Landscape Regions in Hertfordshire are shown in Figure 18.

393.   One of the main targets in the Landscape Strategy is the development of a Landscape Character Assessment for the County through the local plan process. This Landscape Character Assessment will be at an appropriately detailed scale and will take as its context the six Landscape Regions which have been identified in the Landscape Strategy. Following

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[12] '*A landscape Strategy for Hertfordshire, Volume 1: Background Information*', published 1998.

the more detailed assessment, it will be possible to refine the schematic diagram reproduced in Figure 18 and to identify boundaries with greater accuracy.

394. The assessment will be based on a structured, systematic and transparent methodology that will define tracts of landscape with particular characteristics ('landscape types'). It will include consideration of geology, land form, soil types, natural vegetation, historical land management, and visual aspects, avoiding subjectivity. The condition of the landscape will also be assessed. Following community involvement, it will lead to the identification of local landscape character areas. As these become defined, and appropriate policies are created to offer a combination of protection, enhancement or landscape creation, it will become possible to rigorously review other overlapping countryside designations in line with PPG7. It will also enable better advice on relevant development control and countryside management matters.

Figure 18: Landscape Regions

Northern Vale Salient	1
The Chilterns	2
East Anglian Chalk	3
East Herts Plateau	4
Central River Valley	5
South Herts Plateau	6
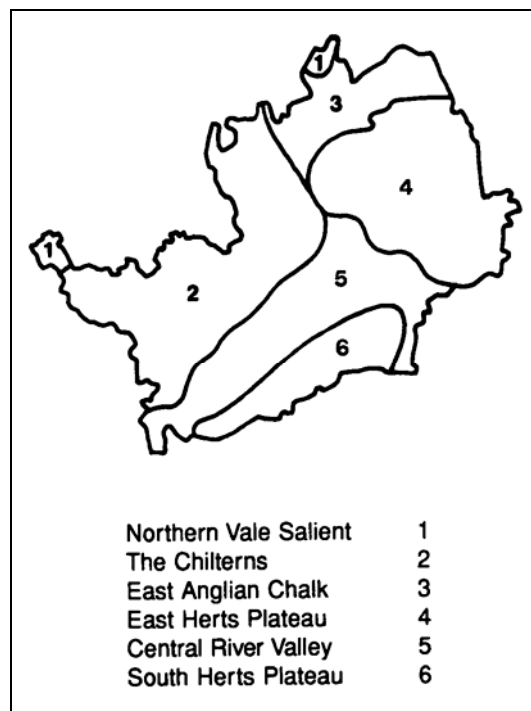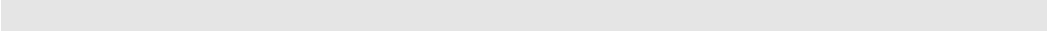
Source: A Landscape Strategy for Hertfordshire, Volume 1, Hertfordshire County Council, 1998

395. It is expected that the more detailed landscape assessment being developed through the local plan process will be available during the currency of this Plan. Meanwhile, Volume 1 of the Landscape Strategy and in the case of the Watling Chase Community Forest, the Forest Plan, will be significant tools for the planning system and will act as supplementary planning guidance. As such they will inform the local plan process and be material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

396. As outlined in paragraph 391 and Policy 43, landscape conservation has tended to be based on designating Landscape Conservation Areas. However, in line with the overall

approach set out above, Policy 44 provides a framework for a more holistic and comprehensive view of how landscape should be dealt with in land use planning.

POLICY 44 LANDSCAPE REGIONS

Landscape regions will be defined as a framework for further action and advice to conserve the distinctive landscape and habitat features of particular tracts of the county. More detailed policies to conserve these features will be incorporated in local plans. As such policies take shape, overlapping landscape conservation area designations will be rigorously reviewed. Development proposals and other activities should take account of the particular characteristics of the landscape regions in which they are located, once these regions and their particular characteristics have been defined in local plans.

Damaged and Contaminated Land

397.   The proper restoration of damaged land forms an important element of action to maintain and improve the environment and the County's resources. The term 'damaged land' includes areas which have been contaminated by previous uses.

398.   The long history of mineral workings in the County has, in some cases, led to some relatively large areas of previously restored-land becoming degraded, while poor management of some urban land has led to derelict and unused areas of land in need of rehabilitation. The main types of damaged and contaminated land which require further action are:

- some former mineral workings, especially where infilling with waste material has occurred.
- certain areas affected by former industrial processes.

399.   Restoration proposals will need to follow best practice and take on board information about existing or previously existing landscape character in Hertfordshire, even if proposals for a new landscape type are agreed.

POLICY 45 RESTORATION OF DAMAGED LAND

Schemes aimed at restoring existing damaged and contaminated land will be supported where it can be determined, in consultation with relevant bodies, that such schemes in themselves would not give rise to unacceptable environmental effects. Any development, including the extraction of minerals, which in the course of its implementation would damage land must demonstrate that the restoration of that land will be timely, effective, appropriate and be properly managed after restoration.

RECREATION AND LEISURE

Open Space

400.   Open space is valuable for sport and recreation, amenity, education, nature conservation, townscape and therefore sense of well being. In urban areas it contributes significantly to the character and image of a locality. Therefore the principles and practice of protecting environmental assets and assessing, conserving and improving the overall landscape character of the environment also apply to open spaces in towns, regardless of whether they are public or privately owned. The quality of such spaces, their diversity, wildlife, attractiveness and the ways in which they are used are more important than solely the quantity. The aims of Policy 46 are to protect, where appropriate, open spaces in towns and to establish an open space strategy for each of the county's towns. It is also recognised that rural settlements may require protection of open space, for example in the form of village greens.

401.   Within Hertfordshire a range of settlement forms exist, from historic market towns and villages (some of Roman and Medieval origin) to planned new towns and garden cities of this century. This wide range of settlements contain a range of planned and unplanned urban space which contributes to their varied form. There are also open spaces that make a contribution to visual amenity and townscape which because of neglect or other reasons will be subject to development pressures. It is important that all these sites are properly assessed for their contribution to the form of the settlement as open spaces are a key part of their health and contribute to the quality of life of residents. A deterioration in their condition must not be allowed to lead to their loss.

402.   Accessibility is a further factor that should be taken into account. The creation or improvement of one open space may not compensate for the loss of another on the other side of town. Policy 46 refers to urban form in determining an open space strategy; this relates to the overall shape of the town and its constituent parts in relation to the landscape features, built form and open space structure. Neighbourhood needs relate to the special character of specific areas and standards of open space provision. Open space proposals in local plans should be justified in terms of urban form, neighbourhood needs and existing supply.

403.   Open space strategies should cover not only the existing area of the town but also any planned peripheral development. They should also ensure that appropriate links between the open countryside and the town are at least maintained and, if possible, improved.

POLICY 46 OPEN SPACE IN TOWNS

Open spaces which are necessary and appropriate to the character or operation of the town will be protected and managed to ensure their continuing value. The overall stock of open space within a town will be maintained or increased, taking account of urban form and neighbourhood needs. To prepare local plan policies and proposals, an open space strategy for each settlement, taking account of any comprehensive settlement appraisal which has been carried out, will be based on an appropriate combination of the following criteria:

i)   landscape features, such as open ridges, waterway corridors or belts of woodland;

ii)   urban form, as defined by neighbourhood structure, historical patterns of development or route corridors;

iii)   open space structure, such as green wedges, greenways or green 'chains';

iv)   the contribution of open space to the special character of specific areas, including conservation areas;

v)   open space standards, particularly in densely developed urban areas with lack of open space;

vi)   the accessibility of open spaces within the town;

vii)   the historic, wildlife and amenity value of the open spaces;

viii)   the uses to which the open spaces are or should be put.

Sporting, Recreation and other Leisure Facilities

404.   The demand for and nature of leisure is changing with rising disposable income, changing age structure of the population, increasing amounts of free time and technological innovation.

405.   As part of a basic strategy, a broad range of leisure opportunities, both formal and informal, needs to be available within and nearby all settlements, in order to encourage enjoyable town living, discourage unnecessary travel and minimise disruption to the deeper countryside. The required range of facilities are identified through the Regional Strategy for Sport 'Sport in the East - Partnership in Action', county and district leisure strategies and, where undertaken, comprehensive settlement appraisals. It is the County Council's desire to improve public awareness of opportunities for informal recreation in the countryside, particularly those areas closer to towns, but in a way which enhances their understanding of the countryside and their ability to enjoy it in a considerate way.

406.   The arts also play an important role in maintaining the diversity and attraction of places, as well as encouraging the use of central areas at less popular times in the evenings and at weekends. Arts and leisure centres, other entertainment establishments, sports halls, health and fitness facilities, football stadia and more playing fields can also have an important role in job creation and regeneration of the urban environment. Such development should be readily accessible by the urban population and, where appropriate, should be located in close proximity to or within the urban green space network.

407.   It is recognised that certain types of leisure development such as golf courses and country parks require extensive areas of open land. Policy 47 will have the effect of steering most development of this type towards appropriate urban fringe sites. This will help to upgrade the physical environment through the re-use of derelict and degraded land, increase

access to countryside recreation facilities by the urban population and divert visitor pressure away from more sensitive rural locations.

408.   Sporting, recreation and leisure proposals which involve large amounts of built development should generally be located at accessible locations within existing built-up areas, in line with the main development strategy (Policies 6 and 7) and transportation policies of this Plan. The maintenance and enhancement of walking, cycling and passenger transport links for all major facilities is important in ensuring they are readily accessible to a wide range of people.

POLICY 47 SPORTING, RECREATION AND OTHER LEISURE FACILITIES

Proposals to increase and improve sporting, recreation and other leisure facilities will be supported within the context, as appropriate, of:

i)   the need for the facility in the Regional, County and local area;

ii)   its contribution to the vitality and viability of the town centre;

iii)   its contribution to Green Belt priorities;

iv)   its impact on open space provision;

**v)   its accessibility for public transport users, cyclists, pedestrians
         and for people with disabilities;**

**vi)   its environmental impact and its contribution to the wider use of
         new and existing facilities, particularly in conjunction with schools,
         other education establishments and community centres.**

In considering proposals account will be taken of the results of any comprehensive settlement appraisal.

Rights of Way

409.   Rights of Way originated as a national system of local access routes within and between settlements. Hertfordshire is a relatively small county with very limited areas of unrestricted access to the open countryside. However, there is a network of 5000 paths covering over 3000 km of Rights of Way. These allow access to all parts of the County for informal recreation, walking, horse riding and cycling (and sometimes motorised vehicles) and can play an important role in the implementation of other policies in this Plan. Protection of Rights of Way must be integrated into both the design and implementation of development proposals, taking into account the conservation of associated landscape elements and their contribution to local landscape character.

POLICY 48 RIGHTS OF WAY

Development proposals will be required to take full account of the need to protect and enhance the public right of way network.

Strategic Footpath, Bridleway and Leisure Cycling Routes

410.   The County Council supports the establishment of long distance recreational footpaths, bridleways and leisure cycling routes. For example, in the south of the County is the proposed London Orbital Bridleroute which is being promoted by the British Horse Society and is also known as the 'H25'. In the north of the County is the Icknield Way route. Such routes will provide access to neighbouring areas and a foundation from which other circular routes can be developed. The H25 bridleroute will also be available to walkers and cyclists.   Both the County and district councils have powers under the Highways and Planning Acts for the creation of footpaths and bridlepaths where appropriate, and these could be used if necessary to assist with long distance schemes.

POLICY 49   STRATEGIC FOOTPATH, BRIDLEWAY AND LEISURE CYCLING ROUTES

The establishment of strategic footpaths, bridleways and leisure cycling routes and links to the wider network of movement are supported, subject to other policies of this Plan. Development proposals will be required to take full account of such routes, and incorporate appropriate measures for their protection and enhancement.

Regional Parks

411.   The County Council recognises the contribution to meeting the growing leisure demands of the Greater London area that can be made through the development of the Lee Valley Regional Park and the Colne Valley Park.

412.   The Lee Valley Regional Park and Colne Valley Park incorporate important wildlife habitats and provide significant leisure opportunities, both locally and sub-regionally. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority is a statutory body, which publishes a Park Plan dealing with a range of environmental and leisure issues. No statutory agency exists for the Colne Valley Park, but a Strategy has been produced by the Colne Valley Park Standing Conference.

POLICY 50 REGIONAL PARKS

The objectives for the Lee Valley Regional Park and Colne Valley Park are supported and the Parks will be protected from inappropriate development.   Development proposals to implement Park objectives will be supported subject to positive contribution to the other policies of this Plan, including landscape, heritage and nature conservation enhancement, and restoration of damaged land.

Watling Chase Community Forest

413.   Watling Chase Community Forest covers an area of about 18,600 hectares in the south of the County, extending into the London Borough of Barnet. It is one of twelve

designated Community Forest areas in England, all of which are located in the countryside near towns. A Watling Chase Community Forest Plan was produced by the Project sponsors in 1994 and subsequently approved by the Department of Environment in 1995.

414. Watling Chase will provide a rich patchwork of mixed woodlands and a variety of attractive open areas - a quality landscape well suited and used for a wide range of purposes. The Forest's creation will therefore involve much more than a major tree planting programme. The Forest Plan seeks to provide a strategic and integrated framework for responding to a whole range of environmental problems and opportunities in a tract of mainly 'urban fringe' countryside activities. This tract of fringe has been extensively damaged by past mineral extraction and waste disposal, major roads and railways which dissect the area and other intrusive developments. The Forest Plan sets out a holistic vision for improving the area, incorporating policies and action programmes for landscape enhancement, planning and development, agriculture, forestry, nature conservation, archaeology and history, sport, recreation and leisure, the arts and education.

415. The Government has stated that an approved Community Forest Plan may be a material consideration in the preparation of development plans and in deciding planning applications within the forest area. The Government has also stated that policies and proposals that are likely to provide the basis for deciding such applications or determining conditions to be attached to relevant planning permissions should be set out in the development plan. The area of the Community Forest as shown in the Key Diagram has been agreed by the Forest Partnership, and will be used by the local authority partners in the preparation of their development plans.

416. Monitoring of the rate of new woodland planting supports the view that grant incentives to plant may prove inadequate to achieve large scale implementation. Compared with many other community forests, this problem is exacerbated in an area fringing London and therefore having particularly high and often speculative land values. One way to increase the overall incentives to create publicly accessible new woodlands or other new open spaces is a mechanism termed 'enabling development' (see glossary).

417. However, Watling Chase lies entirely in the Green Belt, where 'enabling development' would usually be inappropriate. The Government's planning policy guidance (PPG2) states that any development proposals within community forests in the Green Belt should be subject to the normal policies controlling development in Green Belts. The policy below therefore makes no reference to the possibility of allowing enabling development in exceptional circumstances. Any such proposals, if advanced, would be treated as departures from the development plan and so be referred to the Secretary of State.

POLICY 51 WATLING CHASE COMMUNITY FOREST

The creation of Watling Chase Community Forest will be supported in the south of the County, in the area shown on the Key Diagram, for the purposes of landscape improvement, recreation, nature conservation, forestry and farming.

Relevant local plans should show the boundary of Watling Chase on proposals maps, and take the approved Forest Plan into account in the formulation of policies and proposals for development and the use of land in the Forest area.

MINERALS RESOURCES

Safeguarding of Mineral Resources

418.   The minerals resource of Hertfordshire is part of a national resource. Safeguarding future access to mineral resources will ensure their availability when needed and thereby also help to minimise pressure to exploit resources in more environmentally sensitive areas.

POLICY 52 SAFEGUARDING OF MINERAL RESOURCES

Development which would unnecessarily sterilise land containing economically workable mineral deposits will not be permitted. Where essential development can be justified on such land encouragement will be given to extraction of the mineral resource prior to, or in conjunction with, such development.

Mineral Extraction

419.   Primary aggregates are those, such as sand and gravel, directly dug from the ground. Secondary aggregates are other materials usable as aggregate. The latter include the by-products of quarrying, mining and industrial processes, ranging from colliery waste and minestone, blast furnace slag, power station ash, china clay sand, slate waste and demolition and construction waste (including road planings). In Hertfordshire the main source of indigenous secondary aggregates is demolition and construction waste, most of which require reprocessing, while other types of secondary aggregates are imported from elsewhere in the Country. Importation of both secondary and primary aggregates are encouraged to use rail and water freight depots. Support for the establishment of these is set out in Policy 30 in the Transportation Section.

420.   While the use of secondary recycled aggregates is promoted, it is recognised that the greater proportion of the County's contribution to demand will continue to come from land won sand and gravel. The County Council is concerned to ensure that the impact on the environment and the local community is minimised, and that the mineral resources are used efficiently.

421.   There are two principal aims to Policy 53 on mineral extraction. Firstly, that restoration and afteruses which support the other objectives of this Plan will be a prime, but clearly not the sole, consideration in determining the appropriateness of mineral extraction (while still ensuring that the mineral extraction itself takes place in line with criteria designed to protect the local environment).

422.   The second aim is to reduce the reliance on locally won sand and gravel (i.e. direct mineral extraction in the County) during the period of this Plan, while still meeting the County's appropriate contribution to the region's varying needs. This aim fully accords with national and regional guidance, although the County Council recognises that for the foreseeable future a substantial, but progressively reducing, proportion will continue to be met from primary sources. This contribution will be determined by agreement through SERPLAN and tested through the Minerals Local Plan process in the light of prevailing

guidance in the relevant Mineral Planning Guidance notes, which currently require the identification of at least a seven year landbank for sand and gravel. Current guidance accepts that the apportionments represent guidance, are not inflexible and are for testing through the Minerals Local Plan process.

423. The County Council adopted a Minerals Local Plan in July 1998. This sets out background information, detailed policies and guidance on mineral extraction, and strict site operation conditions to provide proper environmental and amenity protection.

POLICY 53 MINERAL EXTRACTION

Facilities to allow:

- **the handling, and where necessary the reprocessing, of secondary aggregates,**
- **the importation of primary and secondary aggregates,**
- **the extraction of primary aggregates, and**
- **the importation and extraction of chalk and clay**

will be permitted at appropriate locations, subject to the other policies of this plan. Particular regard will be had to policies relating to the environmental and other effects of development, notably Policy 39 on the water environment. The extraction of primary aggregates will be permitted so as to make an appropriate contribution to meeting the Region's varying aggregate needs as duly determined for the whole of the relevant period or periods.

In considering proposals for primary extraction, proper restoration, in accordance with Policy 45, and appropriate afteruse will be of prime consideration.

Facilities to cater for an increase in the use of indigenous or imported secondary aggregates will be particularly supported so as to reduce the need for the extraction of primary aggregates, particularly within Hertfordshire.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND GENERATION

424.   The production and consumption of energy forms a vital part in enabling every resident of Hertfordshire to go about their lives, heating and lighting our homes, running our household appliances and fuelling our cars. Currently the vast majority of our needs are met through the burning of fossil fuels, either coal, gas or oil. Burning fossil fuels not only diminishes a finite natural resource, it also produces gases, particularly carbon dioxide, which accumulate in the atmosphere and contribute to increasing the earth's average temperature. This is termed 'climate change' or 'global warming'. It also has direct local effects, polluting the environment and affecting health.

425.   Planning policies can contribute towards the reduction of energy consumption and there are a wide range of policies in the Plan which contribute to achieving this. Policy 1 on Sustainable Development seeks to ensure that the protection and efficient use of resources is integrated into development planning and decision-making.   Policy 2 on Design and Provisions of Development can be seen as a focus for integrating energy conservation into development design, such as through:

- combined heat and power;
- minimising the energy needs of buildings;
- siting layout and orientation of new buildings (passive solar design);
- enhancement of micro-climates through landscape design; and
- use of active solar energy technology in new buildings.

426.   The main development strategy of this Plan focuses on concentrating development in our urban areas, creating more self-sufficient living and working environments which can help significantly reduce the need to travel and maximise opportunities to use modes of transport other than the private car.   Similarly, the central themes of the transportation policies are reduction in the need to travel and greater use of modes of transport other than the private car.

427.   The potential for reduction of energy consumption and energy conservation issues generally are, therefore, covered through a range of policies throughout the Plan. Policy 54 seeks to establish a framework for consideration of development for the purposes of energy **generation**. This is not significantly considered elsewhere, though touched upon by Policy 55 on Waste.

428.   As discussed above, most of our energy comes from the burning of finite natural resources in the form of fossil fuels.   The 1990 White Paper entitled 'This Common Inheritance' set out the Government's intentions for the protection of the environment, including a target of 1,000 MW of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by the year 2000. Renewable energy can be defined as energy sources which can be exploited from the following two main categories:

- resources such as hydro power, wind power and solar energy, that occur naturally within the environment;
- resources that are the product of human activity, such as energy crops, biogas, landfill gas and the energy derived from waste combustion.

429.   The Government's 1993 Coal Review increased the target to be met from renewables to 1,500 MW (Energy Paper 62, DTI, 1994). Government policy is to stimulate the exploitation and development of renewable sources wherever they have prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable, and in order to contribute to:

- diverse, secure and sustainable energy supplies;
- reduction in the emission of pollutants;
- encouragement of internationally competitive industries.

430.   Combined heat and power (CHP) can be defined as the simultaneous production of power, usually electricity, and useable heat. Conventional power stations convert primary fuel into electricity with a maximum efficiency of 38%. CHP can achieve 80% efficiency using heat that is normally lost into the atmosphere. Potential benefits of CHP include the minimisation of CO_2 emissions of the order of 50-60% and significant reduction of other pollutants. Schemes can be powered by a variety of sources including waste incineration. District Heating Schemes use waste heat from some major service to provide heat for nearby homes and industry, and may include CHP.

431.   Renewable sources of energy and combined heat and power will also play a significant part in meeting the UK's target for stabilising CO_2 emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000. The Government's more detailed planning policies in relation to renewable energy technologies are set out in PPG 22 on 'Renewable Energy', published in 1993.

432.   The Eastern Region Renewable Energy Planning Study[1] commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry, has explored the potential for renewable energy in Hertfordshire. The study has shown that the best opportunities for renewable energy projects in Hertfordshire are active and passive solar sources, municipal solid waste & general industrial & commercial waste, short rotation coppice & forestry, and straw, along with small amounts from various other sources. Estimates based on the study are tabulated below.

Hertfordshire Estimated Accessible Renewable Energy Resources (Gwh/y)	in 2005 (Gwh/y)	in 2025 (Gwh/y)
Hydro	negligible	negligible
Wind	negligible	negligible
Active Solar	224	254
Passive Solar Design	187	480
Photovoltaics Domestic	327	372
Photovoltaics Commercial	211	280
Poultry Litter	7	7
Animal Slurry	20	30
Municipal Solid Waste / General Industrial & Commercial Waste	250	250
Anaerobic Digestion	5	5
Landfill Gas	28	28
Short Rotation Coppice & Forestry	146	320
Straw	220	257
TOTAL	**1625**	**2283**

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[1] *Eastern Region Renewable Energy Planning Study - Final Report*, July 1997, published by ETSU for the Department of Trade and Industry.

433. Energy generation from renewable sources can have their own environmental consequences which must be weighed against the national interest of producing 'clean' energy. Proposals for developing renewable energy sources will therefore need to consider the immediate impact of such projects on the local environment, while having regard to Government policy and to the fact that renewable energy schemes can have particular locational constraints (since, in many cases, the resource can only be harnessed where it occurs).

POLICY 54 ENERGY GENERATION

Where there is a viable choice between development to generate energy by renewable or non-renewable means, priority will be given to renewable generation, subject to the other policies of this Plan and particularly those relating to the environmental effects of development and impact on traffic generation. Development of facilities to provide energy from non-renewable sources will generally be more appropriate on sites currently or previously used in this capacity. The provision of combined heat and power will be encouraged in these cases.

Development of facilities to provide renewable energy will be supported, subject to the other policies of this Plan, and particularly those relating to the environmental effects of development and impact on traffic generation. Such facilities should be provided as close to the source of the material used in the process as possible.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

434.   The national strategy for sustainable waste management is set out in 'Making Waste Work', published in 1995.   The strategy identifies three key objectives for waste management, as follows:

- to reduce the amount of waste that society produces;
- to make the best use of the waste that society produces;
- to minimise the risks of immediate and future environmental pollution and harm to human health.

435.   To help achieve these objectives, the national strategy identifies a 'hierarchy' in which waste management options are ranked according to their relative environmental benefits and disbenefits.   The hierarchy is based on the principle that the first priority for waste management is to reduce production to a minimum.   Minimisation is followed by re-use, putting objects back into use so that they do not enter the waste stream.   The third level of the hierarchy is waste recovery, incorporating recycling, composting and recovery of energy from waste.   The fourth level is waste disposal, which is seen as the least attractive waste management option.   Where waste disposal is necessary, priority must be given to ensuring that it is undertaken to a high standard and in as sustainable a fashion as possible. The Government's overall policy aim for achieving more sustainable waste management is to increase the proportion of waste managed by the options towards the top of the waste hierarchy.

WASTE HIERARCHY

Reduce (Minimisation)

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Re-use

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Recovery

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Disposal

436.   The 1990 Environment White Paper entitled 'This Common Inheritance' stated the Government intends that so far as practicable there should be adequate facilities within each region for all waste that arises there.   This approach was supported by the Secretary of State in the latest Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9).   The South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN)'s 'Revised Waste Planning Advice'[13] states that the principle of self-sufficiency (both regional and county) is fundamental to a sustainable waste management strategy, in particular by:

- ensuring that communities become increasingly responsible for the waste they generate;
- discouraging the long-distance transport of waste from counties with inadequate waste management capacity to areas with extensive landfill reserves; and
- stimulating the early development of sustainable waste management methods in counties with a shortfall of suitable landfill capacity.

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[13] SERP 160, published in 1997.

437.   The emphasis in Policy 55 on making an 'appropriate contribution to meeting the region's needs' should therefore be interpreted as meaning sufficient to meet a waste management requirement equivalent to the total generated by the county. This contribution is determined in consultation with other local authorities through SERPLAN.

438.   Closely associated with meeting our own waste management needs is the 'proximity principle'. This principle seeks to ensure that waste is handled as close to where it is generated as possible. This not only reduces the adverse effects which movement of waste entails, but also helps to instil a greater sense of responsibility in each community for the waste which it produces.

439. A considerable amount of the action required to implement the national waste management strategy lies outside the remit of the planning system. Public awareness and domestic, institutional and business actions to deal more sustainably with their own waste are all vital.

440. 'WasteAware' is a campaign which aims to increase public awareness of the problems surrounding household waste disposal and seeks to encourage residents to reduce to a minimum the quantity they produce. Launched in April 1997 by Hertfordshire County Council in partnership with the County's ten district and borough councils, the campaign targets schools, families and individuals across Hertfordshire. Through various media, WasteAware puts the message that it is possible for each and every individual to make a difference. Residents are urged to take action on Hertfordshire's waste problem through simple campaign messages offering practical steps to reduce, re-use and recycle a greater proportion of household wastes. WasteAware also aims to promote better household waste management, e.g. through support for garden composting.

441.   Policy 55 provides a strategic planning policy on waste, setting out a framework within which the overall scale of waste management facilities can be determined. This Policy gives broad support to the principle of the waste management hierarchy and for encouraging options further up the hierarchy. It supports the proximity principle and seeks to ensure that proposed development has due regard to the range of potential adverse effects. In cases where disposal of waste to land is considered necessary and appropriate, timely and effective restoration will be a prime consideration in accordance with Policy 45.

442.   In line with the framework provided by Policy 55, national and regional guidance and other relevant considerations, the County Council is preparing detailed policies on waste in a Waste Local Plan for Hertfordshire. This is likely to be adopted in spring 1999.

POLICY 55 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The establishment of facilities for the handling, transfer, treatment and disposal of waste will be supported, subject to the other policies of this Plan, particularly those relating to the environmental and other effects of development, sufficient to make an appropriate contribution to meeting the region's needs. Regard will be had to the proximity principle. Measures will be expected to minimise risk of pollution of water, air and the surrounding land.

Those facilities further up the hierarchy of waste management will receive more favourable consideration. This hierarchy takes the form of:

1.   Minimisation: those processes which minimise waste at source

2.   Reuse: facilities which enable reuse of materials without further processing

3.   Recovery: facilities designed to make use of waste, through recycling of materials or energy generation

4.   Safe Disposal

Disposal of waste will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

i)   it will not give rise to unacceptable adverse environmental effects, in particular air, water or land pollution, or other effects; and:

ii)   it is necessary and appropriate to restore sites worked, or being worked, for mineral extraction; or

iii) it would result in significant land drainage, landscape enhancement or other environmental benefit.

Within the context of the rest of this Policy, proposals which lead to the recycling of construction waste will be supported, particularly on redevelopment sites where this involves the reuse of demolition waste from the site.

HAZARDOUS INSTALLATIONS, POTENTIALLY POLLUTING DEVELOPMENT AND THE LOCATION OF POLLUTION SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Hazardous Installations

443.   The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 came into force in June 1992. It introduced specific planning controls over the storage and use of hazardous substances, additional to controls over development. The purpose of the controls is to give hazardous substance authorities the opportunity to consider, in consultation with the Health and Safety Executive, whether the proposed storage or use of a significant quantity of a hazardous substance is appropriate in a particular location, having regard to the risks arising to people in the surrounding area.

444.   Policy 56 establishes a strategic planning framework for hazardous installations which is to be translated into local plans and taken into account in the consideration of planning applications and applications for Hazardous Substance Consent.

POLICY 56 HAZARDOUS INSTALLATIONS

Proposals for development involving the processing or storage of hazardous materials shall be located having due regard to:

i)   **other land uses in the vicinity;**

ii)   **the means of transporting any hazardous material to and from the development site; and**

iii)   **the level of any pollution and degree of risk to health and safety likely to be introduced by the development, along with any mitigation measures.**

Development proposals in the vicinity of existing hazardous installations will take full account of the risk to health and safety. Development will not be permitted where such risk is considered to be undesirable or unacceptable.

Potentially Polluting Development and Location of Pollution Sensitive Development

445.   The Government made clear its commitment to controlling and minimising pollution in the 1990 Environment White Paper entitled 'This Common Inheritance'. An important element of the overall approach is the 'precautionary principle'. Great importance is also attached to developing policies which:

- prevent pollution at source;
- minimise the risk to human health and the environment;
- encourage the most advanced technical solutions that can be cost-effectively applied; and
- apply a 'critical loads' approach to pollution, in order to protect the most vulnerable environments.

446.   PPG23 on 'Planning and Pollution Control' gives advice on the relationship between controls over development under planning legislation on the one hand, and under pollution control on the other. It emphasises that the planning and pollution control systems currently in place are separate but complementary, in that they are both designed to protect the environment from the potential harmful effects caused by development and/or operations. The planning system controls the development and use of land in the public interest, so has an important role in determining the location of development which may give rise to pollution and also to control other development in proximity to potential sources of pollution. PPG23 identifies a number of areas where the planning system and the development plan can exert real influence; included in these are contaminated land, waste management, water and air quality.

447.   PPG24 on 'Planning and Noise' provides advice on policies and practices to minimise the adverse impact of noise. It recognises that development plans can play their part in reducing the impact of noise on the population by separating noise-sensitive development (such as homes, hospitals and schools) from noise-generating development or from areas where there are future potential sources of noise.

448.   Increasing awareness of the importance of air quality to human health as well as quality of the environment supports policies and measures to reduce air pollution and improve air quality. The Government recognises that the land use planning system has an integral role to play in improving air quality. The Local Air Quality Management System, introduced by the Government's National Air Quality Strategy, is a central theme to the improvement of air quality at the local level. Local Air Quality Management Plans which may emerge from this process will need to be closely linked and complementary to the preparation of development plans. Transport policies in this Plan which are aimed at reducing the need to travel and encouraging use of modes other than the car can have significant impacts upon air quality through reducing vehicle emissions, and so are likely to be important elements of the Management Plan process.

449.   Increased levels of artificial light at night may be necessary, particularly for improving safety. However, light can also be a form of pollution, by lighting up the night sky as 'sky glow', as 'glare' (the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a dark background) and 'light trespass' (the spilling of light beyond the boundary of a property on which the light source is located). The planning system can play an important role in preventing and controlling light pollution caused by development by giving it full consideration in the determination of planning applications and by attaching appropriate conditions to planning permissions. Policies in development plans provide a framework within which light pollution can be assessed. They can also be used as a mechanism to introduce light-related 'Environment Zones', such as those proposed by The Institution of Lighting Engineers.

450.   Pollution prevention and reduction are central themes in many of the policies of this Plan. Mention is made above of the close links between this part of the Plan and policies in the Transport Section which seek to reduce travel need and car usage. Policies on minerals, waste and hazardous installations all have specific references to pollution prevention and protection of the environment. Policy 39 seeks to protect the water environment from pollution and Policy 54 seeks to encourage energy generation through means other then the burning of fossil fuels. Policy 1 on Sustainable Development and Policy 2 on Design and

Provisions of Development seek to fully integrate pollution prevention and control into decision making.

451.   Pollution prevention will be an essential consideration in implementing the main development strategy of planned regeneration (Policy 7), which seeks to concentrate development and where appropriate to mix uses and activities within existing urban areas. Detailed policies in local plans should seek to ensure that implementation of planned regeneration will not give rise to significant adverse environmental effects or pollution potential.

POLICY 57   POTENTIALLY POLLUTING DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION OF POLLUTION SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals which would be likely to result in or significantly contribute to unacceptable levels of pollution will not be permitted.

Development proposals which would themselves be likely to be sensitive to adverse environmental conditions, such as unacceptable levels of noise, air, light and other pollution, will be resisted where such conditions exist or are likely to exist in future and where mitigation measures would not afford satisfactory protection.

Glossary

This glossary has been included to assist readers who may be unfamiliar with some of the technical terms used.

Affordable Housing	Housing made available, based on the evidence of need, to people who are unable to afford housing at market prices. Legal agreements can be used to restrict the occupation of property to people falling within categories of need.
Agenda 21	An international action plan aiming to tackle social, economic and environmental problems. It is one of the documents signed by governments at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.
Aggregates	Sand, gravel, crushed rock and other bulk materials used in the construction industry for purposes such as the making of concrete, mortar, asphalt or for roadstone, drainage or bulk filling materials.
Aftercare	(see Reclamation)
Afteruse	(see Reclamation)
Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)	The process used by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to determine the quality of agricultural land. Grades 1, 2 and 3a are classed as being of the "best and most versatile" and should be protected as a national resource for the future (Planning Policy Guidance Note 7, para. 2.17).
Aided School Sites	Schools in the trusteeship of a foundation, often the local Roman Catholic or Church of England Diocese but whose annual running costs are provided by the Local Education Authority.
Ancient Woodland	Areas which are thought to have had woodland cover continuously since before 1600 AD and have only been cleared for underwood or timber production.
Aquifer	Subterranean geological deposit which is capable of holding water, and which may be tapped for water supply.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Area designated by the Government to protect landscapes of national importance and high amenity value. The Chiltern hills, extending into west and north west Hertfordshire are designated as an AONB. This designation affords special status in the control of development.
Area of Special Restraint	Green Belt land identified in some local plans to meet likely development needs after the end of the local plan period but which is treated as if it were in the Green Belt until such time as it may be formally allocated for development.
BEAMS	Built Environment Advisory and Management Service is the trading company of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust, which is a charity founded in 1963 and supported by the County Council and nine of the district and borough councils.
Circulars	Ministerial Statements on Government Policy.
Climate Change (Global Warming)	A possible consequence of the increase in emissions of 'greenhouse gases', such as carbon dioxide and methane which trap the sun's heat and warm the earth's surface. Emissions from human activity, such as fossil fuel burning and widespread deforestation, have been the main cause of rises in concentrations of greenhouse gases this century.
Community Forest	The designated Watling Chase Community Forest in south Hertfordshire and part of

	the north London Green Belt is one of nine community forests in England. These are urban fringe areas where a significant increase in tree cover is being sought in conjunction with a wide range of other environmental and recreational benefits.
Comparison Goods	'Comparison Goods' are non-food goods such as clothes and electrical equipment, for which the consumer generally expects to invest time and effort into visiting a range of shops before making a choice.
Comprehensive Settlement Appraisals	A process through which the local community is consulted on and involved in a technical audit of their town, focusing on the land use implications of the needs and aspirations of residents, community groups, public and private sector organisations, with the purpose of these being taken into account in the review of the local plan.
Conservation Areas	An area designated as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Constant Assets	(see Environmental Assets)
Convenience Shopping	Food and associated goods, typically those sold in supermarkets.
Critical Capital	(see Environmental Assets)
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)	Government department which amalgamated the former Department of the Environment and the Department of Transport, and responsible for land-use and transport planning.
Development Brief	A non statutory document produced by the local planning authorities in partnership with other interested parties which sets out the main principles for the design, siting and layout of a development site or sites.
Development Plans	Statutory plans such as the structure plan and local plans which set out local planning authorities' policies and proposals for the development and use of land within their area. Development decisions must be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
Dwelling	A self contained unit of accommodation which includes both houses and flats.
Enabling Development	Development which would be contrary to e.g. Green Belt policy, but which exceptionally, in very special circumstances, may be permitted to help finance related land use development or building restoration projects which are deemed to be in the public interest but which otherwise would not be financially viable. There have been a number of such cases in Hertfordshire during recent years, mainly to enable the restoration of historic buildings.
Environmental Appraisal	An iterative process to ensure that environmental considerations are evaluated consistently throughout the preparation and review of policies. A consolidated account of the County Council's appraisal work up to the time of the EIP in 1997 was published as a technical paper which is available on request.
Environmental Assets	These range from essential resources such as: water; ecological processes; landscape; and historic and archaeological features which give a locality its unique character. The use of the term 'environmental asset' encompasses not only those things which are considered to be valuable and irreplaceable and therefore need to be strongly protected in their entirety (critical capital), but also those elements of the environment which, although amenable to some management or change, need to be protected or enhanced to avoid their degradation or where any loss would have to be compensated for by equivalent provision elsewhere (constant assets).
Environmental Assessment	Under the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, scheduled developments are required to submit an Environmental

Statement along with a planning application. The statement should evaluate the likely environmental impacts of the development, together with an assessment of how the impacts could be mitigated.

Examination in Public (EIP)
A Roundtable discussion chaired by an independent panel which is held to debate particular issues arising from draft structure plan policies and proposals. The panel may then make recommendations in a report to the County Council if it considers that draft policies should be modified.

Green Belt
An area designated in development plans which is protected against inappropriate development in order to check unrestricted urban sprawl; safeguard countryside from urban encroachment; prevent towns merging; preserve the special character of historic towns and assist urban regeneration.

Green Field Site
Land on which no built development has previously taken place, usually understood to be beyond or on the periphery of an existing built up area. It also includes parks and playing fields in urban areas.

Green Tourism
An approach to tourism that can be maintained in the long term, without degrading the environment in which it takes place.

Green Zones
A residential neighbourhood which has become a safer, cleaner and more attractive place to live in as a result of measures developed with communities designed to create a street environment dominated by people rather than motor traffic.

Hazardous Installations
An installation e.g. factory or warehouse which is officially identified as being hazardous as a consequence of the handling, at any one time, of quantities of dangerous materials in excess of certain specified amounts.

Hazardous Substances
Substances specified in Schedule 1 of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 1992. Over 70 different substances which are toxic, highly reactive, explosive or flammable are included.

Hectare
Area of 10,000 square metres. One hectare = 2.471 acres.

Historic Associations
Buildings, sites and locations which have interest and are worthy of conservation because of their historical associations e.g. key events in history.

Historic Parks and Gardens
Parks and gardens which by reason of their historic layout, features and architectural ornaments considered together make them of interest. They include parks and gardens of special interest which have been registered by English Heritage.

Household
A household is either:
(a) one person living alone;
(b) a group of people (who may or may not be related) living, or staying temporarily, at the same address, with common housekeeping.

Housing Needs Assessment
Studies done by district and borough councils to assess the level and types of unmet needs for accommodation, particularly affordable housing.

Key Diagram
A diagram, forming part of the Structure Plan, illustrating its main policies and proposals.

Key Employment Sites	Sites which have been identified to play a major long-term role in the Hertfordshire economy, where employment generating activities will be encouraged and where co-ordinated activity and investment programmes are required to realise their full potential.
Knowledge Based Economy	The knowledge based economy has been described in the Industrial Strategy as the increasing development of production and processing of information and the greater use of applied knowledge and information in the physical manufacture of goods - i.e. information processing, research and development, and high-end "bespoke" manufacturing, rather than mass production.
Landbank (Minerals)	A stock of planning permissions for the winning and working of minerals.
Landfilling	The disposal of waste by its permanent deposition in or on the ground, involving either the filling of man-made voids or the construction of features above ground level (often referred to as land raising).
Landscape Character Assessment	The process of using one of several techniques of describing, analysing, classifying and subdividing the landscape. Information on techniques is available from the Countryside Commission, and the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy explains the application of Landscape Character Assessment in Hertfordshire.
Landscape Character	The distinct pattern or combination of natural or built elements occurring consistently in a particular landscape, linked to the geology, soils, topography, ecology, history and visual dimensions of the landscape.
Landscape Conservation Areas	Areas identified through the local plan process to which special conservation policies apply during the determination of planning applications.
Landscape Enhancement	Direct action to improve the broad amenity offered by the landscape, e.g. in terms of the objectives of sustainable development.
Landscape Quality	The fitness of the landscape to meet a range of objectives, assessed by a systematic review of its condition and strength of character.
Landscape Value	Value as identified by a process of landscape evaluation, in which the landscape types, units or features have been systematically judged against specified criteria covering form and/or function and/or importance to the community.
Listed Building	A building listed by the Secretary of State as being of special architectural or historic interest as defined in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
Local Air Quality Management	A programme of assessing air quality against national targets, and the development of remedial measures where the targets will not be met.
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Sites of importance for wildlife statutory designated as nature reserves under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
Local Plan	A detailed land use plan prepared and adopted by local district or borough planning authorities, which should be in general conformity with the policies of a structure plan.
Local Transport Plans	A new five year plan covering a local authority's capital and revenue expenditure on transport. Local transport plans will replace the existing Transport Policies and Programmes system.
Master Plan Strategy	A Master Plan is the overall plan for a development, from which development briefs and planning applications flow. It identifies the disposition of land uses and phasing

on an outline basis with, most probably, the first phase of development identified in further detail.

Material Consideration	Factors which are appropriate to take into consideration in the determination of a planning application.
Modal Split	The proportion of trips by different types of transport, e.g. walking, cycling, bus, train and car.
National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	Sites of national conservation importance, managed by English Nature or other approved bodies and established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
Park-and-Ride	A service which provides parking facilities at peripheral locations and transport, generally bus or rail-based, to a town centre or other attraction.
Passenger Transport	Those services on which members of the public rely for getting from place to place when not using their own private transport. It includes bus, rail and taxis, together with more innovative forms of transport such as Light Rail or Guided Bus.
Planning Obligation	Legally binding undertakings which can be used to mitigate the effects of, or enhance, development. They are generally complimentary to conditions which may be imposed on planning consents, and can control the use of land, require specific actions and provide for payments to be made. Government policy on the use of planning obligations is currently contained in its Circular 1/97.
Planning Policy Guidance Notes	A series of notes (PPGs and in the case of minerals, MPGs) issued by the Department of the Environment which set out the Government's policy guidance on planning issues, such as housing, shopping, the countryside etc.
Precautionary Principle	This principle recognises that where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage to the environment, the lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason to delay taking cost-effective action to prevent or minimise such damage.
Ramsar Sites	Areas designated under the Ramsar Convention to protect wetlands that are of international importance, particularly as waterfowl habitats. All Ramsar Sites are SSSIs.
Reclamation	Reclamation has a special meaning in minerals planning. It comprises operations which are designed to return the area to an acceptable environmental condition, whether for the resumption of the former land use or for a new use. However, it includes events which take place before and during extraction (e.g. correct stripping and protection of soils); and also operations after extraction which may include filling and contouring, the creation of planned water areas, landscaping and tree planting. Reclamation includes 'restoration', 'aftercare' and 'after-use', which are described below:

- 'Restoration' comprises of steps to return land to its original or former condition following mineral working by using subsoil, topsoil and/or soil-making material.
- 'Aftercare' provides for steps to be taken to bring land to the required standard for use for agriculture, forestry or amenity. These may include planting, cultivating, fertilising, watering, drainage or otherwise treating the land.
- 'After-use' is used to mean the ultimate use after mineral working for agriculture, forestry, amenity (including nature conservation), industrial or other development.

Recycled Aggregates	Aggregates obtained from the treatment of materials formerly used for another purpose.
Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)	Guidance issued by the Government which sets out its policies to guide development in the regions and provide a framework for the review of structure and unitary plans. Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9), which includes Hertfordshire, was published in March 1994. Revised RPG9 to 2016 is due to be published in 1999 or 2000.
Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)	A national scheme promoted by English Nature and organised on a county basis. A non-statutory designation to promote the protection of sites for research, science, education, leisure and amenity.
Regional Parks	A significant area of land designated mainly to provide informal and formal recreational use, both locally and sub-regionally, and where significant environmental improvements are sought. Hertfordshire has two, the Lee Valley and Colne Valley Regional Parks. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority is a statutory body, which publishes a Park Plan dealing with a range of environmental and leisure issues. No statutory agency exists for the Colne Valley Park, but a strategy has been produced by the Colne Valley Park Standing Conference.
Renewable Energy	Energy obtained from natural sources which cannot be exhausted, for example from the sun, wind, tides and waves.
Restoration	(see Reclamation).
Retail Hierarchy	Hierarchy of shopping centres ranging from regional and sub-regional centres through town centres, district and local centres. Structure plans outline the hierarchy within a county and local plans indicate the hierarchy within districts.
Rights of Way	A public right of way is a type of highway over which the public have a right to pass and repass. The nature of the right determines the type of way, which under common law can be either:

- a footpath, over which there are rights on foot only;
- a bridleway, over which the right of way is on foot and on horseback, possibly with an additional right to drive animals;
- a road used as a public path (RUPP), over which there are rights on foot and on horseback and possibly by vehicle;
- a byway open to all traffic (BOAT), over which there are rights on foot and on horseback and in a vehicle but is mainly used by walkers and riders.

The Countryside Act 1968 granted cyclists the right to use bridleways so long as they gave way to horse riders.

Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997	The Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 requires local highway authorities to determine appropriate targets for the reduction of either the levels of traffic or the rate of traffic growth.
Safeguarding land	(see Areas of Special Restraint)
Safeguarding Minerals	Protection of mineral deposits, rail heads and potential minerals wharfage from sterilisation by preventing building or other development.

Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)	A nationally important archaeological site included in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments maintained by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. It should be noted, however that not all nationally important archaeological sites are SAMs.
Sequential Approach	The sequential approach is defined in PPG6 on retail and town centres. It requires retail development to be located such that 'first preference should be for town centre sites, where suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion are available, followed by edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres and only then by out-of-centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport'.
SERPLAN	The London and South East Regional Planning Conference, which is a regional planning organisation constituted by the London Borough Councils and the shire county, unitary and district councils for Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, the Isle of White, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex. SERPLAN considers regionally important land-use and transportation matters and provides advice to the Government accordingly.
Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)	The record maintained by the County Council, which contains information on archaeological sites and finds in Hertfordshire.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	An area designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being of special importance by reason of its flora or fauna, or its geological or physiographical features.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An SSSI designated under the EC Habitats Directive as being of importance as a particular defined natural habitat or as a habitat for particular defined animal or plant species.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Identified as an important habitat for rare and vulnerable birds under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.
Sustainable Development	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Telecommunications	Forms of communications by electrical or optical, wire, cable and radio signals. Telecommunications infrastructure includes masts, antennas, cable networks, relay stations etc.
Town Cramming	Excessive densities of development and associated traffic in urban areas that are considered to be undesirable because of losses in environmental, cultural and social resources, particularly green space.
Transport Policies and Programmes (TPP)	An annual document which is primarily a bid to central government for transport funds. The document also sets out the current problems, policies and future programmes of works to fulfil the County's transport aims and objectives. TPPs are now to be replaced by Local Transport Plans.
Trip Generation	Additional journeys which are made in an area as a result of a particular development taking place, for example new residential or industrial areas, retail or leisure facilities.

Use Classes Order	Use classes are defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. In general terms, activities within the same class may change without requiring planning permission, (e.g. from office to light industrial use) whereas activities changing from one class to another (e.g. from residential to office use) usually need permission.
Waste	Any substance which constitutes a scrap material or an effluent arising from the application of any process, and any substance or article which requires to be disposed of as being broken, worn out, contaminated or otherwise spoiled.
	Inert waste - waste that does not normally undergo any significant physical, chemical or biological changes when deposited at a landfill site.
	Hazardous waste - a general term encompassing difficult and special wastes which may give rise to particular pollution risks or nuisance and may require special management for disposal.
Whole Settlement Strategies	A process that enables local communities, working in partnership with local government and other service providers, to fully participate in shaping a sustainable future for their town.
Wildlife Sites	Sites identified as being of County importance for their wildlife, but which may have no statutory protection. Such sites may be recognised in local plans as part of a County's environmental assets.
Windfall Site	A site which is not identified in a local plan but which unexpectedly becomes available for development or re-development.

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