BEDFORD BOROUGH

LOCAL PLAN
OCTOBER 2002

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

BEDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

THIS WRITTEN STATEMENT AND THE ACCOMPANYING PROPOSALS MAP IS THE STATUTORY LOCAL PLAN FOR THE BOROUGH OF BEDFORD. IT WAS ADOPTED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL ON 20TH OCTOBER 2002.

THE LOCAL PLAN SETS THE PATTERN AND CHARACTER OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOROUGH AND PROVIDES THE BASIS THAT THE COUNCIL WILL USE FOR DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

THE PROCESS OF PREPARING THE LOCAL PLAN HAS INVOLVED THE PUBLICATION OF CONSULTATION AND DEPOSIT DRAFT PLANS, EXTENSIVE TECHNICAL AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS AND A YEAR LONG PUBLIC INQUIRY AT WHICH AN INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR CONSIDERED OVER 2300 OBJECTIONS. HIS RECOMMENDATIONS WERE CONSIDERED BY THE COUNCIL AND MOSTLY CARRIED FORWARD INTO THIS DOCUMENT.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

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1 / INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Local Plan is an important tool and reference document that will help the Borough Council guide development, and assess proposals that are submitted as planning applications. It sets out a wide range of policies and proposals positively to encourage development to occur in suitable forms and locations with the aim of improving the quality, convenience and sustainability of the environment in which we live and work.

1.2 The preparation, structure and scope of the Local Plan is consistent with the national guidelines provided by various Acts of Parliament, Circulars and Regulations. It has been prepared in the context of corporate 'Aims and Objectives' and supports the various other strategies being pursued by the Borough Council. Thus its content and direction is firmly based on local conditions, needs and aspirations although to some extent the full effect of these on the Plan may be restrained by national policy and the policies of the County Council.

1.3 The Deposit Draft County Structure Plan 2011 was published at the same time as the Consultation Draft of this Borough Local Plan and has subsequently been adopted. This together with the results of public consultation, has prompted changes in the Borough Local Plan including the extension of the period covered by this Local Plan to 2006. Links to the previous 3rd Alterations Structure Plan are therefore superseded. The impact and scale of such changes was to a degree anticipated by the Consultation Draft Local Plan in so far as the ultimate capacity of identified housing sites exceeded the requirement to 2001 and were in any case fully consistent with Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9).

1.4 The preparation of the plan has been guided by an ongoing environmental appraisal which started by looking at a structured set of aims and objectives from which detailed policies and proposals have been formulated. These demonstrate the overall direction of the plan and what it seeks to achieve. Inevitably the scope for a planning and land use document to make dramatic change during the plan period is limited, but it is nevertheless important to make progress toward improving social and economic conditions and both the local and global environment.

1.5 In addition the plan builds on the former adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan 1993, rolling forward the development requirement and expanding on key areas of policy, for example those affecting the environment.

1.6 The process of preparing the Local Plan has followed a number of specific steps that are designed to ensure that local people and a wide range of interests have contributed to and influenced the plan, its policies and proposals. The Consultation Draft Borough Local Plan was published in February 1995. That document was revised and the Deposit Draft Bedford Borough Local Plan was placed on deposit in February 1997. Over 2,300 objections and supporting representations were received and considered by the Council. Those objections which could not be resolved were considered at a Local Plan Inquiry which was held between February 1999 and January 2000. The Inquiry was conducted by an independent Inspector, Mr C J Hoile MA(Oxon), DipTP, MRTPI and his report was published in May 2001.

1.7 The Inspector's report included a large number of recommendations which have been considered very carefully by the Council. As a result, the Council published Proposed Modifications in September 2001 and these too attracted objections and supporting representations. All of these were considered fully before the Council resolved to adopt the Local Plan. The Notice of Adoption was published on 20th October 2002.

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INTRODUCTION / BOROUGH STRATEGY / NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING / EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM / SHOPPING / BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE
TRANSPORT / LEISURE & RECREATION / UTILITIES & TELECOMS / IMPLEMENTATION
AIMS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
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BOROUGH STRATEGY POLICIES

Policy S1	Urban priority
Policy S2	Opportunity sites
Policy S3	Urban area boundary
Policy S4	South West Bedford Strategic Corridor
Policy S5	Marston Vale
Policy S6	Settlement Policy Areas
Policy S7	Rural settlement hierarchy
Policy S8	Supplementary Planning Guidance
Policy S9	Facilities in tandem with development

Policy S2: Deleted 8th October 2008 in respect of sites that are covered by the Town Centre Area Action Plan

2 / BOROUGH STRATEGY

2.1   This chapter has three main purposes, it examines the context for the Local Plan, it explains the overall strategy that is being pursued and it sets out a series of general policies that apply across the other chapters.

CONTEXT

2.2   The new Borough Local Plan is set within a well defined context provided by Government and County policies. It is prepared taking account of local circumstances and the relevant legislation, including national planning guidance embodied in Planning Policy Guidance Notes, and Circulars and is in accordance with official Regulations and Orders. In particular, Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 12 'Development Plans & Regional Planning Guidance' has been used to decide the scope and format of the Local Plan, and guides the environmental appraisal of the Plan's policies and proposals.

2.3   This context is extremely broad and often quite detailed. However, it is appropriate to highlight the four key influences on the Borough Strategy which are seen to have a fundamental impact. These are:

'THIS COMMON INHERITANCE'

2.4   This Government White Paper published in 1990, identifies a major responsibility for planning authorities to ensure that their local plans take environmental considerations comprehensively and consistently into account. Such considerations go beyond the traditional concern for landscape quality, nature conservation, the built heritage and the reduction of pollution, and now include newer concerns about global warming and the consumption of non-renewable resources. In 1991, this requirement was embodied in the Planning and Compensation Act. Thus the need to tackle environmental issues on this broad front at a local level, underpins much of this plan. This will become apparent as individual policies and proposals are considered. An environmental appraisal of the Local Plan has been carried out and forms part of the Plan. This and ongoing appraisal work will be used to examine the environmental impact of the Local Plan and identify any inconsistencies and conflicts of approach.

REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE SOUTH EAST

2.5   Regional Planning Guidance published in March 1994 formed the basis for the preparation of the County Structure Plan (2011) and this Local Plan. It contains three matters of particular relevance to Bedford. Firstly, it advises on the requirement for new house building at the County level, based on projections of population numbers, household growth and migration patterns. (These influence the County Structure Plan which is discussed below.) Secondly, it expresses a long term strategy to move the weight of new development to the north of the County, ie. away from Luton and South

Bedfordshire. Thirdly, regional guidance identifies the Marston Vale area (which straddles the boundary with Mid Bedfordshire) as a regional resource and gives support for a strategy for the development, restoration and environmental improvement of the area in association with continued landfill and brick making activities.

TRANSPORT INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES

2.6   In the context of relatively poor local levels of strategic accessibility and resulting congestion, which in turn act as serious investment disincentives, the content of current transport investment programmes and the scale of public and private funding initiatives are particularly important, since these will influence the strategy of this local plan. It is increasingly clear that assumptions underlying regional and county strategies about the scale of development proposed and the programmed availability of infrastructural investment required to service this level of growth, are out of step. The result is potentially, a growing gap between policy and funding. It is this issue which the plan seeks to address through its main housing and employment allocations.

2.7   Historically levels of trunk road investment have been relatively low and the review of the Trunk Road programme in August 1998 gave funding priority only to the A6 Clapham Bypass and A421 Great Barford Bypass, the Norse Road link scheme having dropped out of the programme. However, the proposed Bedford Western Bypass (A421/A428 and A428/A6 link) continues to have government support on the basis of it being privately funded, and the strategic importance of the A421 is acknowledged.

2.8   Future investment in public transport services and systems is also of concern not least due to the reliance that new forms of sustainable development place on such facilities, and historic patterns of dis-investment and service reduction.

2.9   The quality, capacity and convenience of the local transport network depends upon the level of Government support for the Local Transport Plan which derives from the County Structure Plan and County Transport Strategy. These embody key elements of the Borough/County 'Integrated Transport Strategy' and Bedford Transport Development Plan as the Bedford/Kempston Package. Further details of these can be found in the Transport chapter.

2.10   Clearly, in a climate of shrinking infrastructural investment, the contribution that development can provide to the early implementation of such improvements is vital.

BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

2.11 The Structure Plan (covering the period 1991-2011) needs to be taken into account since it interprets Regional Guidance and sets the context for development policies and proposals. Detailed references are made where necessary in the subsequent chapters of the Local Plan, but there are two key elements, (apart from those which interpret national planning policies and guidance) that have a fundamental impact on the development strategy adopted in this Local Plan. These are:

Provision for Additional Housing

2.12 The Structure Plan sets the overall requirement for additional housing in the County and at District/Borough level and continues to show a greater proportional increase in Bedford Borough when compared with the existing distribution of County population. This is of concern to the Borough Council as provision fails to be matched by compatible levels of investment in infrastructure and local services. Bedford's requirement to 2006 based on Regional Guidance equates to an annual rate of provision of 780 dwellings. However, the average number of dwellings completed in the years 1991-1998 has fallen short of this rate with the result that over the remaining period to 2006, an average of 975 dwellings would need to be completed annually. This may present a particular challenge to the house building industry.

Strategic Allocations and Corridors

2.13 The development strategy set out in the Structure Plan 2011 has a spatial dimension and makes distinct allocations in respect of both the urban areas and strategic corridors. Coupled with the guidance provided by PPG13 (para 3.2), this is taken as signalling that priority/preference should be assigned to maximising the potential of the urban area, where there is greatest accessibility and scope for modal shifts to less damaging forms of transport, as well as vacant, damaged and under-used sites that are ripe for redevelopment/recycling.

2.14 Within the urban area, Policy 33 of the Structure Plan identifies the west of Bedford as a strategic allocation continuing the provisions of the 3rd Alteration to the Structure Plan. The Marston Vale which extends into Mid Bedfordshire District is identified as the South West of Bedford Strategic Corridor and includes the Elstow Storage Depot as the focus of a site with major development potential. This approach is different to the strategy on which the Consultation Draft of this local plan was based and the plan has now been adjusted to take this into account.

2.15 As a separate, but linked initiative, the County, Bedford Borough and Mid Bedfordshire District Councils are seeking in partnership with the private sector, to upgrade substantially the environment and landscape of Marston Vale. In forming the Marston Vale Partnership, these bodies have produced a Strategy for the Vale which envisages further development occurring in tandem with environmental improvements. The Partnership is expected to agree a mechanism to achieve the necessary practical linkage between development and environmental improvement based on work undertaken by consultants. An important part of this initiative is the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale.

CONTEXT – CONCLUSIONS

2.16 Regional and strategic planning policy have assigned a particular role for Bedford Borough in terms of absorbing additional development. This in turn will have significant implications for the existing built fabric, the local infrastructure and the environment. The main challenge facing the Local Plan is to provide a framework which ensures that this development can be assimilated in a sustainable manner, and which enables the necessary infrastructure to be brought forward. This is explored further in the next section.

THE BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2.17 Within this context, the Council has defined a set of overall aims and objectives which have been used to formulate the Borough Development Strategy.

OVERALL AIMS

2.18 Building on the policies established by the Bedford Borough Local Plan 1993, this Local Plan starts from the premise that the land use and planning policies pursued by the Borough Council should contribute to the achievement of the following aims:

To move towards more sustainable forms of development – ensuring that development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

To protect and enhance the existing built and natural environment and the landscape – giving greater emphasis to improving environmental quality and the conservation of existing assets.

To meet the needs of the Borough's residents – enabling the provision of sufficient houses, jobs, and other facilities.

To maintain and enhance the economic and social well being of the Borough – by attracting additional investment and encouraging the full use of existing resources.

To protect and enhance Bedford's role within the sub-region – encouraging the Town Centre to develop a stronger competitive edge and identity, together with improved attractiveness and convenience.

To improve the quality of life for the Borough's residents – combatting pollution, creating additional facilities and ensuring access for all.

To improve the quality of new development within the Borough – striving for a noticeably higher standard of design and finish in all developments and in the sensitivity of their setting.

To improve communications and movement in and out of the Borough – achieving improved levels of mobility, accessibility, convenience and personal safety consistent with environmental, economic and development considerations.

To promote equal opportunities – the local plan must contribute to ensuring that access to opportunities is not dependent upon age, culture, literacy or mobility. Positive action is required.

2.19 The setting of overall aims is an important stage in preparing plans of all types. It gives clarity of purpose, provides a structure for multi-faceted strategies and a framework for testing progress and achievement. In these practical terms these nine aims are too general and each has therefore been translated into a series of more detailed objectives, as in Appendix A. Policies and proposals of this Local Plan have, in turn, been developed from these objectives.

SUSTAINABILITY

2.20 The major force for change during the plan period is the scale of housing development imposed by the Structure Plan and this must be approached from the viewpoint that development is to be encouraged to locate according to the principles of sustainability. This theme therefore is the main plank of the Borough Strategy. The concept behind this theme is best explained by reference to the established texts on the subject that to a greater or lesser extent informed or derived from the 1992 World Rio Summit and in particular Agenda 21. This body of policy and opinion has been translated to apply to the local situation and land use planning in various documents. In Bedford, sustainability is perhaps most appropriately defined by the consideration of its main implications for the Borough Council's development strategy. The promotion of sustainable forms of development implies:

a) maximising the reuse of derelict, damaged and under-used urban sites before the development of greenfield sites is promoted;

b) concentrating new development on main existing and proposed transport nodes and corridors (in particular rail routes), thereby maximising the potential use of public transport facilities;

c) encouraging suitably sized and located settlements to become more self-sufficient in terms of matching the provision of housing with local employment opportunities and community services and facilities;

d) making provision for appropriate mixed use developments thus minimising the potential for trips;

e) steering development away from areas representing finite resources such as wildlife habitats, mineral reserves, areas of archaeological importance and historic environment;

f) targeting development to locations where major environmental improvements can be achieved as a direct result, such as the approaches to Bedford.

2.21 The Borough Council's development strategy has been prepared by following a sequence of deliberate steps, starting with an examination of the capacity of the urban area to absorb development and then considering land adjoining the urban area and the strategic corridor where a number of settlements have been 'selected' as focuses for development, before seeking development opportunities in the rural area. This approach complies

with the search sequence set out in PPG3 'Housing', is consistent with that of the Structure Plan and produces a hierarchical development strategy comprising potential locations for development in descending order of preference thus:

The Urban Area

The preferred location for development with an emphasis on recycling derelict, vacant or under-used sites subject to no inappropriate loss of open space or employment land.

Land Adjoining the Urban Area

An area of search for development subject to infrastructure provision , landscape, environmental and other constraints.

Strategic Corridor

An area of search for development subject to infrastructure provision, landscape, environmental and other constraints focused on existing 'selected' settlements and brownfield sites. 'Selected' settlements are prime foci for development in the Plan period.

First Order Villages

Settlements with a good range of facilities, community provision and access.

Second Order Villages

Settlements with a recognisable built-up character and basic facilities.

Other Settlements

Settlements without a recognisable built-up character which are subject to rural restraint policies.

2.22 The overall scale of development in the first three locations is set by virtue of policies 32 and 33 of the Structure Plan 2011. As to the balance of the strategic housing development requirement, the Structure Plan gives no guidance as to any specific spatial criteria to be applied. However, it can be expected that a proportion will be found within the rural area, ie. First and Second Order Villages. It is appropriate to consider this hierarchy in greater detail.

THE URBAN AREA

2.23 At the local level, the most effective strategy to improve environmental sustainability, given the growth requirements imposed by the Structure Plan, is to concentrate development in the urban area where public transport is focused and where most facilities, shops, schools and jobs are located. However much of the undeveloped land in Bedford and Kempston is precious as open space and contributes considerably to the character of the twin towns. It provides amenity, habitat, places for recreation including allotment gardens and if it were developed it could never be replaced. Such open land is identified on the Proposals Map and is protected. Equally, the value of existing business sites and premises must be recognised not least due to local unemployment levels, a growing imbalance between homes and jobs in this part of the County, the need to maintain a range of sites with varying characteristics and qualities, the need to promote mixed land use patterns,

and reduce journeys to work. However, the assessment carried out by the Borough Council has identified a number of vacant premises and derelict sites in the urban area and others that are approaching a point of obsolescence as to prompt redevelopment.

POLICY S1

~~The Borough Council will use its influence and resources to encourage the beneficial reuse of derelict and under-utilised urban sites in order to expand the range of housing available, foster the vitality and viability of Bedford Town Centre and to encourage the creation of new and additional employment opportunities.~~

2.24   Proposals are made in relation to each of these sites and as appropriate they are the subject of specific policies elsewhere in this plan. Because of land assembly and other issues, it is recognised that a proportion of these urban sites including those most suited to mixed use schemes, may only come forward for development in favourable market conditions. It is for this reason that the plan designates such sites as Opportunity Sites.

> Policy S2: Deleted 8th October 2008 in respect of sites that are covered by the Town Centre Area Action Plan.

POLICY S2

Within the urban areas there exists a number of opportunity sites that have redevelopment potential for a mix of land uses. These are shown on the Proposals Map. The Borough Council will seek to encourage land owners and other interests to investigate such opportunities and bring forward proposals.

2.25   The Borough Council's views as to the potential of these Opportunity Sites are described in Appendix D.

LAND ADJOINING THE URBAN AREA

2.26   As one might expect, the bulk of new development over the years (indeed centuries) has taken the form of extensions to the urban area with the creation of Goldington, Brickhill, Woburn Road and Elms Farm estates for example. However, town cramming and congestion are serious concerns and much of the countryside and other open areas that encircle Bedford and Kempston are of particular value and are now constrained perhaps more than ever before. In addition, as the urban area expands outwards, the surrounding settlements are at risk of becoming subsumed into Bedford and Kempston. There are therefore real concerns about coalescence, and one of the main functions of the local plan is to ensure that new development adjoining the urban area is accommodated in a sustainable manner, ensuring that the identity of individual settlements is retained. Furthermore unrestrained outward expansion would not assist urban regeneration and the re-cycling of urban sites.

2.27   To the north, the established Area of Special Restraint seeks to prevent the coalescence of Bedford with Renhold and Clapham. The creation of a linear park in this area is a key objective.

2.28   To the south, the Southern Bypass is tightly drawn around the urban area leaving only the opportunity to expand the quality and range of employment land available for development. The open setting and important views of the historic village of Elstow are

important to maintain. Beyond the Bypass immediate development is resisted so as to avoid coalescence with Shortstown, encroachment into the open countryside and to help promote the establishment of the Forest of Marston Vale.

2.29   Development to the east of Bedford is also constrained by the alignment of the Southern Bypass. The open river valley within this area, is crucial in defining the character of the town. As such it will continue to be subject to policies concerning Areas of Special Restraint and River Protection Area. The Borough Council is promoting leisure and recreation proposals in this area in accordance with these policies.

2.30   To the west of Bedford and Kempston and given Structure Plan allocations, there is the opportunity to extend the urban area up to the proposed Bedford Western Bypass. In this context, the village of Biddenham is not considered to be within or adjoining the urban area and is shown by way of an inset to the Proposals Map.

2.31   In recognition of these constraints, and to be consistent with other elements of this Plan (ie. Settlement Policy Areas) the edge of the urban area has been defined on the Proposals Map. This includes both the existing built-up areas of Bedford/Kempston, and land adjoining the existing urban area which is considered suitable for development during the plan period. Within this urban area boundary, there are areas of open countryside, parkland and riverside areas that have particular value as such and these are designated as Area of Special Restraint.

POLICY S3

~~The Borough Council seeks to protect the character of Bedford and Kempston by defining on the Proposals Map the extent of the urban area, which marks an outer limit to their expansion, and by protecting structural open spaces by specific designation including the extension of the Area of Special Restraint.~~

2.32   Within this envelope there is considerable development potential, particularly in the south and west of the urban area. Some of this potential has already been acknowledged, at Harrowden, and at Biddenham Loop. These sites are well located in relation to the strategic road network. The local plan identifies additional land, specifically targeted to provide key elements of strategic infrastructure, with the ultimate aim of enabling the Department of Transport to bring forward complementary elements of its Trunk Road Programme. This has been a fundamental consideration in devising the development strategy of this plan.
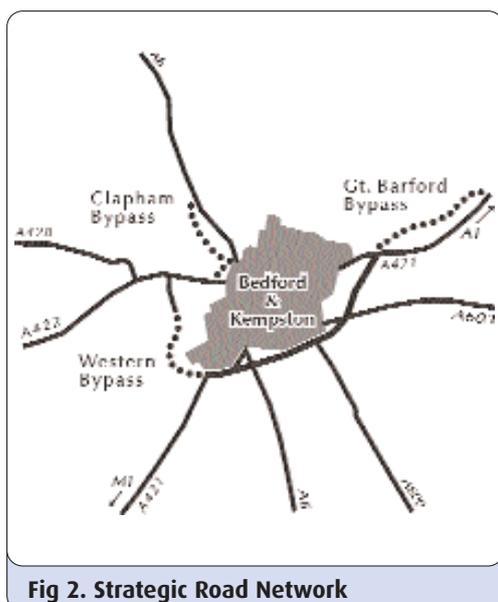
Fig 2. Strategic Road Network

2.32a   Immediately adjoining the defined urban area, on its southern side, is the settlement of Shortstown. Here there is a major opportunity to improve the existing settlement in association with the development of brownfield land at and adjacent to the former RAF Cardington. This has been designated a 'selected' settlement in the hierarchy along with those in the South West Bedford Strategic Corridor (see below).

2.33   The approaches to Bedford and Kempston are important as they provide a number of gateways into the town and the opportunity to integrate the landscape improvements and other environment benefits envisaged by the Marston Vale Strategy and the Forest of Marston Vale. The scope and ability of the identified development sites to make a significant contribution to these key projects is critical to their acceptability in terms of the Borough Council's overall strategy. The Plan includes policies in respect of each of these sites which are also shown on the Proposals Map.

THE SOUTH WEST BEDFORD STRATEGIC CORRIDOR

2.34   The Structure Plan in effect assigns about a quarter of Bedford's total housing requirement to the South West Bedford Strategic Corridor. It also identifies Elstow Storage Depot as the focus of a strategic allocation (taking about half of the corridor requirement) and indicates an area of search on the Key Diagram which embraces settlements at Stewartby and Wootton as well as parts of Mid-Bedfordshire.

2.35   The purpose of Strategic Corridors is not to create a linear urban area. This in any case would probably not be possible in Marston Vale due to the scale and disposition of mineral reserves, active brick pits and landfill sites. The approach to development in the corridor is to strengthen the existing 'selected' settlements of Wootton and Stewartby and to form a new 'selected' settlement by the redevelopment of the largely redundant Elstow Storage Depot and nearby land. Housing development on this scale needs to be matched by increased opportunities for employment. The plan identifies several such locations within the corridor

including a key site at the proposed junction of the Southern and Western Bypasses with the A421. Developments of this scale need to be planned carefully and dovetailed with the provision of infrastructure. In consultation with acknowledged interests, 'supplementary planning guidance' in the form of development/planning briefs will be prepared and adopted in order to secure appropriate forms of development.

POLICY S4

To accord with Structure Plan Policy 33, the 'selected' settlements of Wootton and Stewartby, and a site focused on Elstow Storage Depot shall be the location for development planned in the context of the South West Bedford Strategic Corridor.

2.36   A century of brick making activity has left its mark on the Marston Vale, producing a landscape that now provides a challenge and an opportunity for both the business and landowning interests in the Vale, and for the local community. Public and private organisations have in partnership prepared a Strategy for the Vale which sets out the guiding principles for a major landscape restoration initiative financed through development. The area is one of twelve Community Forests in the UK and this covers a more extensive area than the Strategy produced by the Marston Vale Partnership.

2.37   The objective of the Strategy is to create a more attractive and varied landscape, characterised by extensive woodland and copses, water areas and well managed farmland that will provide an appropriate setting and recreational and access opportunities for the existing and prospective residents of the Vale. Joint action, probably sustained over several decades, involving the public, private and voluntary sectors will be needed to achieve the scale of environmental and landscape enhancement envisaged. Proposals for further development, including residential and commercial schemes, mineral extraction, waste management and transport investment will be supported by the planning authorities where such proposals make a positive contribution to the strategy. The designation of a strategic growth corridor will assist in focussing attention on the Vale and bringing forward these environmental improvements.

POLICY S5

The Borough Council places a very high priority on achieving the objectives and principles embodied in the Marston Vale Strategy and will use its powers and resources with others to achieve positive improvements to the landscape and environment of the Vale. Within the Marston Vale Strategy Area (as defined on the Proposals Map) planning applications for development proposals will be determined in accordance with the policies of this plan, and with specific reference to the contribution that the development makes to achieving the strategy and improving the environment of the Vale.
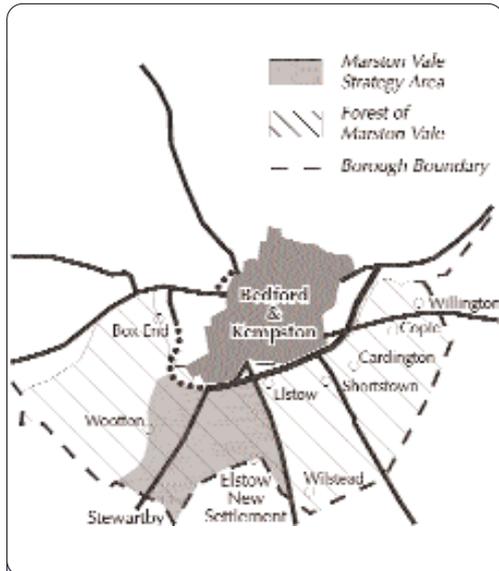
Fig 3. Marston Vale

2.37a   Policy NE21 refers to the Borough Council's support for the Forest of Marston Vale.

THE RURAL AREA

2.38   In physical, social and economic terms the character of the rural area is not uniform. It exhibits a range of different types and sizes of settlements, different landscapes and a variety of rural economic activity including farming. Its future requirements as addressed by this Local Plan cannot be viewed solely in the context of the blanket policies of rural restraint as set out in the Structure Plan and previous Local Plans. It must be viewed in the context of the following considerations:

a) the contribution that rural communities might make towards achieving greater levels of sustainability;

b) the need to move towards more viable rural communities, including diversification;

c) the need to optimise the utility of existing investment in infrastructure etc;

d) the need to promote social inclusion and provision of affordable housing.

2.39   Structure Plan policies are well established and impose considerable restraint in the rural area, protecting the countryside from urban sprawl, ribbon and sporadic development, preventing the coalescence of settlements and conserving the rural character of this part of Bedfordshire. It would be totally inappropriate to abandon the principle of rural restraint, yet the Local Plan must accommodate the acknowledged development pressures and have regard to the Government's latest guidance. The approach that the Borough Council has taken has involved defining firstly Settlement Policy Areas and secondly establishing preferred rural locations as in the hierarchy referred to below.

Settlement Policy Areas (SPAs)

2.40   Within the rural area, planning policies have an emphasis of restraint and have previously applied as a blanket across the whole. Historically, this has caused

problems of interpretation on the edge of settlements and where there are isolated clusters of houses, perhaps mixed with farm buildings. When this matter was considered by the Local Plan Inspector in 1992/3, he made the suggestion that a line be drawn round each village to mark the limit of development so that a clear distinction could be made between the policies applicable to villages, and those relevant to the surrounding countryside; hence Settlement Policy Areas.

2.41   Rural communities have witnessed many changes over recent decades. With increasing car ownership, many villages have experienced a decline in their range of facilities. Village shops, Sub-Post Offices and businesses have closed as people are more able and willing to travel the distance to the larger centres for their needs. However, increasing awareness about the wider environmental issues associated with high car ownership levels, coupled with renewed interest in the regeneration of rural economies and the maintenance of viable rural communities, may arrest or perhaps reverse this trend of decline.

2.42   Whilst the lifting of restraint policies would have a dramatic and unwelcome effect on the character of the rural area and run counter to sustainability aims, it is clear that in drawing a firm and enduring line around a village it is appropriate to consider whether or not the SPA should make some allowance for development. Obviously some villages are better placed to absorb growth than others and some may need modest levels of development in order to survive as communities.

2.43   The approach taken to the definition of Settlement Policy Areas (SPAs) has been very much a 'bottom-up' process involving detailed discussions with each Parish Council at the outset about how their villages should change in future years. Firstly, this process involved deciding which settlements should have defined development limits and which should be regarded as part of the countryside. The view formed that SPAs should not be defined for settlements without a recognisable built-up character, due to their size and/or the dispersed nature of development. The Borough contains many small groups of houses scattered about the rural area, some of which are known locally as 'Ends', where the cumulative effect of development would have a major adverse impact. Such settlements have been regarded as forming part of the open countryside where there is a general presumption against development.

2.44   Secondly, the Borough consulted Parish Councils about the boundaries of each SPA. Parishes were asked if they felt that their village had the physical capacity to absorb growth without adversely affecting the character of the village, whether some growth would be likely to improve the prospects of the village becoming more self-sustaining, and if there were constraints that would suggest that growth might be inappropriate.

2.45   The outcome of this exercise provided a crucial input into the Consultation Draft Local Plan and has attracted a large amount of support from Parish Councils. This preliminary work, along with ongoing dialogue and negotiation has continued to influence the current local plan strategy.

2.46   Thus the local plan defines Settlement Policy Areas that will:

a) promote policies of rural restraint, by protecting the countryside for its own sake, preventing the coalescence of settlements, ribbon development, and the piecemeal extension of villages; and,

b) provide a framework and additional clarity for the control of development within the built-up area of villages during the plan period.

2.46a   Whilst Biddenham and Elstow villages are located within the boundary of the Urban Area (Policy S3) and are not wholly surrounded by countryside, they remain distinct places having a quasi-rural character and accordingly they have been given a defined Settlement Policy Area.

POLICY S6
The Borough Council defines Settlement Policy Areas on the Proposals Map to distinguish between the built-up areas of villages and the countryside surrounding them which shall be protected for its own sake. Within the Urban Area, Biddenham and Elstow villages have a defined Settlement Policy Area in recognition of their quasi-rural character.

2.47   Policies setting out the considerations to be used in determining planning applications for development within SPAs (both in specific and general terms) are to be found in the housing and employment chapters of the plan.

SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

2.48   In determining the location of development (ie. to sites first in and adjoining urban areas and then to settlements in the Strategic Corridors), the Structure Plan identifies the upper section of a settlement hierarchy which needs to be extended in the Local Plan to provide a basis for the planning of the rural part of the Borough in addition to the 'selected' settlements referred to in paragraph 2.21. The rural settlement hierarchy is defined in the Plan as follows:

First Order Villages
First Order Villages are larger rural settlements, with a population exceeding 1,500 inhabitants. They are generally well located to significant local work opportunities, public transport connections and road/rail corridors, and have a good range of facilities and community provision. This typically would include a Lower School and shopping facilities.

Second Order Villages
Second Order Villages have a recognisable built-up character and basic facilities.

Other Settlements
Other settlements within the rural area are regarded as forming part of the open countryside where there is a presumption against development.

This hierarchy sets out the order of preference in the rural area (ie. after the urban area, land adjoining the urban area and the strategic corridor) of potential locations for development.

POLICY S7
The Borough Council defines a rural settlement hierarchy. Villages have been categorised as First Order Villages, Second Order Villages, and other settlements.
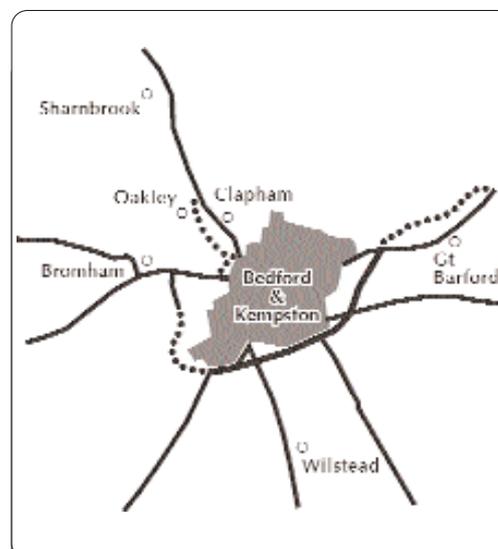
Fig 4. First Order Villages

2.48a   Classification does not necessarily imply the suitability of a village for expansion; constraints on growth must also be taken into account. Any proposals for development will be considered against the rural planning policies, in particular the policies contained in the housing and employment chapters. The suitability of a village to accommodate additional housing is based on an assessment in the context of the following factors:

a) the location of the village in relation to the main urban area, the strategic road network and the potential use of public transport;

b) the size of the village and the strength of the local infrastructure and scale of village facilities already existing or capable of provision;

c) the character and form of the village;

d) the scale of recent developments and their degree of integration;

e) the scale of environmental and other constraints upon development including: long term environmental designations such as landscape protection, nature conservation, river protection areas, areas of special restraint, etc; and shorter term or specific inhibiting factors such as major recent growth, and priorities and policies in higher level guidance and plans; and

f) the scope for development to generate benefits that would help meet local plan objectives such as the provision of affordable housing which will help secure a mixed and balanced community.

FIRST ORDER VILLAGES

2.49   The following have been designated First Order Villages:

2.50   **Bromham** is a large well established village with a good range of local services. It has been the focus of significant development in recent years which will take time to assimilate and there are further outstanding

planning permissions. It has environmental constraints, is not within a preferred location as defined by the Structure Plan and thus only has limited development potential. In addition, given its proximity to sites H6, H7 and H8, Bromham's growth should be held in check until those sites are virtually built out as development here would deflect housing demand from key allocated sites where essential roads infrastructure, otherwise unobtainable from the public purse, can be provided.

2.51　**Clapham** has been constrained in recent years, more so than the other comparable satellite settlements around Bedford and Kempston, because of the drainage situation. This problem has now been resolved and some development is thought appropriate in advance of completion of the A6/Clapham Bypass to support existing local services.

2.52　**Great Barford** is well located in terms of the strategic road system and enjoys a good range of local facilities. However, absence of a bypass and constraints due to the A421 trunk road which passes through the village limits its capacity for development.

2.52a　**Oakley** has been the focus for much development in recent years because of its location close to Bedford and good access to the strategic road system. However there are many significant constraints on growth which effectively rule out further significant expansion during the plan period.

2.53　**Sharnbrook** acts as a focus for the rural area north of Bedford. Relatively modest proposals in this plan will provide direct benefits for the village and thus the allocations made are seen as being supportive of the village whilst, at the same time, contributing to the wider strategic aim.

2.55　**Wilstead** is reasonably located on the A6 south of Bedford and is just beyond the area of search for the South West Bedford Strategic Corridor. With the prospect of a new settlement focused on Elstow Storage Depot nearby, the scale and character of Wilstead need to be respected and this in addition to other constraints limits the potential for development. No more significant growth will be allowed in the village while the Elstow New Settlement is establishing itself in this plan period.

SECOND ORDER VILLAGES

2.56　Second Order Villages where small development sites have been identified are as follows:

Cardington, Cople, Cotton End Eastcotts, Elstow, Harrold, Riseley, Roxton, Stagsden, Swineshead, Turvey, Upper Dean, Willington & Wymington

2.57　Other villages which fall into the Second Order category, but where small development sites have not been specifically identified are as follows:

Biddenham, Bletsoe, Carlton, Colmworth, Felmersham, Little Staughton, Milton Ernest, Odell, Pavenham, Podington, Church End Ravensden, Green End Renhold, Salph End Renhold, Souldrop, Stevington, Thurleigh, Wilden & Yelden.

EMPLOYMENT

2.59　Fundamental to the local plan strategy, is the premise that employment opportunities must go hand in hand with new housing and population growth. This is essential to secure growth in the local economy, to achieve a more sustainable land use pattern which reduces journeys to work, and to meet the requirements of modern commercial enterprises.

2.60　The local plan aims to achieve this by:

a) Introducing policies to protect existing employment areas from loss due to change of use or redevelopment. This is equally important within the urban area and within the rural area.

b) Encouraging investment in brownfield sites such as Thurleigh Airfield. Development briefs have already been prepared for Thurleigh Airfield and Elstow Storage Depot and the adopted Shortstown Development Brief will be revised and made subject to public consultation in order to take account of changed circumstances.

c) Identifying a new employment sites located at key intersections on Bedford's trunk road network in order to maximise accessibility and commercial attractiveness.

d) Ensuring that major housing allocations are accompanied by employment opportunities, and that this requirement forms an integral part of the development briefs prepared for these sites.

GENERAL POLICIES

2.61　To avoid unnecessary repetition in this plan, the following section introduces a series of policies that have an impact and application beyond the remit of individual chapters.

2.62　The Borough Council prepares, consults upon and adopts supplementary planning guidance from time to time in order to provide a more detailed context for the preparation and consideration of planning proposals. The purpose of this guidance is to supplement and add further detail to the specific development details included in the local plan process. Documents to be considered as supplementary planning guidance are listed within the Implementation chapter of this plan and include guidance currently being produced.

~~POLICY S8~~

~~The Borough Council will consider its adopted supplementary planning guidance to be an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.~~

2.63　Where the scale or complexity of development, or the sensitivity of local issues indicate, the Borough Council will prepare, consult upon and adopt Development Briefs as supplementary planning guidance.

2.64　The local plan proposes a number of substantial development sites, the development of which depends upon elements of infrastructure, the provision of amenities, or community, educational and other facilities necessary to serve the development. In all such circumstances and in the context of Circular 1/97, the following policy shall apply:

POLICY S9

In accordance with the principles set down in current published national policy advice, the Borough Council will seek provision of community and other facilities in tandem with development with planning permission. Where appropriate and necessary, it expects development to contribute directly to the capital and/or revenue costs of consequent social and physical infrastructure provision.

INTRODUCTION / BOROUGH STRATEGY / NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING / EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM / SHOPPING / BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE
TRANSPORT / LEISURE & RECREATION / UTILITIES & TELECOMS / IMPLEMENTATION
AIMS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL / OPPORTUNITY SITES / GLOSSARY / PROPOSALS MAPS

BEDFORD BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN
OCTOBER 2002
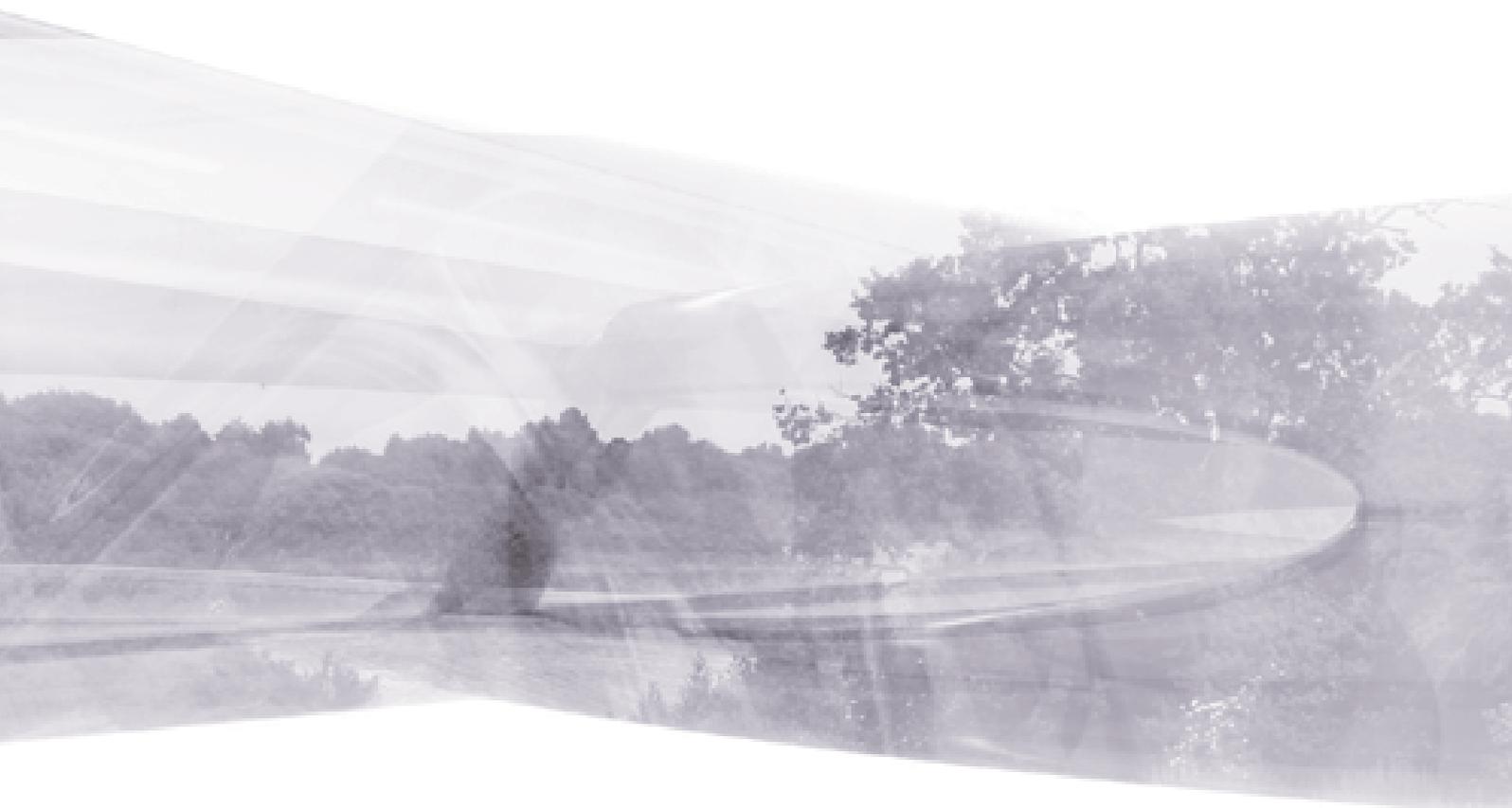
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Policy NE1   Sites of special scientific interest

Policy NE2   Species protected by law

Policy NE3   Sites of local importance

Policy NE4   Trees and hedges

Policy NE5   Tree Preservation Orders

Policy NE6   Woodland

Policy NE7   Wildlife corridors

Policy NE8   Replacement provision

Policy NE9   Conservation management

Policy NE10   Contributions to nature conservation

Policy NE11   Access to the countryside and
                    interpretation facilities

Policy NE12   Landscaping in association
                    with development

Policy NE13   Landscape management and protection

Policy NE14   Area of Great Landscape Value

Policy NE15   River Protection Area

Policy NE16   Flooding

Policy NE17   Open spaces

Policy NE18   Character of built areas

Policy NE19   Wyboston Land Settlement Association Area

Policy NE20   Landscape and environmental improvement

Policy NE21   Forest of Marston Vale

Policy NE22   Bedford Linear Park

Policy NE23   Bedford River Valley Park

Policy NE24   Protection and enhancement
                    of water resources

Policy NE25   Pollution

Policy NE26   Agricultural land quality

Policy NE27   Wildlife habitats-v-agricultural land

Policy NE28   Land contamination

Policy NE29   Uncertain consequences of proposals

3 / NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

3.1 The natural environment comprising land, water, air and associated assets, supports all mankind's activities by providing for his needs whether this be for food, shelter, the material for economic goods, or places for relaxation or leisure. One of the key roles of planning is to balance the need for development with the need to protect and conserve the environment. Since the Rio Summit in 1992 and more recently the Johannesburg Summit in 2002 this role, in recognition of the increasing pressures on the natural environment, has taken on far greater importance, as the relationship between local actions and their global consequences is recognised. The Summit endorsed the concept of sustainable development as a guiding principle for assessing future development. This is fundamental to the strategy underlying this plan and the Borough Council intends to follow this principle when considering development proposals.

3.2 There are several definitions of sustainability, all of which seek to protect the environment while meeting the needs of the present, in order to avoid compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Within this broad context, this chapter identifies those natural assets that are potentially at risk and capable of influence through the planning system. Greatest protection needs to be given to irreplaceable assets. Other assets critical to the concept of sustainability will be protected and in some cases where displacement is unavoidable replacement will be required. The overall result will therefore be to enrich the quality of the whole countryside and other natural areas in the Borough.

KEY ISSUES

3.3 Thus the chapter addresses the following key issues:

1 The protection of environmental resources, to ensure that the environment is preserved for the benefit of future generations.

2 The protection and enhancement of finite and irreplaceable resources.

3 The protection, enhancement and where necessary the replacement of critical resources.

4 The achievement of overall environmental protection and enhancement through developer contributions where necessary and appropriate.

5 The identification of areas where particular efforts are required to restore derelict or despoiled areas and landscapes.

6 The protection and enhancement of the river environment as a fundamental part of the natural environment.

7 To improve and safeguard the quality of the existing landscape and to require a high standard of landscape design with new development.

8 To improve accessibility to the natural environment for all.

9 The resolution of the competing demands on the environment.

NATURE CONSERVATION

3.4 Areas or sites of natural history interest form important habitats in both urban and rural areas. Nature conservation interests will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

3.5 Both County and Borough authorities keep a wide range of detailed information on sites of known natural history interest. Details such as the location of particular plants, animals or geological features are included. In view of their value and fragility these sites are considered worthy of protection. The Borough Council will identify relevant sites and will seek their protection.

3.6 Our natural wildlife heritage is not confined to the various statutorily designated sites. There is a continuous hierarchy of nature conservation interest throughout the countryside and in urban areas. The survival of the nation's wildlife cannot be achieved solely by site protection. It also relies on sympathetic management practices aimed at conserving the environment and improving its quality throughout the countryside. Many features of natural history interest must be afforded protection. These can include ponds, hedgerows, green corridors, trees, copses, woodland, archaeological features, verges, grassland, watercourses and former mineral workings and areas of neglected land not identified for built development. Care will be taken on the edge of urban areas and villages to avoid developments affecting areas of wildlife interest and to maintain the continuity of wildlife corridors. Special attention will be paid to those areas supporting valued flora and fauna, both of local and national interest.

3.7 In June 1996, the Borough Council adopted its draft Nature Conservation Strategy. This document contains the Council's policy and programme for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. The strategy will guide the Council's continuing commitment in the management of its own land. The Council will encourage other land owners to adopt the management patterns laid out in the Strategy.

3.8 In addition, a number of Wildlife Priority Areas have been identified in the County and these represent concentrations of wildlife habitats and important biogeographical features where positive action will produce the most significant benefits. Within the Borough, the main areas of relevance are the River Great Ouse Valley and the North Bedfordshire Ancient Woods.

3.9 The degree of protection afforded to sites with nature conservation value will depend on their identified international, national or local importance.

SITES OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

3.10 These sites are subject to the most rigorous examination and development on or affecting them will be allowed only exceptionally. No such sites have been identified in Bedford Borough.

SITES OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

3.11 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) form a national network of sites given statutory protection under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The SSSI network alone does not contain a sustainable wildlife resource but the sites represent the best examples of biological, geological or landform features which must be protected if the biodiversity of Britain is to be maintained. SSSI account for just 1.2% of the land area of Bedfordshire compared to an average for England as a whole of 6.8%. There are just eight SSSI in Bedford Borough and these are shown on the Proposals Map.

3.12 Consultation with English Nature is required for any proposal which may affect an SSSI. Development outside SSSI can adversely affect the special interest within a site. Consultation areas around SSSI are defined by English Nature. These normally extend for 500 metres although in important or sensitive cases they can extend for up to 2 kilometres. Consultations with English Nature may be required beyond these limits where major developments are involved.

3.12a There will be a strong presumption against developments which either directly or indirectly adversely affect an SSSI. Any proposal for development which may affect an SSSI will be subject to rigorous examination and such developments will be allowed only exceptionally. Where there is no acceptable alternative to development affecting an SSSI appropriate measures will be required to mitigate or compensate for the effects of the development.

POLICY NE1

The Borough Council will not permit development that may directly or indirectly destroy or adversely affect a designated or proposed Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the network of such sites.

Where development is permitted the authority will consider the use of conditions or planning obligations to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation interest.

3.13 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 sets out the protection which is afforded to wild animals and plants. Certain plant and animal species, including all wild birds, are protected under the Act, with some being protected under their own legislation. The presence of a protected species is a material consideration in considering a development proposal likely to affect them.

POLICY NE2

The Borough Council will not permit development that may directly or indirectly destroy or adversely affect animal and plant species protected by law (ie. those protected by Schedules 1, 5 or 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended and by the Badgers Act 1992) unless the reason for development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site and/or the national interest.

Where development is permitted the developer will be required, where possible, to take steps to secure the protection of such plants and animals. In doing this, conditions and/or planning agreements may be used to reduce disturbance to a minimum, to facilitate the survival of individual members of the species and to provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of population.

SITES OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE
Local Nature Reserves

3.14 Local Nature Reserves are habitats of local significance and may be established by local authorities under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They can make a useful contribution to both nature conservation and to the opportunities available for the public to enjoy or learn about wildlife. Within the Borough, LNRs have been designated at Fenlake Meadows, Putnoe Wood, Mowsbury Hill north of Bedford, Browns Wood, Hill Rise, Bromham Lake and most recently at Brickhill Allotments (Park Wood). Further sites may be designated during the plan period.

County Wildlife Sites

3.15 To supplement statutory conservation measures, a County based tier of non-statutory wildlife habitat protection has been developed, known as County Wildlife Sites. They were designated following the Phase I habitat survey conducted by the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust. The selection guidelines were modelled on those used by English Nature when assessing SSSIs (ie. sites representing the best in the County, those with high species diversity, sites with highly natural ecosystems or those containing rare, endangered or threatened species or habitats).

3.16 The whole length of the River Great Ouse flowing through the Borough is identified as a County Wildlife Site (see Proposals Map).

Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)

3.17 Many of the County's best geological and physiographical sites are under threat. Those of national significance will be notified as SSSI but there is a need to identify and protect other sites in the county and regional context. These are termed 'Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites' and may include archaeologically sensitive areas. They are non statutory designations.

POLICY NE3

The Borough Council will not permit development that may

i) directly or indirectly destroy or adversely affect a Local Nature Reserve, County Wildlife Site or Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site or

ii) destroy or have an adverse effect on other sites supporting national, regional or County Rare Species

unless alternative provisions can be agreed or it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site or feature.

In all cases such damage will be kept to a minimum and where appropriate the Borough Council will consider the use of conditions and/or planning obligations to provide compensatory measures.

TREES AND WOODLAND

3.18   In 1994, the Borough Council produced its Tree and Woodland Strategy. This strategy explains the Council's commitment to the protection and enhancement of trees and woodlands in the Borough.

Trees

3.19   Trees have an important visual and ecological value both in urban and rural areas. Small groups or individual trees make an impact by their shape or form, by giving shelter, or by providing enclosure. In a built up area, trees will also soften hard outlines, link different man-made features, provide shade and seasonal variety.

3.20   When granting planning permission the Borough Council will consider the need for the retention, protection and planting of trees. Applicants should, therefore, provide information on accurate site plans showing the proposal, site levels, tree position and size, trees to be retained and felled, and the provision for new planting. Trees on adjacent sites close to boundaries should also be shown, as they may be affected by the development or may provide screening. Where a number of trees exist on site, the Council may require the submission of a detailed tree survey to aid decision making.

3.21   In general existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows should be retained. During demolition and development they will need protection and it may be necessary to agree a management plan. Particular attention should be paid to the resultant relationships between retained trees and buildings. It is important to ensure that adequate space is secured and that the trees' survival is not prejudiced by problems such as shading and root damage. (see also paras 4.76 to 4.85 and Policies BE38, 39 and 40).

POLICY NE4

In considering proposals for development, the Borough Council will seek to protect and retain trees and hedges which it considers to be of amenity, landscape or wildlife significance. Where development is permitted, conditions will be applied and, where appropriate, legal agreements sought to:

i) secure landscaping, tree and hedgerow planting on or adjacent to such sites appropriate to the character of the development and its setting, including using native species of local origin where suitable;

ii) protect existing and new planting;

iii) secure structural planting where required;

iv) secure the conditions to allow existing or newly planted trees to grow unhindered to full maturity;

v) provide for the reinstatement or replacement of such features consequently lost or adversely affected.

Tree Preservation Orders

3.22   In order to protect trees in the landscape, local authorities can impose planning conditions for the retention of trees when granting planning permission. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) can be made to retain an individual tree or groups of trees for their own value and in the interests of amenity. Trees within Conservation Areas are afforded special protection in that six weeks notice is required by the Borough Council before they can be felled or lopped. Where appropriate, the Borough Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders to secure immediate protection for newly planted trees as part of an approved landscaping scheme.

POLICY NE5

~~The Borough Council will make and enforce Tree Preservation Orders, and/or use planning conditions where it considers trees are worthy of retention.~~

Woodland

3.23   Bedfordshire is one of the least wooded counties in the country. Most of the remaining woodland is found in the north west of the Borough and much is considered to be ancient semi-natural woodland, generally having been in existence since at least 1600AD. This woodland represents a significant landscape and wildlife resource.

3.24   New mixed woodland will be welcomed as an economic, leisure or amenity resource. The Borough Council will generally support and encourage the planting of new woodland, subject to there being no conflict with local plan policies, the surrounding landscape or with other environmental features. To ensure the long term health and vitality of trees and woodlands, active management is necessary. New plantings should be maintained to assist its successful establishment. Woodland can be a particularly good after-use for reclaimed derelict sites. Within the Borough there are also proposals for the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale (discussed in more detail at section 3.50 to 3.53a).

3.25   The Borough Council supports appropriate management practices which will retain and enhance the landscape and ecological value of woodland. Requests for advice and guidance on all aspects of planting and preservation will be welcomed.

POLICY NE6

In considering proposals for development, the Borough Council will:

i) protect areas of woodland which it considers to be of landscape, amenity and/or, wildlife significance;

ii) protect ancient woodlands by a presumption against development or any potentially damaging use;

iii) seek appropriate management;

iv) encourage the creation of new woodland especially on ridges and hills;

iv) discourage recreation uses likely to have an adverse impact on woodland habitat.

WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

3.26 Sites of ecological interest can become isolated or adversely affected by intensive agriculture or by being surrounded by buildings. This may mean that the community of plants and animals becomes extremely vulnerable and may result in local extinctions. It is important that sites are linked in order that species are not cut off from the wider environment. Wildlife corridors are ecologically vital and can be important features in the landscape.

3.27 The main wildlife corridor within the Borough is the River Great Ouse. A number of other wildlife corridors also link the urban area with the countryside. They include tributaries, footpaths, tree belts, tracks, hedgerows, the road verges and railways, both active and disused. Such corridors may not be of consistent high ecological value throughout their length, or in isolation, but their integrity should be maintained for the overall distribution and abundance of ecological resources throughout the area.

~~POLICY NE7~~

~~The Borough Council will seek the protection and enhancement of the network of wildlife corridors shown on the Proposals Map. Proposals for development which would have an adverse impact on such a corridor will be resisted, unless satisfactory alternative provisions can be agreed, or it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard this network.~~

REPLACEMENT PROVISION

3.28 If development is permitted which is likely to result in some environmental loss, the Council will attempt to secure adequate compensation by the creation of new environmental resources. The aim of this approach is to secure the overall character and quality of the environment in the longer term.

3.29 Both planning conditions and planning obligations will be used where appropriate, to achieve compensatory measures.

3.30 The types of benefit which might be required include

– landscape benefits, including more generous landscape treatment, and sensitive planting and management of trees and shrubs, providing that it takes account of archaeological resources, and is in keeping with the character of the area;

– protection, restoration, repair and management of important features such as trees, woodlands and boundary features like walls or hedges;

– creation or restoration of appropriate wildlife habitats such as ponds, wetland, meadows and woodland with appropriate access provision;

– the protection and repair or reuse of historic buildings, features of historic landscape interest or archaeological remains, with provision for access and interpretation where appropriate;

– enhanced provision for access and enjoyment, including new footpaths, cycleways and bridleways,

open space such as informal parks, community woodland, meadows or pocket parks, and support for or provision of facilities such as visitor centres or information and interpretation.

3.30a In line with Circular 1/97, the benefit being sought must be reasonable in scale and kind, be directly related to the development proposed and necessary to the granting of planning permission.

POLICY NE8

Where development is permitted which results in the loss of natural history sites, habitats or features, the Borough Council will seek to secure a replacement asset of a comparable or enhanced nature conservation value. A detailed survey of the site or feature will be required before such development is permitted. In determining the nature of such required replacement provision, full consideration should be given to the following:

i) size;

ii) diversity of species and habitat, including rarity and national/local significance, soil type and quality;

iii) the relationship of the site or feature in question to other assets.

MANAGEMENT OF SITES WITH CONSERVATION VALUE

3.30b Management is usually crucial to the retention and enhancement of habitats. The Borough Council is already implementing management and enhancement objectives on its own sites. Measures can often be as simple as cutting grass less frequently or at particular times. Similarly effective action by others will be encouraged and advice given as appropriate.

3.30c Where nature conservation interests are associated with development proposals, the Council will if required use its planning powers, and Section 39 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, to secure appropriate management agreements. Encouragement will be given to land management regimes that account for nature conservation and which enhance the natural and landscape value of the land.

POLICY NE9

Where the nature conservation interest of a site is considered to be at risk, the Borough Council will, where appropriate, enter into a management agreement, or pursue other means of controlling inappropriate forms of permitted or other development, or other potentially threatening activity.

3.30d The Council will continue to develop and implement appropriate strategies to enable long-term commitments to management and will continue to be proactive in seeking to protect, enhance and manage habitats of nature conservation interest.

POLICY NE10

Where appropriate, development will be expected to contribute to nature conservation.

The Borough Council will promote nature conservation by:

i) the designation and conservation by appropriate

management of Local Nature Reserves (shown on the Proposals Map);

ii) safeguarding and encouraging the appropriate management of sites of nature conservation interest;

iii) seeking opportunities for the creation of wildlife habitats;

iv) the implementation of a nature conservation strategy.

INTERPRETATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

3.30e Increased public access in the countryside for the purposes of leisure and recreation provides the opportunity for educational visits. The provision of suitable low key interpretation facilities, such as appropriate information boards and signing will be encouraged at certain locations. In this way it may be possible to increase understanding of the countryside, increase enjoyment and thereby foster a sense of caring in visitors. In appropriate cases, negotiation may be used to secure developer contributions for such facilities at the planning application stage. Countryside access for recreation purposes is dealt with by Policy LR10.

POLICY NE11

In appropriate cases the Borough Council will seek opportunities to increase access to the countryside and for the provision of environmental interpretation facilities, subject to there being no conflict with other policies.

THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE BOROUGH

3.31 The Borough contains a diversity of rural landscapes including the open flat agricultural areas in the east, the changing valley of the Great Ouse, the Greensand Ridge to the south, the limestone ridge to the north and claylands in the Marston Vale. Agricultural use generally dominates the rural areas. Many of the characteristics of the landscape stem from its use and management. In some instances this has resulted in its enhancement but sometimes the result has been degradation, particularly where industrial and extraction uses have been abandoned. Development in the countryside and changing farming practices have changed the landscape considerably. However, many traditional elements remain and potential exists for its enhancement.

RETENTION OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

3.32 Landscape considerations will play a significant part in the determination of planning proposals. Consideration will be given to the impact of proposals on the surrounding area in terms of visual intrusion and loss of landscape features. In exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of development outweigh the loss of landscape value and features are lost, the Borough Council will seek replacement or other compensatory measures to mitigate the loss. In order to ensure that landscaping becomes effective as soon as possible the Council may, in some cases, require structural planting to be implemented in advance or at the earliest stage of development. This will ensure quick integration of the scheme into the surrounding area.

3.33 The Borough Council has prepared a Landscape Design Guide setting out basic principles of landscape design and advice on detailed planting stock and materials. Developers are advised to consult this in advance especially when promoting large schemes. (See also Policies BE33 and BE34).

POLICY NE12

Development proposals should make early provision for adequate and appropriate landscaping which accords with the Borough's Landscape Design Guide. Schemes should provide adequate screening. In exceptional cases, where the benefits of development outweigh any resultant loss in landscape features, the Borough Council will require compensatory provision as an integral part of the development.

POLICY NE13

Where landscape features are to be retained, or created the Borough Council will need to be satisfied that adequate provision has been made for their retention, protection, management and maintenance. Applications are required to show details of safeguards protecting the feature both during construction and after completion of development.

AREA OF GREAT LANDSCAPE VALUE

3.34 A large area in the north-west of the County is identified in the County Structure Plan as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). This comprises two principal features, namely land dominated by the limestone ridge rising to just over 90m, and land in the valley of the Upper Ouse with its associated meadow lands. Grassland remains the most prominent feature in the AGLV although agricultural policies have encouraged the ploughing of pasture land in recent years.

3.35 Within the Area of Great Landscape Value, matters of landscape concern will normally take precedence; landscape features will be retained, and consideration of development proposals will need to take particular account of their visual impact.

~~POLICY NE14~~

~~Within the Area of Great Landscape Value as defined on the proposals map, priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the character of the landscape. Development will not be permitted, except where, it does not adversely affect the character and value of the area and is in accordance with other policies of the Local Plan or it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard the landscape value of the site.~~

RIVER PROTECTION AREA

3.36 The River Great Ouse is one of the Borough's most attractive features. It is an important wildlife resource and provides drainage and flood protection. Wetland habitats within river floodplains are in general decline. The Council will seek to retain the ecological benefits of flooding by opposing development which would adversely affect flood regimes.

3.37 In order to preserve the character of the riverine areas, the Local Plan includes a River Protection Area where development will not normally be permitted unless it meets criteria i) to iv) of policy NE15. The Borough

Council will pay particular attention to preserving and enhancing the habitat and landscape character of this area and will encourage other agencies to follow the same objectives. The boundaries of the River Protection Areas have been drawn, as far as possible, to follow identifiable features and are not intended to be a reflection of the extent of the floodplain, in fact in places the RPA covers a wider area than the floodplain. To further the enjoyment of river areas, facilities such as car parks may be provided if this can be done without conflicting with the following and other policies of this plan. The RPA is not related to concerns about flood protection.

POLICY NE15

~~Within the River Protection Area, as defined on the proposals map, the Borough Council will give priority to the retention and where appropriate the enhancement of the landscape. Development will not be permitted within the Area unless:~~

~~i) it would not adversely affect the landscape character of the Area;~~

~~ii) it does not adversely affect the nature conservation value of the Area;~~

~~iii) it accords with proposals and policies set out elsewhere in this Plan or~~

~~iv) it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard the river protection area.~~

POLICY NE16

The Borough Council will not permit development where

i) it would intensify the risk of flooding; or

ii) it would be at an unacceptable risk from flooding; or

iii) it would prejudice existing flood defences or interfere with the ability to carry out flood control and maintenance work; or

iv) it would adversely affect wildlife habitat in the floodplain unless, the Borough Council, in consultation with the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Board as appropriate, is satisfied that the developer will provide appropriate mitigation, protection and compensatory measures.

(See Policy U2 also)

SAFEGUARDING OPEN SPACE

3.38   Some open spaces within built up areas in both the urban and rural parts of the Borough serve a range of important functions for which they are recognised as Urban Open Spaces and Important Open Spaces respectively. They can provide public access and contribute to the overall quality of life for those who visit, live or work in the area. Open space can enhance the setting of historic parts of a town, such as conservation areas, it can help to attract investment and tourism, aid regeneration, provide a break in the urban fabric, allow the creation of habitats as well as providing an important recreational resource. The value of open space is not necessarily dependent upon active use or public access.

3.38a   Reasons for designating Urban Open Spaces and Important Open Spaces may therefore be very similar for example where they provide visual relief in an otherwise built up area. However, open space in the urban and rural areas may perform subtly different functions. For example open space in the urban area may be important where it forms part of the town wide network of spaces affording permeability not only for residents and visitors but also for wildlife moving both within the town and between the town and countryside beyond. In rural areas, space on the edge of a village might be particularly important and warrant designation if it affords pleasing views from the settlement to the wider countryside or from distant points into the village. For this reason the character of Urban Open Spaces and Important Open Spaces may also be quite different. Urban Open Spaces are likely to have been planned in association with surrounding built development and as a result are likely to be formally managed with a more manicured appearance. Important Open Spaces on the other hand are often a reflection of the remaining undeveloped land within and close to the village framework. Their character is more likely to be informal and rural as a result. Further detail on Important Open Spaces is given in paragraph 5.49.

3.38b   If built on, such open space is likely to be lost to the community irrevocably and there will therefore be a presumption against the loss of designated spaces. The planning process must take full account of the long term implications of such losses.

3.39   In the urban area the designation of land as Urban Open Space on the Proposals Map and in the policies of the local plan will ensure that its amenity, recreational and habitat value are safeguarded. When proposals come forward which pose a risk to such open spaces within the presumption against the loss of urban open space, full account will be given both to the localised impact and to the overall impact on the structure of the network of open spaces, such as the river corridor, footpaths, parks and the Wildlife Corridors. The sustainability argument favours the reuse of vacant or redundant land especially in urban areas, but this must not be at the risk of town cramming and the loss of open spaces which are a vital resource to be protected. In the exceptional cases where development does occur on such open space, developer contributions will be sought for either the provision of new space or the enhancement or maintenance of existing open space facilities, including where appropriate and necessary, consideration of the potential for habitat/wildlife benefit.

3.40   The provision of open space within the urban area is not uniform and some parts have poor access to parks and recreational areas. The creation of additional open spaces in areas of inadequate levels of local provision will be taken into account when development proposals are considered. The Council's Parks Strategy provides guidance on this issue.

POLICY NE17

~~The Borough Council will safeguard and enhance open spaces as defined on the Proposals Map by:~~

~~i) not permitting proposals which would be likely to have an impact on the open space in terms of its function as part of the~~

~~wider open space network and/or as a wildlife corridor, its setting, its existing or potential contribution to the townscape or its value as a wildlife resource unless the proposals are able to provide a replacement of at least equal value, in terms of the above qualities;~~

~~ii) seeking in association with development, the provision and/or the enhancement of open space and the creation of areas having high ecological value.~~

3.41   The loss of small gaps and natural breaks both in urban areas and villages is cause for concern. Such gaps fulfil a number of functions and reflect the natural and structural development of an area, thereby contributing to the identity of a place and community. They add to the variety which makes an area attractive and are as important as other land uses in this respect. Even one new dwelling in a gap may destroy distant views and create ribbon development. Such green spaces and even derelict land may be a wildlife resource. In villages, open gaps and spaces are sometimes the last remaining remnants of declining habitats. Development on such sites could destroy both the natural wildlife and characteristic form of the settlement.

3.42   Policies that particularly deal with infilling within villages and on Important Open Spaces are included in the Housing Chapter, see Policies H24 and H25. However, non identification of land as an important open space or urban open space does not mean that development will be permitted.

POLICY NE18
Development will only be permitted where:

i) it will not adversely affect the built character of villages or the urban area;

ii) it will not result in the adverse loss of open space between or adjacent to buildings;

iii) it will not result in the loss of wildlife habitat.

WYBOSTON LAND SETTLEMENT AREA
3.43   In the late 1930s provision was made in the area of Wyboston and Chawston for small agricultural holdings. A distinctive land use pattern has resulted and has become known as the Land Settlement Association Area (LSA). Each holding was around 1.5 to 2 ha in size and had a modest detached house fronting the access road. The character of the area is determined by the open nature of the land and the spaciousness about the dwellings which by contrast is quite different to that of the nearby housing.

3.43a   In the LSA the design of the houses would originally have been very similar and a number have survived without substantial alteration. In addition little infill development has taken place over the years thus retaining opportunities for horticulture, agriculture and horsiculture in the locality.

3.43b   In order to protect the special character of the LSA, proposals which seek to adversely alter the established rhythm of spaces and buildings, such as infill or backland development, or which seek to extend dwellings substantially beyond the modest scale of the original will be resisted.

POLICY NE19
~~Within the Wyboston Land Settlement Association Area defined on the proposals map development will only be permitted where:~~

~~i) it would not result in a significant adverse impact on the unique agricultural character or appearance of the area;~~

~~ii) it would not result in an adverse impact on residential amenity or create unacceptable disturbance;~~

~~iii) it would be on a scale appropriate to the area;~~

~~iv) it would not result in increased traffic generation or the need for significant related development.~~

ENHANCING THE CHARACTER & APPEARANCE OF THE BOROUGH

3.44   As part of a long term commitment to improving the character and appearance of the Borough, the Council will prepare and promote schemes and programmes which will include landscaping, tree planting or other proposals. In the rural area, small schemes may be undertaken in cooperation with other bodies such as the County and Parish Councils and involvement of the local community is always important. Encouragement will be given to landowners and other agencies to carry out works that maximise landscape and environmental benefits.

3.45   The need for environmental improvement is particularly apparent along some stretches of main roads and railway lines and at the gateways to the urban area, which are perhaps the most visible and important, though possibly the most neglected parts of the Borough. The image this creates is not a true reflection of the Borough but it is a disincentive to investment. The Council will take every opportunity to improve the character and appearance of these high profile areas. Where appropriate, negotiation will be used to secure developer contributions for landscape and environmental improvements. (See also Policy BE33 relating to gateways and paras 3.28 to 3.30a).

POLICY NE20
Where appropriate and necessary, the Borough Council will seek to improve the character and appearance of the Borough by seeking developer contributions for landscape and environmental improvement.

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

3.46   In addition to the general policies which set the context for promoting landscape quality, the Borough Council has identified four specific priority areas for landscape improvement, increased public access and recreation opportunities. These areas overlap and concentrate attention around much of the urban area. Within these areas the Borough Council will be seeking to ensure that development proposals contribute to a programme of enhancement schemes.

3.47   The four initiatives involve:

–   the Marston Vale Strategy centred upon the brickfields;

–   the Forest of Marston Vale which overlaps with the Marston Vale Strategy Area but stretches over a much wider area to the south and east of Bedford;

–   the Bedford Linear Park;

–   the Bedford River Valley Park Project.

3.48   Both of the Marston Vale initiatives are being pursued jointly with Mid Bedfordshire District Council, and the County Council, in partnership with a wide range of bodies including the key commercial interests in the area.

3.49   The emphasis and approach to landscape improvement is different in each of these areas and separate policies have been developed by the Borough Council.

3.49a   The adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan identifies sites which are currently operational or preferred for mineral extraction and some of these sites fall within the following landscape improvement initiatives. As such, restoration of mineral workings have already and can continue to make a significant contribution to the stated aims and objectives of policies NE21, NE22 and NE23.

MARSTON VALE STRATEGY

3.50   The Marston Vale is of regional significance because of its strategic location, the presence of the brick industry, the capacity of the former clay workings for landfill and the scope for environmental improvement. A Strategy has been agreed by the parties involved, recognising that through joint efforts major environmental improvements can be achieved. Policy S5 arises in the context of this agreement. The Marston Vale Strategy Area is defined on the Proposals Map. A diagrammatic map showing the relationship between the Marston Vale Strategy Area boundary and the Forest of Marston Vale is given at Figure 3 in Chapter 2.

FOREST OF MARSTON VALE

3.51   The Forest of Marston Vale is one of 12 such Countryside Agency and Forestry Authority projects. It covers an area of some 60 square miles that includes the whole of the Marston Vale Strategy Area (see above), additional land in the Parishes of Wootton, Kempston Rural, Elstow, Wilshamstead, Eastcotts, Cardington, Cople and Willington as well as part of Mid Beds. The aim is to create multi-purpose forests on the edge of towns and cities, which meet a range of needs such as extensive areas of woodland for wildlife, timber production, jobs and for leisure. The principal objective is to increase woodland cover to 30% of the area over 40 years (by 2035). A variety of grants and supplements are available to encourage farmers and landowners to carry out (on a voluntary basis) tree planting and access improvements.

The Forest Plan is a non statutory plan which has been approved by the Department of the Environment. Whilst it does not form part of the Local Plan, it is a material consideration in both the preparation of this Local Plan and in deciding planning applications. The Forest Plan has as its objectives to:

–   improve the landscape, including reclamation of derelict land, to create a visually pleasing and varied countryside

–   increase opportunities for access, sport and recreation and cultural events for all social groups in the Borough

–   protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from irreversible development, ensure that farm land manages to recreate attractive landscape and wildlife areas and that opportunities for farm diversification are increased.

–   protect and manage areas of high quality landscape, and areas of archaeological interest

–   improve physical links between urban areas and countryside sites in the vale

–   protect and manage sites of nature conservation value and create new opportunities for conservation

–   provide new opportunities for educational use of the area and ensure that community forests can be used for the environmental educational needs of local communities

–   establish supplies of local timber and encourage development of timber based industries, employment opportunities and woodland projects

–   improve the economic well being of towns and cities through the creation of more appealing locations for industry and commerce.

–   improve the environment near housing and local industry, enhancing the value of properties and business and adding to the quality of life for residents and employees

–   encourage a high level of local community ownership of the concept and community involvement in implementation.

–   seek available grant funding and private sector support to implement the Forest of Marston Vale and to invest in the area.

3.53   The Borough Council has contributed to this project on land that it owns at Berry Farm, Wootton, where an extensive tree planting programme has been implemented together with access improvements. Where development opportunities arise which are consistent with the policies of the Local Plan, contributions will be sought to the environmental enhancement of the Vale. These could equally apply (dependent on location) to either the Forest of Marston Vale or the Marston Vale Strategy and in certain cases the environmental improvements achieved may be common to both initiatives.

3.53a   Additionally the Beds and River Ivel Drainage Board is, through the Marston Vale Surface Waters Group, actively pursuing strategic solutions to deal with surface water drainage in the Forest of Marston Vale. The group has published 'The Marston Vale Surface Waters Plan' which identifies strategic options for storm-water control and flood protection as alternatives to piecemeal solutions prepared by developers in response to individual development opportunities. It is hoped that such a comprehensive approach to water management will

result not only in more sustainable and environmentally acceptable solutions but will also maximise the opportunities for environmental enhancement within the Forest area. The Borough Council fully supports this strategic approach and as such is actively involved in the Marston Vale Surface Waters Group and has had an active input into the preparation of the Surface Waters Plan.

POLICY NE21

~~The Borough Council will provide continuing support to the Forest of Marston Vale. When considering development proposals (within the area defined on the proposals map) it will expect proposals to incorporate the aims of the project and in appropriate circumstances seek contributions towards its implementation.~~

BEDFORD LINEAR PARK

3.54   The countryside on the edge of the urban area can play an important part in providing for the informal recreational needs of the Borough and the creation of new habitats through the provision of open space and parkland adjacent to the urban area.

3.55   The Borough Council has identified two potential parkland areas, Bedford River Valley Park (see Policy NE23) and Bedford Linear Park. The Linear Park formed part of the 1993 Bedford Borough Local Plan. The Council will encourage the development of the Linear Park to the north of Bedford and wishes to see access to the area for informal recreation including walking, cycling and horseriding improved. The park could provide a strategic buffer between the urban and rural areas and protect the visual quality of the rising land to the north of the town. It would also provide an important opportunity for the establishment of new habitats and routes for wildlife. Policy H10a will contribute significantly towards the delivery of the Linear Park.

POLICY NE22

~~Within the area defined on the Proposals Map the Borough Council will encourage the creation of Bedford Linear Park as an area where opportunities exist for informal recreation and increased public access.~~

BEDFORD RIVER VALLEY PARK

3.56   The Borough Council has identified an area of land known as the Bedford River Valley Park within which it will seek to maintain and enhance public access and leisure and the level and diversity of wildlife.

3.57   The area covers approximately 860 hectares of land predominantly in agricultural use, although mineral extraction and subsequent poor restoration has rendered parts less suited to farming. The land lies adjacent to the River Ouse, is rich in archaeology, and links strongly with Priory Country Park and the town centre.

3.58   The area has potential for landscape improvements, provision of wildlife habitats (eg. reed beds, summer pasture, woodland etc) opportunities for countryside access (footpaths, including riverside access, bridleways and cycle routes), farm diversification and green tourism. The area could also accommodate a rowing course, subject to the resolution of a number of issues (see also Leisure and Recreation chapter, para 10.26).

3.59   Within or immediately adjacent to the area defined on the proposals map, if and when development opportunities arise, the Borough Council will seek contributions to the River Valley Park as appropriate and necessary.

3.59a   Development proposals should respect the high quality of agricultural land in this area and have regard to the need to protect Grades 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land as a non renewable resource.

POLICY NE23

~~When development opportunities arise, within the area defined on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will seek the creation of the Bedford River Valley Park as an area where opportunities exist for landscape enhancement, nature conservation, recreation and increased public access whilst protecting sites of acknowledged archaeological importance (see Policies BE24 and BE25).~~

NATURAL RESOURCES

3.60   It is essential that planning authorities take account of the effect of development activity on the stock and qualitative factors such as the accessibility of non renewable resources. The principle of sustainability requires that the quality and quantity of resources such as water, air and soil are protected or where possible improved. (Matters concerning minerals and waste are covered by the Bedfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan).

WATER

3.61   Increasing demands arising from population growth and changing use patterns can increase pressures on water resources in terms of demand and pollution. Some development proposals could adversely affect water quantity and quality. Where the local authority (following liaison with the Environment Agency [formerly the National Rivers Authority]) consider that granting planning permission would give rise to a risk to surface or ground water reserves, the presumption will be against development. The Environment Agency document 'Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater' provides some useful information relating to the water environment. In addition the Borough Council will, in liaison with the Environment Agency, prepare supplementary planning guidance to aid developers in achieving sustainable methods of surface water management. Anglian Water Services are responsible for supplying water allocated to them and will continue to liaise with the local authority and the Environment Agency to prepare more detailed guidelines to assist the analysis and management of potential risk to water resources from specific forms of development.

3.62   Waterside environments can provide significant opportunities for recreation and nature conservation. Development likely to have a detrimental effect on the recreation, landscape, amenity or conservation value of these areas will be resisted. Elsewhere, negotiations will take place, as appropriate, through the development control process, for measures to mitigate problems where development is permitted.

POLICY NE24

The Borough Council will seek to protect, and where possible, enhance, the water resources in the Borough by:

i) not permitting developments which would adversely affect the quality or quantity of water resources or their amenity or nature conservation value;

ii) not permitting development which would unduly restrict access to the River and other water bodies with recreational potential;

iii) actively negotiating with developers in order to achieve more sustainable methods of surface water management and drainage.

AIR

3.63　Good air quality is essential for health and the well being of people and natural ecosystems. The planning and public transportation functions of local government have the potential to have a significant impact on air quality. The development of integrated transport policies to divert movement away from private cars to more environmentally – friendly modes, coupled with a wider debate on appropriate forms of development and locational policies will therefore play a vital role. By seeking sustainable development in the form of both land use and transportation patterns, the effects of pollution can be reduced. Further, the implementation of detailed controls relating to potential polluting activities and sensitive uses such as schools or housing, as well as sensitive nature conservation interests can be implemented. As such, the location of polluting uses adjacent to sensitive uses will be resisted as will the location of sensitive uses by sources of pollution.

3.63a　Circular 15/97 'Part 1V The Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management' promotes a corporate approach to the issue of local air quality. It establishes the adoption of a National Air Quality Strategy as well as requiring a co-ordinated approach to local air quality management. DETR Guidance Note 4 'Air Quality and Land Use Planning' identifies the links between planning and achieving better standards of air quality. In this respect the Borough Council will continue to work with others to assess the need for the designation of Air Quality Management Areas in the Borough to deal with identified pollution "hot spots".

POLICY NE25

~~The likelihood of proposed development creating or exacerbating pollution, its effect on sensitive surrounding uses and the location of sensitive uses adjacent to polluting development will be material considerations in the determination of planning applications.~~

SOIL AND LAND

3.64　The north and east of the Borough has a high proportion of good quality agricultural land (particularly Grade 2). A number of changes are occurring to agricultural policy and practices, with implications for the landscape in the Borough. These stem from a cut back in agricultural production and are expressed in agricultural policies concerning diversification and set aside. Against this background the Borough Council seeks activities compatible with the protection of land, especially the

best quality agricultural land in the countryside. Allied to this it will also seek to protect the landscape, ecological and historic assets and seek to maintain a healthy rural economy.

3.65　The best and most versatile land, Grades 1, 2 and 3a will be protected as a non renewable natural resource wherever possible to be preserved for the future. Whilst the loss of grades 3b, 4 or 5 agricultural land would not normally be resisted on agricultural land quality grounds, in some areas grades 3b and 4 land can have special importance to rural economic activity and management of individual farms. Where the choice of development locations is limited to higher grade land development will be directed to the lowest of these grades. In allocating sites in the plan, full consideration as been given to these matters and wherever possible sites selected accord with this procedure. Conservation interest will be protected in favour of lower grade agricultural land such that potential development will be directed away from areas of conservation interest towards lower quality agricultural land. An up to date detailed survey may be required by the Council to establish the precise agricultural value of a particular site.

POLICY NE26

~~The Council will not permit irreversible development where it results in the permanent loss of agricultural land falling within Grades 1, 2 and 3a, unless it can be demonstrated there is an overriding need for development and no alternative site is available. Where development on Grades 1, 2 or 3a, is permitted it will be directed to the lowest grade suitable.~~

POLICY NE27

~~Where a choice of otherwise acceptable development sites is available, the Council will favour the development of low grade agricultural land (ie. 3b, 4 or 5) over that of alternative sites (not in agricultural use) where these sites are of greater nature conservation interest.~~

LAND CONTAMINATION

3.66　Land is a scarce resource, and should be protected from damage, including contamination, particularly as this may have knock-on implications for other natural resources, for example, water courses and aquifers. Contaminated or derelict land can reduce options for development in the future. The move towards increased sustainability requires that natural assets should be passed to future generations in the best possible condition.

POLICY NE28

~~Planning applications which involve a potential risk of ground contamination will not be permitted unless appropriate preventive measures can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council. In considering proposals for development, the Council will seek to ensure that ground with existing contamination or potentially contaminated ground is reinstated to acceptable levels.~~

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

3.67 Assessment of the environmental effects of development is covered by Regulations. These require that applications for certain types of development described under Schedule 1 and 2 of the Regulations are accompanied by an environmental statement. There may, however, be other instances, where the Borough Council require further information in order to assess fully the impacts of proposed development not falling within Schedule 1 or 2. In such cases, the Borough Council may require the applicant to provide details on a range of issues before the application can be determined.

POLICY NE29

Where there is uncertainty about the possible consequences of development, the Borough Council will require additional information relating to proposals in order to assess the full extent of the impact of development.

4

INTRODUCTION / BOROUGH STRATEGY / NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING / EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM / SHOPPING / BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE
TRANSPORT / LEISURE & RECREATION / UTILITIES & TELECOMS / IMPLEMENTATION
AIMS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL / OPPORTUNITY SITES / GLOSSARY / PROPOSALS MAPS

BEDFORD BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN
OCTOBER 2002

BUILT ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Policy BE1	Mixed uses
Policy BE2	Mixed uses in Opportunity Sites
Policy BE3	Uses and infrastructure to promote self-sustaining communities
Policy BE4	Mixed uses in residential areas
~~Policy BE5~~	~~Area of Special Restraint~~
~~Policy BE6~~	~~Renewable energy~~
Policy BE7	Renewable energy – criteria
Policy BE8	Energy efficient layouts
Policy BE9	Protecting the character of Conservation Areas
~~Policy BE10~~	~~Review of Conservation Areas~~
Policy BE11	Setting of Conservation Areas
~~Policy BE12~~	~~Plans, drawings and cross sections~~
Policy BE13	Demolition in Conservation Areas
~~Policy BE14~~	~~Premature demolition~~
Policy BE15	Protecting views and open spaces
Policy BE16	New advertisements/shopfronts in Conservation Areas
~~Policy BE17~~	~~Retaining listed buildings~~
Policy BE18	Demolition of listed buildings
Policy BE19	Alterations to listed buildings
Policy BE20	Change of use of listed buildings
Policy BE21	Setting of listed buildings
Policy BE22	Recording of listed buildings
Policy BE23	Archaeology
Policy BE24	Archaeology
Policy BE25	Archaeology
Policy BE26	Historic Parks and Gardens
Policy BE27	Barn conversions
Policy BE28	New agricultural buildings
Policy BE29	High standard of design

Policy BE30	Material considerations in the control of new development
Policy BE31	Statement of design principles
Policy BE32	Development on the edge of urban areas and villages
~~Policy BE33~~	~~Gateways~~
Policy BE34	Development adjoining main road and rail routes
~~Policy BE34a~~	~~Protected views~~
Policy BE35	Achieving quality in residential layouts
Policy BE36	Space about buildings
Policy BE37	Overdevelopment
Policy BE38	Landscaping
Policy BE39	Landscaping
Policy BE40	Landscaping
Policy BE41	Control of advertisements
Policy BE42	Lighting
Policy BE43	Public spaces
Policy BE44	Public art
Policy BE45	Community safety and crime prevention
Policy BE46	Security shutters
Policy BE47	Overhead power lines and electro-magnetic fields
Policy BE48	Accessible environments
Policy BE49	Accessible environments

Polices BE1 and BE2: Deleted 8th October in respect of sites covered by the Town Centre Area Action Plan.

4 / BUILT ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

4.1 For the purposes of this plan the built environment is defined simply as, buildings and the spaces between them. Whilst this definition may be simple, the impact of the built environment on both the individual and the community as a whole can be both complex and considerable. Quality of life can be affected by such issues as loss of privacy and overlooking, loss of sunlight and environments which appear unsafe and unwelcoming. The layout of the built environment can also facilitate or restrict access and movement.

4.2 It is the quality of the buildings and spaces which define the character of a town or village and give it a 'sense of place'. It is these elements which make one settlement different from another and there is a need to foster and promote such diversity in planning policies and detailed design.

4.3 The quality of the built environment can be a factor in attracting external investment and the Borough has many valuable assets in terms of attractive villages, listed buildings and Bedford's historic town centre. It is the role of the Borough Council and other agencies to enhance and protect these assets, thereby providing a valuable baseline for improving the Borough's built environment.

KEY ISSUES

4.4 This chapter addresses the following key issues:

1 In the past, planning policies have encouraged areas of single land use. In town centre locations in particular, this can have a detrimental effect on vitality and security. There is a need to encourage more mixed use development in appropriate locations.

2 Many of the villages on the periphery of the urban area could potentially be subsumed into part of Bedford or Kempston. There is a need to plan the peripheral expansion of the urban area, whilst retaining and reinforcing the identity of existing settlements.

3 Energy efficiency in both buildings and layout is now essential to prevent factors which contribute to global warming. In addition, greater emphasis needs to be given to the potential for the use of renewable energy.

4 There is a need for a more positive and sustainable approach towards protecting and enhancing the heritage of the Borough.

5 There is a need to raise the profile of good design in new development within the Borough. The Local Plan should be used to clearly indicate the standard of design required.

6 The environmental quality of the countryside on the edge of the urban area and most of the main transport corridors is poor. This provides an unattractive approach to the town.

7 Positive action is required to ensure a better quality of life within existing as well as new environments.

8 There is a need to provide up to date design guidance that seeks to avoid the creation of unattractive and cramped forms of development, inadequate amenity space and the loss of privacy.

9 Landscaping in many new developments is of poor quality and inadequate. Good landscaping should be more integral to the design process and not just an afterthought.

10 There is increasing recognition that the spaces between buildings are as important as the buildings themselves. This needs to be reflected more in Development Control.

11 There is a greater awareness of the role of planning in crime prevention and in the creation of environments in which people feel safe and secure.

12 Accessible environments are good environments. The environment should be accessible to all members of the community.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.5 A fundamental principle of achieving more sustainable development is to create a land use pattern which reduces the need to travel, particularly by private car. In the past, there has been a tendency to define areas of single land uses for example for housing, and employment, which may be some distance apart. This reflects a policy of segregation rather than integration.

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

4.6 The vitality of the town centre, district and local centres is also very much dependent on the diversity of uses located there including retailing, offices, service uses and residential. These generate different activities at different times of the day and night which in turn can help to deter criminal activity. The Borough recognises the need to protect and enhance this diversity in areas which are readily accessible to a large population. These areas are shown in the Proposals Map. Within these areas, a mixture of land uses will be encouraged especially those which make a major contribution to the vitality of the area, are compatible with adjoining uses and which are not in conflict with the other policies in the local plan in particular the shopping policies. Particular emphasis will be placed on the re-use of vacant premises or under-used space above shops for residential use.

4.7 Within the urban area, there are several sites which lend themselves to re-development with a mixture of uses, thus providing a more sustainable form of development than single land uses. These 'opportunity sites' are shown on the Proposals Map and the Borough Council

will encourage landowners and other interests to investigate bringing these sites forward (see Appendix D). In addition, major new developments within the Borough should be designed to assist the creation of self sustaining communities through the provision of a mixture of uses and dwelling types (including affordable housing), employment and community facilities and good access to public transport. This approach will be particularly appropriate in the case of the Biddenham Loop and Elstow Storage Depot. Smaller scale new housing developments should also, where appropriate, be provided in tandem with employment opportunities and improvements to community facilities. In all cases, the mixture of uses should be compatible with each other, should take account the extent, nature and sustainability of existing uses/facilities and should not be contrary to the other policies in this plan. The potential for the dual use of car parking and other facilities should be fully considered thereby allowing for the more efficient use of land.

4.8   It is now generally recognised that it is not always appropriate to separate industry and commerce from residential communities, especially if it is on a small scale and relatively innocuous, for example tele-working from home. Many small scale commercial and industrial activities can operate satisfactorily within housing areas without detriment to residential amenity. (See Policy E15)

POLICY BE1

Within Bedford Town Centre and established district and local centres, the Borough Council will grant planning permission for proposals which enhance the diversity of uses and which make a major contribution to the vitality of the area. In all cases, such uses should:

i) be appropriate to that location;

ii) be compatible with adjoining uses;

iii) not lead to the loss of residential use;

iv) and be fully in compliance with the other policies in the local plan.

POLICY BE2

Within the opportunity sites as shown on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will grant planning permission for a mixture of uses provided:

i) the proposed uses are compatible, both with each other and with adjoining uses;

ii) the proposed uses do not prejudice any of the other policies in the local plan, in particular the shopping policies.

POLICY BE3

Major new housing development will be required to incorporate the necessary uses and infrastructure to enable the establishment of more self-sustaining communities. This will normally include:

i) a mixture of uses and dwelling types including affordable housing;

ii) a range of community and employment facilities which are well related to the housing areas;

Policies BE1 and BE2: Deleted 8th October 2008 in respect of sites covered by the Town Centre Area Action Plan.

iii) ready access to public transport systems and the provision of cycling, walking and where appropriate bridleway networks;

iv) adequate open space and leisure opportunities.

In the case of minor development sites, the same principles will apply and uses and infrastructure will be required at a level commensurate with the scale of the proposed development and the nature of existing provision.

POLICY BE4

Within established and new residential areas other uses will be acceptable provided they are of an appropriate scale and do not have an adverse effect on residential amenity, the type and level of traffic using the local road network, or the character of the surrounding area.

THE IDENTITY OF SETTLEMENTS

4.9   Reference to the settlement pattern of the Borough shows that the main urban area of Bedford and Kempston is surrounded by several satellite villages. As the urban area has historically expanded outwards, it is particularly important to prevent the coalescence of these settlements with the urban area or with each other, and to both protect and reinforce their individual identity. This represents a long established principle of good planning practice and was fully endorsed in the Inspector's report following the Inquiry into the previous (1993) adopted Local Plan, and in the Inspector's report in respect of this plan.

AREA OF SPECIAL RESTRAINT

4.10   In order to achieve this, an Area of Special Restraint has been defined between the urban edge and the satellite villages (see also Policy S3). New development must seek to avoid this and will not be allowed to extend into the areas identified on the Proposals Map, and open land will be safeguarded in order to maintain a clear identity between settlements. Policies S3 and H26 are particularly relevant in this regard.

4.11   The Area of Special Restraint is different from the concept of the green belt in that it does not have the same degree of permanence that a green belt designation has. It is intended that, after the effective life of this Plan, the Area of Special Restraint designation will be reviewed to complement future housing allocations made in the light of future Regional Guidance and Structure Plans. This does not weaken the force of the policy, indeed it is a reinforcement of the Plan's specified housing allocation sites, as well as an implicit statement that development should go only in specified and carefully chosen locations. The designation does not seek to unduly restrict acceptable development and economic activity in the countryside in general. The designation is limited to adjoining the main urban area. Extra protection is needed here to preserve its essential physical and social identity, because of the pressure for development which could easily lead to coalescence with the satellite settlements nearby. Within these 'buffer' areas some recreational activity, park or woodland (including where appropriate, the Forest of

Marston Vale) could be acceptable provided that there is no adverse impact on either the landscape, archaeology, or natural history.

4.12 South of the River Great Ouse, the boundary of the Area of Special Restraint is shown as the western limit of the safeguarded road corridor for the Bedford Western Bypass. Once the detailed alignment of the road has been determined the boundary of the Area of Special Restraint will be adjusted accordingly so that the road forms the easternmost boundary. An 18 hole Golf Course and 100 house low density golf village are located within the Area of Special Restraint immediately to the south of Biddenham village.

POLICY BE5

An Area of Special Restraint has been defined between the urban edge and the satellite villages. Within this area, the Borough Council will not allow peripheral expansion of settlements unless identified in this plan and will strictly implement planning policies in determining applications in such areas.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

4.13 Renewable energy is defined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 22 as 'those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – energy from the sun, the wind and the oceans, and the fall of water'. The renewable energy study for the Eastern Region indicates that in the case of Bedford Borough, the most likely sources of renewable energy are biofuels and the use of small scale solar panels. The Government's policy as set out in 'New and Renewable Energy : Future prospects in the UK, Energy paper 62, March 1994', aims to stimulate the development of new and renewable energy sources wherever they have prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable in order to contribute to:

a) diverse, secure and sustainable energy supplies;

b) a reduction in the emission of pollutants;

c) encouragement of internationally competitive industries.

4.14 The Borough Council acknowledges that new and renewable energy sources potentially contribute to energy needs in a significant and sustainable way and can offer the hope of increasing diversity and security of supply, as well as reducing harmful emissions to the environment. The Borough Council's policies towards developing renewable energy sources must be weighed carefully with its continuing commitment to policies for protecting the local environment, and it is recognised that proposals to harness renewable energy can display a variety of factors peculiar to the technology involved. Furthermore, such schemes can have particular locational constraints since, in many cases, the resource can only be harnessed where it occurs. The Borough Council will need to consider both the immediate and wider impact of such projects on the environment and their wider contribution to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

POLICY BE6

In view of the general environmental benefits associated with harnessing renewable energy sources, the Borough Council will support the development of renewable energy schemes provided that it can be shown that such development would not harm interests of acknowledged importance in the local environment.

POLICY BE7

In assessing proposals for renewable energy schemes, the Borough Council will have particular regard to the following issues:

i) the immediate and wider impact of the proposed development on the landscape;

ii) the need to protect features and areas of natural, cultural, historical and archaeological interest;

iii) the measures that would be taken, both during and after construction, to minimise the impact of the development on the landscape, local land use and residential amenity;

iv) the local and wider benefits that the proposal may bring;

v) certain renewable energy resources can only be harnessed where the resource occurs;

vi) any requirement for future restoration of the site.

ENERGY EFFICIENT LAYOUTS

4.15 In addition to reducing energy consumption through the disposition of land uses, the Borough Council has a role in ensuring that the layout of new buildings fully addresses the need to conserve energy. The energy efficiency of individual buildings is dealt with by the Building Regulations and this is not dealt with in this plan. However, the Borough Council will, wherever possible, encourage the use of energy efficient design solutions. In the case of energy efficient layouts, several key factors need to be taken into account. The principal considerations are orientation, overshadowing, wind protection and the nature of the built form itself. It is the Borough Council's intention to provide supplementary planning guidance on this topic.

POLICY BE8

In considering proposals for major new development, the Borough Council will seek to achieve energy efficient layouts which, wherever possible, maximise the potential for the use of passive solar energy.

CONSERVATION

4.16 Local Planning Authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas, areas which are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Whilst the Borough Council has discharged this duty over the last 25 years it recognises that designation alone is insufficient to retain the character of particular areas. The Council is seeking a more pro-active approach to conservation through:

a) The identification of those elements which give a conservation area its individuality and character and how this could be enhanced. In addition, consideration will be given to the feasibility of preparing urban trails.

b) Preparing detailed proposals for enhancement, and wherever possible, additional funding from external organisations will be sought.

c) Involving the general public and local organisations in these activities.

POLICY BE9

The Borough Council will seek to protect the character and appearance of conservation areas shown on the Proposals Map, through the careful control of development and by general support for enhancement schemes. Within such areas proposals which fail to preserve or enhance their character will not be permitted.

CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

4.17   The Borough Council also has a duty to review existing areas and to consider whether there are additional areas worthy of designation. There are currently 26 conservation areas in the Borough (see Proposals Map), many of which were designated in the 1970s. It is intended that all existing conservation areas will be kept under review. In addition, the Insets to the Proposals Map indicate where there is potential to rationalise or extend existing boundaries. (Update: These amendments have now been incorporated into the Proposals Map insets). This arises from the need to accommodate development which has taken place since the conservation area was designated, or where there is a need to follow more recognisable boundaries. Conservation Area appraisals will be carried out by the Council as and when resources permit.

4.18   In the case of new conservation areas, the Borough Council intends to consider further potential designation at Bletsoe and Hinwick within the lifetime of this plan. It is also intended to carry out a more extensive review of the Elstow Conservation Area. Public consultation will form an integral part of this process.

POLICY BE10

The Borough Council will undertake a review of existing conservation areas, and where appropriate will designate new ones. In all cases conservation areas will be assessed against the following criteria:

i) the quality of the buildings and spaces;

ii) the importance of historical street patterns, layout and materials, archaeology and historic landscape;

iii) where appropriate, the impact of development that has taken place since designation;

iv) the quality of other features such as trees, shopfronts, walls, outbuildings etc which are worthy of retention.

PROTECTING THE SETTING OF CONSERVATION AREAS

4.19   Within conservation areas it is important that new development is sensitively designed and respectful of its context. A well designed scheme which conserves and enhances the essential character of an area can also bring about economic benefits particularly through the re-generation of sites which are derelict or under-used. In order to achieve the best possible scheme for a particular site, the Borough Council welcomes discussions

with applicants prior to the submission of a planning application. Problems can then be overcome before detailed commitments have been made.

4.20   Whilst the full powers of conservation legislation apply within the boundaries of a conservation area it is important to recognise that development proposals adjacent to, or which affect the setting of, such an area, can have considerable impact. In certain circumstances, such development could erode the character of the conservation area which designation is seeking to protect. In such cases development proposals will be considered as if within the conservation area itself.

POLICY BE11

The Borough Council will ensure that all new development within, adjoining, or likely to affect the setting of conservation areas, preserves or enhances its character or appearance. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

ii) the scale, form and density of development in relation to its surroundings;

iii) the quality and type of materials and architectural detailing;

iv) levels of traffic generation, the visual impact of car parking/servicing arrangements or other environmental problems which could have an adverse effect on the character of the area;

v) the effect on the streetscape, roofscape and skyline including important views both into and out of the area;

vi) whether or not any open space will be affected by the proposals;

vii) the extent to which the proposed works would bring about substantial benefits in terms of economic regeneration and environmental enhancement.

FORM OF APPLICATIONS

4.21   Because of the sensitive nature of sites within conservation areas, it is essential that adequate information is supplied to the Borough Council to enable it to fully assess the impact of development proposals. Outline planning applications are unlikely to be granted in conservation areas unless the appropriate reserved matters have been adequately dealt with.

POLICY BE12

Within conservation areas, the Borough Council will require development proposals for new buildings, or alterations to buildings, to be accompanied by accurate scaled drawings of elevations, floor plans, roof profiles and cross sections both proposed and existing. Where appropriate, details should show:

i) the relationship to adjoining buildings and spaces;

ii) the impact on existing townscape including views into and out from the site.

DEMOLITION IN CONSERVATION AREAS

4.22   With conservation area designation comes control over the demolition of most buildings. Applications for consent to demolish must be made to the Borough Council. In considering these applications, the prime

consideration will be whether or not demolition would conflict with the overall aims of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area. There is also a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to that character.

4.23   Before considering whether or not to grant applications for demolition, it is imperative that the Borough Council should have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. Acceptable and detailed re-development plans should be submitted in tandem with the application for demolition. The merits of these redevelopment proposals will be taken into account in determining applications for demolition consent.

POLICY BE13
Demolition consent will be refused where the building or other structure make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. An applicant applying for demolition consent will need to demonstrate that the economic viability of alternative uses has been fully investigated and that a satisfactory scheme for redevelopment can be achieved. In considering applications for demolition, the Borough Council will need to have full information about what is proposed for the site.

PREMATURE DEMOLITION
4.24   In the past, demolition has taken place far in advance of redevelopment proposals coming forward. An example of this is the former Granada Cinema site, St Peter's Street, Bedford. This has resulted in open gaps in the urban fabric which are unsightly and are detrimental to both adjoining properties and the conservation area as a whole. It is accepted however that in exceptional circumstances, demolition in conservation areas without subsequent replacement may be desirable where this removes an eyesore, creates new views of key buildings or enhances permeability.

~~POLICY BE14~~
~~Within conservation areas unless there is a positive impact on their character and appearance, the Borough Council will require that demolition does not take place until detailed planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment, and a contract for carrying out the redevelopment works within an agreed timescale has been let, with a fixed date for completion.~~

VIEWS AND OPEN SPACES
4.25   Within conservation areas, the spaces between buildings can contribute significantly to character and identity. In the urban context, these may form the remnants of a historic street pattern which is worthy of retention. In villages open gaps in otherwise built up frontages, village greens and parks are also important. In both cases, such spaces can create vistas and views which are also an integral feature of conservation areas. Whenever possible these should be retained.

POLICY BE15
The Borough Council will protect important views in conservation areas and development will not be permitted on any open space which contributes to the inherent character of a conservation area.

4.26   In carrying out the review of conservation areas, the Borough Council will pay particular attention to the identification of these views and open spaces.

SHOPFRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS
4.27   Within the urban area in particular, many buildings suffer from poorly designed shopfronts and advertisements. In certain cases these can form the most strident feature in the streetscene and thereby detract from the quality of the buildings of which they form a part.

4.28   Shopfronts need to be designed as an integral part of the building to which they relate, in terms of style, colour and materials. Similarly, advertisements need to be respectful of their context and their potential impact on amenity and public safety.

4.29   Within conservation areas, more stringent standards will be applied when considering applications for new shopfronts and advertisements. In order to assist applicants the Borough Council has prepared a document entitled 'Shop Fronts and Adverts – Design Guide'. This sets down some of the key design principles to be applied when drawing up a scheme.

4.30   In addition, as part of the Borough Council's initiative to improve the appearance of Bedford's High Street, another supplementary document has been produced. This is entitled 'Bedford High Street Facades Shopfronts and Advertisements – A Design Guide' and is obtained from the Town Hall.

4.31   As part of the Borough Council's commitment to this initiative, grant assistance is available for the provision of more traditional shopfronts and advertisements under the Architectural Maintenance Grant Scheme. (See also Town Centre chapter).

POLICY BE16
Within conservation areas, the Borough Council will exercise strict control over applications for new advertisements and shopfronts, having regard to its published design guidance.

LISTED BUILDINGS

4.32   The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides a system of control for listed buildings. These are buildings which are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Listed Building Consent is needed for any works to demolish a listed building or to undertake any alterations (both to the interior and the exterior) or extensions which would affect its character or setting. Control also extends to any object or structure which is fixed to the building and is ancillary to it.

4.33   Regular maintenance and repair is the key to the preservation of historic buildings, and the best way to secure their upkeep is to keep them in active use. In many cases the original use may be the best use for the building and the potential to restore or continue that use should be fully explored before alternatives are considered. In certain cases the original use of the building may neither be appropriate nor economically viable. Some form of adaptation, conversion or part

demolition may therefore be required, and the impact of such alterations on the fabric, interior and setting of the listed building will be of paramount importance. The costs of maintaining listed buildings can be considerable and some degree of enabling development may be acceptable to fund the renovation of a listed building where this would not prejudice established planning policies.

POLICY BE17

~~The Borough Council will have special regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.~~

DEMOLITION OF LISTED BUILDINGS

4.34   Once lost, historic buildings cannot be replaced, and demolition should be considered as a last resort. In considering applications for demolition consent, the Borough Council needs to be satisfied that sufficient information has been provided on:

a) the condition of the building and the likely cost of repairs;

b) whether sufficient efforts have been made to retain the building in active use;

c) the relative merits of alternative proposals for the site which are a material consideration in deciding whether or not Listed Building Consent should be granted.

4.35   In considering such proposals, the Borough Council recognises the need to achieve a balance between the desire to preserve buildings intact and the benefits to the community and the local economy that regeneration may bring. In all cases, the Council will wish to fully explore the potential for the incorporation of the listed building, either in whole or in part, in any redevelopment scheme, before wholesale demolition is considered.

POLICY BE18

Listed Building Consent for the demolition of any building of special architectural or historic interest will not be granted other than in the following exceptional circumstances:

i) the condition of the building makes it impracticable to repair, renovate or adapt to any reasonable economic use for which planning permission may be given, or to enable it to be incorporated into any redevelopment scheme; or

iii) the proposed works would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh any loss arising from demolition.

In all cases, before any listed building consent is granted, it should be demonstrated that every possible effort has been made to retain the building in its current use or to find a suitable alternative.

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

4.36   As stated above, some amount of alteration may be required to accommodate viable uses within a listed building. It is recognised that in order to secure the future use and upkeep of the building, a degree of flexibility will be required. Such change needs to recognise those elements which are of special

architectural or historic interest and an appropriate balance struck. In most cases, the most effective way to ensure the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active use. Primarily consideration should be given to the continuation or reinstatement of the use for which the building was originally designed. It is accepted however that this may no longer be viable or in certain cases appropriate. The main aim when considering alternative uses is to identify a use which is both viable and fully compatible with the fabric, interior and setting of the building. As with applications in conservation areas, applications for listed building consent will need to be sufficiently detailed in terms of drawings, photographs and other supporting material to enable the Borough Council to fully appraise the impact of the proposals on the listed building and its setting. Particular emphasis will be placed on the use of traditional methods of construction and repair.

POLICY BE19

In considering applications for Listed Building Consent which involve development, either for alteration, extension or demolition, the Borough Council will take the following into account:

i) the importance of the building in terms of architectural and historic interest at both the local and national level;

ii) the impact on particular features of the building eg. the interior, plan and structure;

iii) the effect of the proposals on the character and setting of the listed building;

iv) the extent to which the proposed works would bring about substantial benefits in terms of economic regeneration and environmental enhancement.

POLICY BE20

The change of use of a listed building will only be permitted if it would not have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building.

THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

4.37   Listed buildings cannot in certain cases be considered in isolation. Their setting can be of equal importance and can form an integral part of the building's character. Examples include walled gardens, formal gardens, courtyards and farmyards. It is important to retain these spaces and ensure that buildings should not become isolated from their surroundings either through new development or highway proposals.

POLICY BE21

The Borough Council will seek to preserve and enhance the setting of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features.

RECORDING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

4.38   In certain cases, it may be appropriate to apply a planning condition requiring applicants to arrange suitable programmes of recording of features that would be destroyed in the course of the proposed works.

POLICY BE22
When granting Listed Building Consent for development, the Borough Council may impose a requirement for adequate access for the purpose of investigation and recording, during building or other operations.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

4.39   There are currently 69 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Borough which include for example fishponds, earthworks and mortuary enclosures, although the number may vary following a review by English Heritage. These are afforded protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Secretary of State's consent is required for any works which affect the scheduled monument.

4.40   In addition, the Borough contains a great diversity of archaeological interest. Within such areas it is imperative that the impact of development proposals on the underlying archaeology is taken fully into account prior to works commencing on site. Early consultation between developers and the Borough Council is therefore vital to identify these areas, and where necessary further information based on an archaeological field evaluation may be required. This will indicate the weight to be attached to the preservation of the archaeological features, and should highlight the potential options for minimising damage as a result of construction works. Where appropriate, detailed assessments of the likely impact of development proposals may need to be carried out. This may initially take the form of a desk top study to review existing information, followed if necessary by field evaluation. Early use of these measures is the key to minimising the impact of development on archaeological remains. The results of this assessment should be submitted as part of any planning application. Further information and advice on areas of archaeological interest are available from the County Archaeological Officer of the Heritage and Environment Section of the County Council.

4.41   Such options could include on one hand the excavation and recording of remains prior to works starting on site, and on the other, the preservation in situ of archaeological remains. In the latter case, modifications may be required to the proposed disposition of buildings or other structures on the site in order to accommodate this requirement. In all cases, the Borough Council will require sufficient and adequate information to be submitted prior to the granting of planning permission. It may also be appropriate to consider the future management and maintenance of any sites which are retained intact.

4.42   Attention is drawn to the British Archaeologists' and Developers' Code of Practice.

POLICY BE23
Proposals which would have an adverse effect on scheduled ancient monuments and other important archaeological sites and monuments, and their settings, will not be permitted except in circumstances where the adverse impact of a proposal can be overcome and the site or monument physically preserved in situ.

POLICY BE24
In considering planning proposals, the Borough Council will have regard to the need to protect, enhance and preserve sites of archaeological interest and their settings. It will where appropriate require the archaeological aspects of development proposals to be examined and evaluated before a planning application is determined. In the absence of an adequate assessment of the archaeological implications, planning permission will be refused.

POLICY BE25
Where the Borough Council decides that the physical preservation in situ of archaeological remains is not justified, and that development affecting such remains should proceed, it will require applicants to submit proposals that:

i) minimise as far as possible the effect of a proposal on the archaeological remains; and

ii) ensure satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of the remains, prior to the commencement of development.

4.43   Archaeological personnel or organisations employed or contracted by applicants should liaise with Bedford Museum before commencing excavation or other fieldwork to arrange for eventual deposition of the site archive (subject to the requirements of the Museum's Acquisition Policy) with Bedford Museum.

HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS

4.44   Within the Borough, four sites have been included in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. These are Bedford Park & Cemetery, Hinwick Hall and Hinwick House, although this number is subject to review.

4.45   Whilst no additional statutory controls apply to these sites, the effect of proposed development on a registered park or garden is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

POLICY BE26
Development which would have an adverse effect on the site, setting or enjoyment of any part of the grounds of historic parks and gardens will not be permitted.

BARN CONVERSIONS AND NEW FARM BUILDINGS

4.46   In the rural area, there are examples of barns or other agricultural buildings which are no longer in use or cannot be satisfactorily adapted to meet the needs of modern agricultural practice. Many of these may be listed and others, whilst not benefiting from the control that listing brings, are of historic or architectural quality or contribute to the character of the area or village. They are a valuable resource and often form an important feature in villages. They can, in certain circumstances, have potential for conversion to alternative uses. However, particular care needs to be taken to ensure that alterations are carried out in sympathy to the structure and appearance of the building.

BARN CONVERSIONS

4.47 Where conversion is proposed, the Borough Council will require the submission of sufficient evidence (in the form of a detailed structural report) to show that the building is capable of adaptation and alteration. The amount of repair and replacement involved should also be clearly indicated.

4.48 Every effort should be made to ensure retention of old agricultural buildings, but their location may limit the choice of appropriate uses. It may therefore be necessary to make exceptions to general policies and to give approval for uses which would not normally be approved in the countryside. However, such exceptions will only be acceptable if the building is of architectural merit, the architectural integrity of the building is retained, and the use would not present adverse environmental problems. In certain cases, such buildings provide a valuable opportunity for conversion to employment use, provided this is on an appropriate scale

4.49 Residential conversions in particular can have detrimental effects on the fabric and character of historic farm buildings. The introduction of a residential curtilage along with associated car parking etc can also have a detrimental effect. The introduction of business uses can bring important economic benefits to rural communities and in certain circumstances may be more desirable than residential conversion. In all cases, the impact of proposals on the setting of barns, including associated 'yards', will need to be considered.

4.50 As outlined in Policy H26 there are strict controls on new housing in the open countryside. The existence of vacant farm buildings in the rural area will not override these established planning policies although in exceptional circumstances, sympathetic conversion to residential use may be acceptable in order to safeguard the future of the buildings.

4.51 In considering applications for the changes of use of farm buildings, the effect on species such as owls and bats which use these buildings for breeding and shelter must also be considered (see also Policy NE9).

POLICY BE27

In considering the conversion of barns and other agricultural buildings of historic interest or architectural character or quality, the Borough Council will permit only those works and uses which are compatible with the fabric of the building and its setting and which maintain its existing character.

4.52 This policy relates specifically to buildings which are of historic interest or of architectural merit, whereas Policy E18 deals specifically with the re-use of other buildings in the rural area for commercial or industrial use.

NEW FARM BUILDINGS

4.53 Older agricultural buildings, when constructed of indigenous materials, often limestone, are generally felt to blend comfortably into the landscape; the same is not always true of post war buildings. Many traditional buildings are no longer appropriate to the needs of modern agriculture and they have been superseded by large modern buildings of alien materials forming obtrusive features in the landscape, many of which have not required planning permission. The Borough Council, in conjunction with the National Farmers Union, has produced a guide for farmers and land owners – the 'Farm Buildings Design Guide'. This suggests ways in which the impact of large buildings on the landscape may be reduced, and yet still meet the needs of modern agriculture. In addition, the design and siting of new buildings in the in the countryside should where appropriate, reinforce regional diversity and local distinctiveness through detailed design and the careful use of materials..

4.54 Policy E18 in the Employment chapter deals with the issues related to the re-use of buildings in the rural area for uses other than those associated with agriculture.

POLICY BE28

In considering applications for new agricultural buildings, the Borough Council will have regard to the approved design principles as set out in the Farm Buildings Design Guide.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

4.55 In the past the Borough Council has refused planning permission for poorly designed proposals which in terms of their physical form, scale, density or detailing would be of detriment to the quality of the built environment, although the Council is aware that some developments, particularly on the fringe of the urban area, adopt the 'lowest common denominator' approach to design. In such cases, the development has, for example through inadequate landscaping and the use of poor quality materials, not always fully realised the potential of the site and a poor quality environment has resulted. In many residential developments, the incorporation of minimal amounts of space, in particular to the front and side of dwellings, has resulted in uniform layouts and bland environments. The appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are not only matters of proper public interest but also material considerations in determining planning applications and appeals.

THE PROMOTION OF GOOD DESIGN

4.56 There is a need to raise the profile of good design within the Borough. Good design creates attractive environments and is instrumental in creating a strong 'image' which in turn can be used to attract external investment. In this respect, the Borough Council welcomes the main thrust of the Government's discussion document entitled 'Quality in Town and Country' which seeks to raise awareness of the need for quality urban design in the environment. The government has also given emphasis to urban design in the documents 'By Design : Urban Design in the planning system', 'By Design : Better Places to live, A companion guide to PPG3', 'The Value of Urban Design' and the 'Urban Design Compendium'. In order to promote good design at the local level, the Council will use a variety of measures, for example publication of a design charter, use of design guidance based on established design principles, design awards etc (See also Policy BE31).

POLICY BE29

The Borough Council expects all new development to be designed to the highest standards. The Council will promote good design by means of design guides, good design principles and other appropriate measures that it will publicise.

THE IMPACT OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

4.57　Within conservation areas and where listed buildings are involved it is particularly important that new development is respectful of its context. In other, less constrained locations, the Borough recognises that a bolder, more innovative and imaginative approach to design may be appropriate. In the rural area, the Borough Council endorses the concerns expressed by the Countryside Commission in their report 'Design in the Countryside', of the need to respect the diversity and distinctiveness of the local landscape character. Where resources permit, consideration will be given to the preparation and completion of Countryside Design Summaries and Village Design Statements in partnership with others. A pilot village design statement has been produced for Wilstead and one for Great Barford is in preparation. In the urban area, the need to consider local distinctiveness equally applies and there is the need for new developments to consider the existing urban grain. This is dealt with in more detail in the Council's document entitled Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts.

4.58　It is important that new designs are developed following a careful study of the context within which new development sits and the identification of its main features and characteristics. Such local distinctiveness does not necessarily mean capturing some vernacular characteristic, as is for example readily identifiable in the case of certain villages (eg. Pavenham, Harrold, Turvey) and replicating it in new development.

4.59　In some locations the immediate setting will give few clues from which to draw inspiration – reinforcing an unsatisfactory pattern of development is not acceptable. One may have to look further afield for inspiration to the wider context of the site. Many villages, suburban and urban areas may appear ordinary and unassuming where local character is not well defined – but they create a context and do not impose themselves on their surroundings. The integration of development into such areas of existing development should still be handled carefully. The extreme contrast between new estate development and existing properties is evident all over the country. New detached dwellings are frequently of a size, dominance and appearance which bears no resemblance to the existing pattern and appearance of an area and the unassuming simplicity of existing dwellings.

4.60　Economies of scale and ease of transport have been eroding diversity and distinctiveness for decades. Standard building designs can mean that houses, workshops or farm buildings are the same all over the country. The layout of new housing developments, dominated by the styles of volume house builders and by building and highway regulation have a sameness throughout the country. To provide choice to individual

customers, variety is often introduced artificially in the form of a series of styles from the housebuilder's catalogue. The dwelling is the same underneath – the houses are often identical in scale, proportion and construction. The consequence has been the predominance of uniform estate housing comprising customised but essentially standardised house types.

4.61　In all cases, the urban design qualities of new development will need to be considered, for example:

a) What does the development contribute in terms of townscape and making the environment more legible through the use of landmarks etc?

b) How new buildings create and interact with public space. Do they encourage or discourage a sense of safety in public areas?

c) The quality of public space created by the new development and whether these are designed to encourage their use for a variety of activities, and are fully accessible.

d) How does the new development respect its local context be it semi-rural, suburban or urban?

4.62　Proposals should indicate the urban design principles that have been adopted and how the development has had regard to relevant local plan policies and supplementary planning guidance. This may take the form of a short statement or design 'rationale', and should be presented in a manner appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposals. This should at least be accompanied by illustrative material showing plans and elevations and the development within the wider context. Perspective views can also be helpful in highlighting the key features of a scheme. Where proposals are of a much smaller scale, photographs and drawings showing the details of the development and where relevant its relationship with adjoining buildings and uses are likely to be more appropriate.

4.63　New development can also make a significant contribution to increased noise levels, traffic generation, and in certain cases a reduction in privacy. Whenever possible the Borough Council will seek the provision of measures to mitigate against these negative environmental impacts. Equally, certain uses such as housing, hospitals and schools are generally regarded as noise sensitive development, and when considering proposals, the Borough Council will refer to the guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 to determine the suitability of the existing noise environment.

4.64　The Borough Council will prepare and publish supplementary planning guidance on these issues.

4.64a　The Government White Paper 'Making Waste Work: A Strategy for Sustainable Waste Management in England and Wales' published in December 1995, highlights the important role that local authorities will have to play in helping to achieve the goal of sustainable waste management. They are responsible for implementing waste management policies in their duties as planning authorities, waste disposal authorities

and as waste collection authorities. In 2001 the County Council published a Waste Strategy for Bedfordshire and Luton in partnership with the constituent local authorities. The document sets out a strategy for dealing with waste in Bedfordshire and Luton up to the year 2020.

4.64b   In February 1996 Bedfordshire County Council adopted the Bedfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan which contains detailed policy guidance on minerals and waste planning in the County. In support of these policies the Borough Council is concerned that the various options for waste management should be considered at the earliest possible stage in any proposal. Therefore, wherever new development is likely to produce significant amounts of waste material, the Borough Council will expect proposals to identify the waste management options which have been considered. In February 2002 a replacement draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan was placed on deposit by the County Council.

POLICY BE30

When determining applications for new development, the Borough Council will have full regard to all material considerations and in particular:

i) the visual impact of the development and its relationship with the context within which it is placed, and the contribution the building will make to the townscape and landscape qualities of the area, and where appropriate, the extent to which local distinctiveness is reinforced or created;

ii) the quality of the buildings in terms of scale, density, massing, height, materials and layout;

iii) the quality of the public spaces created by new buildings in terms of public safety, hard and soft landscaping, and where appropriate how buildings interact with public space;

iv) any additional traffic expected to arise from the development, either in relation to highway capacity or general disturbance, and provision made for car parking;

v) the extent to which the development is served by, and makes provision for access by public transport, cycles and pedestrians;

vi) the suitability of access arrangements to and within new development for all members of the community, including, pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people;

vii) any noise, smell or other health and safety problems which are likely to be generated by the development;

viii) the suitability of the existing noise environment;

ix) any factors which might give rise to disturbance to neighbours and the surrounding community;

x) any adverse effects on the natural environment and the built heritage likely to arise from the development.

xi) the proposals for dealing with any significant amounts of waste which may arise;

xii) the adequacy of the existing infrastructure. Consultation will be undertaken with the appropriate agencies in this respect. If provision is inadequate the Borough Council will seek to phase or postpone the development until adequate infrastructure provision is likely to be available.

POLICY BE31

Applicants for planning permission will be required to submit a short statement setting out the urban design principles adopted and how the development has had regard to relevant local plan policies and supplementary planning guidance. This should be presented in a manner appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposals.

THE APPROACHES TO THE URBAN AREA

4.65   In the past as the urban area of Bedford and Kempston has expanded outwards, little if any consideration has been given to the impact of new development in the landscape. Whilst planting may have been provided on site to soften parking areas etc, this has been inadequate in the wider context. This has resulted in a 'raw edge' to the urban area. At a smaller scale, similar problems arise in villages where new housing often provides a sharp distinction between the village and open countryside.

4.66   This area requires a positive approach to planning and management aimed at achieving environmental improvement and increased public access so as to benefit existing residents. The inclusion of part of Bedford's southern and eastern approaches in the Forest of Marston Vale provides an opportunity to solve some of these problems.

4.67   There is a need to establish a series of main 'gateways' into the town reinforced where appropriate by sensitive and well designed new development and extensive new landscaping. These will not only improve the approach to the town, both by road and by rail, but to the south of Bedford and Kempston they will also provide a 'gateway' to the Forest of Marston Vale. Areas considered appropriate for this 'gateway' approach are shown on the Proposals Map.

4.68   In addition to the point of entry into the urban area, the approaches into the centre are equally important. Many arterial routes – both road and rail – suffer from unattractive adjoining development and the lack of screening or planting to soften their impact. Where these routes pass through industrial or commercial areas, unsightly open storage or car parking areas often abut the highway or rail route. There is a need to consider the impact of such proposals on these transport corridors. Where planting is proposed, consideration should be given to the need to ensure that this does not interfere with the surveillance of the site (either by natural means or where CCTV is used). In the case of planting within the rail corridors, this should not conflict with the safety and operational requirements of the railway.

POLICY BE32

Where new development is permitted on the edges of the rural or urban area, or of villages, it should be carefully designed to minimise the impact of development on the surrounding land.

POLICY BE33

~~The Borough Council has identified on the Proposals Map, a series of 'gateways' on the fringe of Bedford and Kempston and will require extensive structural landscaping to be carried out at these locations in association with development where appropriate, and the Forest of Marston Vale.~~

POLICY BE34

In the case of development which adjoins the main road and rail routes into Bedford and Kempston, a high standard of design and landscaping will be required. The provision of parking areas, external storage and other visually intrusive uses adjoining the highway and railway will not be acceptable without substantial landscaping. (See also Policy NE20)

VIEWS AND LANDMARKS

4.68a   Attractive views of significant buildings can contribute to the quality of the townscape and landscape. In general, the Council will seek to ensure that development proposals are compatible with the character, scale and setting of views, and will refuse permission for development that will adversely affect such landmarks and the views to them. In particular, the Council will retain the important views of the historic village core of Elstow from the west. The Proposals Map Insets 1 and 14 show the extent of the protected views.

POLICY BE34A

~~The Council will protect the important views of the historic village core of Elstow and its setting from the west as identified on the Proposals Map.~~

QUALITY IN RESIDENTIAL ESTATE LAYOUTS AND OVERDEVELOPMENT

4.69   For some time, local communities have expressed concern to the Borough Council about the quality and interest in new residential estate layouts; the form and massing of dwellings together with inadequate space about them. Historically, plot sizes were defined in relation to the size of the dwellings. Dwellings were therefore in proportion to the space around them, which in turn provided a setting for the dwelling. In many modern housing developments these rules of thumb no longer apply. Large dwellings are being erected on small plots of land and the relationship between space and dwelling size is poor. This is often exacerbated by the use of an inadequate mix of dwelling types within sites. Thus, a site consisting solely of detached four bed dwellings, may have a low density in terms of dwellings per hectare, whilst appearing cramped in terms of space. Furthermore, the quality of spaces is often poor and in particular, space has been minimised and designed to cater for functional needs only. The end result is a layout where houses are arranged in a uniform and uninteresting manner and lack any identity or 'sense of place'. Furthermore, many developments do not achieve a satisfactory relationship with their surroundings. These concerns are also raised in the Government's 'Quality in Town and Country' initiative and in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (revised).

4.70   An alternative approach is therefore needed and the Borough Council has published guidance on this subject entitled 'Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts'. This aims to make a positive contribution to improving the quality of new housing in the Borough and has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

4.71   This guidance recognises that as part of the design process, it is imperative that an initial site appraisal is carried out to identify constraints and opportunities and importantly, the relationship of the site to its surroundings. This in turn should influence the design philosophy or rationale and enable the capacity of the site to be calculated on the basis of a net developable area. This assumes that various parts of the site cannot support development and should therefore be discounted when the site capacity is assessed. For the avoidance of doubt, the term net developable area will be interpreted as excluding those uses such as major distributor roads, primary schools, open spaces serving a wider area and significant landscape buffer strips. This is consistent with Annex C of PPG3. The Council will amend 'Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts' in due course to comply with this definition. Having defined the net developable area, the guidance proposes that for the majority of sites, a capacity based on up to 70 car spaces per hectare, where combined with a mix of dwelling types, will achieve a satisfactory density and relationship of buildings to space. Exceptions above this will be possible where high quality design can demonstrably overcome problems of a car dominated environment. This is consistent with the government's policy of avoiding the inefficient use of land through higher densities and a reduction in space given over to car parking, whilst recognising the need to avoid plots which have inadequate space relative to the size of the dwelling.

4.72   Space around dwellings is particularly important and needs to meet a variety of requirements including privacy, car parking, landscaping and children's play. It can also be used to define territory and areas of 'defensible'' space. Once a development is completed, it is important that this space is not eroded by the introduction of house extensions and other structures which would normally fall outside the remit of planning controls. Where appropriate therefore, the Borough Council will, when granting planning permission for significant areas of new housing, remove permitted development rights by the use of conditions attached to the original consent.

POLICY BE35

In considering proposals for new residential development, the Borough Council will have regard to its guidance on achieving quality in residential layouts. The Council recognises that on very small developments clauses v, vii and x may not be possible. In particular, proposals should:

i) where appropriate, respect local distinctiveness in terms of scale, density, massing, height, landscape and layout;

ii) be based on a detailed site analysis and a clear design philosophy;

iii) have full regard for the impact of the development on the wider landscape and adjoining uses;

iv) have a site capacity based on the identification of a net developable area;

v) make provision for a range of dwelling sizes;

vi) generally, achieve a car parking density of up to 70 car spaces per hectare;

vii) contain a variety of external spaces between dwellings in terms of dimensions, landscaping and use;

viii) have regard to 'Secured by Design' principles;

ix) be fully accessible by all members of the community; and,

x) make provision for a range of plot sizes which respect the size of individual dwellings.

POLICY BE36

In order to safeguard space about dwellings, the Borough Council will, where appropriate, remove permitted development rights by the use of planning conditions.

OVERDEVELOPMENT

4.73   The Council frequently considers proposals for new housing development on sites which are either surrounded or partially contained by existing development. In certain cases, particularly in villages and within the older established residential areas of Bedford, the scale and density of a development proposal in no way reflects that of the adjoining buildings and spaces.

4.74   Such proposals inevitably attempt to achieve much higher densities, resulting in a form of development which is disrespectful of its context and of cramped appearance. This situation is exacerbated by the space between buildings being given over predominantly to car parking. Such development is clearly unsatisfactory and will be resisted by the Borough Council.

4.75   Unless significant measures such as landscaping belts are introduced, the impact of such proposals on existing properties which adjoin these sites can be considerable. In order to prevent problems of overlooking, overshadowing and loss of privacy etc. an element of separation between proposed and existing development should be incorporated.

POLICY BE37

Proposals which bear little or no relationship to the character of the surrounding built fabric and which would result in a cramped form of development, and overdevelopment of the site will not be permitted. Therefore on sites which are contained or partially contained by existing development, all new development should:

i) respect the site's context in terms of layout, means of access, building type and density;

ii) respect the standard of amenity/privacy presently enjoyed by adjoining occupiers; and,

iii) include measures to prevent any adverse impact on existing development which adjoins the site. Such measures could include planting belts or the physical separation of proposed and existing development.

LANDSCAPING

4.76   Within new development, the quality of the landscaping can be of comparable importance to the buildings themselves. Government guidance reinforces this concept and suggests that all new development should result in a benefit in environmental and landscape terms.

4.77   Good landscaping provides numerous benefits. It can:

a) help to integrate new buildings into the wider landscape;

b) frame views and screen unsightly structures;

c) provide shelter and shade, visual interest, habitats etc;

d) define particular uses within a site, for example car parking space;

e) support activity within public spaces.

4.78   In any development, landscaping therefore needs to be considered at two levels – the strategic or structural level, and the localised or site specific level. In all major development a landscaping master plan should be prepared indicating the structural landscaping framework within which the development will sit. This will vary with, and needs to reflect, different contexts eg. urban, semi-rural and rural. Consideration will need to be given to the impact on the landscape and on adjoining land and landscape features. Linkages with existing areas of planting are also important. In many cases this will involve planting which is off-site.

4.79   Within sites the quality of landscaping is equally important. In the past inadequate provision has been made for landscaping and this has been to the detriment of the environment. Consideration also needs to be given to the future maintenance of landscaped areas and the Borough Council will negotiate with developers for the provision of commuted sums, or seek to create management mechanisms, to ensure that new environments are maintained to a high standard.

POLICY BE38

Planning permission will not be given for proposals unless provision has been made for adequate on-site, and, if practicable and necessary to make the development visually acceptable, off-site landscaping which would result in a benefit in environmental and landscape terms. Where necessary and appropriate, the Borough Council will negotiate for the provision of commuted sums to secure the long term management and maintenance of landscaped areas.

4.80   It is imperative that landscaping is considered at an early stage. It must form an integral part of the design process and not be an afterthought. In considering planning applications, the Borough Council will need to be satisfied that sufficient detail of proposed landscaping has been submitted to enable the full impact of the development to be assessed.

POLICY BE39
Where appropriate, detailed planning permission or the approval of reserved matters will only be given where full details of both existing landscape and proposed landscaping have been submitted to and approved by the Borough Council.

4.81   Within the urban area, and in certain villages, the existence of trees within streets and open spaces/gardens is of great importance. Many of Bedford's most attractive streets, for example De Parys Avenue, Park Avenue, are notable for their street trees.

4.82   Trees are important in reducing the impact of both new roads and in breaking the skyline of, for example, areas of new housing. There are many examples within the Borough where new roads have been laid out without provision being made for roadside trees to the detriment of environmental quality. Once services have been laid within highway verges there is little scope to accommodate tree planting. It is therefore imperative that roads are laid out with consideration being given to these at the outset. The same applies to the provision of trees within open space. Sufficient space should be provided to enable the larger varieties of native species to grow beyond the ridge lines of adjoining dwellings.

4.83   Where existing trees are retained within new developments, these should be protected from damage during the course of the site works, and sufficient space should be allowed to enable these trees to grow to maturity.

4.84   In addition, in order for the proposed planting to make an impact in the short term, the Borough Council will expect a proportion of the trees planted to be either standards or half standards. Planting schemes where predominantly whips are used are unlikely to be satisfactory.

POLICY BE40
The Borough Council will regard, where appropriate, the extent to which a development makes use of tree planting in the highway and on open spaces in order to soften the built environment and reduce its visual impact, as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

4.85   In implementing this policy, the Borough Council will be mindful of its duty to make adequate provision for the preservation and planting of trees when granting planning permission for new development.

ADVERTISEMENTS

4.86   All outdoor advertisements affect the appearance of the building or the neighbourhood where they are displayed. Local planning authorities have powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 (as amended) to control certain advertisements. In addition, powers are available to require their discontinuance.

4.87   In every case, applications for advertisement consent can only be controlled in the interests of amenity and public safety. In the case of amenity, this is especially the case in conservation areas, in the open countryside

and where advertisements are proposed on listed buildings. Elsewhere, the impact of advertisements can be considerable, particularly in shopping streets where they can compete for attention to such an extent that the benefits of individual advertisements are lost. Paras 4.27 – 4.31 above refer to the guidance produced by the Borough Council in respect of Advertisements.

POLICY BE41
In acceptable locations, advertisements should be properly related to the design of the building on which they are displayed, or if free-standing to that of their setting. Applications for advertisement consent will be considered against the following criteria:

i) the scale of the advertisement in relation to the building and/or the surroundings;

ii) the location of the advertisement on the building and/or in relation to the surroundings;

iii) the appropriateness of both materials and typefaces used;

iv) the levels and means of illumination, and measures used to minimise glare and spillage;

v) the cumulative effect of the proposal and existing advertisements on both the building and the street scene or landscape as a whole;

vi) any likely affect on highway safety.

EXTERIOR LIGHTING

4.88   Street lighting and amenity lighting have long been an integral feature of new development. In the former case, concerns for safety and security have been of paramount importance and amenity lighting has been used to emphasise individual buildings or features within a site.

4.89   There is now some concern nationally that in many cases, external lighting is both poorly designed and misdirected. The result can be extensive light pollution and glare which can be both wasteful and intrusive. The problem is not restricted solely to highways but also includes commercial developments, sports pitches etc. Guidance on this subject is contained in a number of documents. These include:

a) Guidance notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution, The Institution of Lighting Engineers (1992).

b) Lighten our Darkness; lighting our cities – successes, failures & opportunities, The Royal Fine Art Commission (1994).

c) Domestic and Commercial Security Lights & the Night-Time Environment, The British Astronomical Society (1993).

d) Road Lighting and the Environment, Department of Transport (1993).

e) Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice, Countryside Commission (April 1998).

4.90   In exercising its development control function the Borough Council will seek to minimise light pollution by ensuring that the detailed design of any lighting scheme properly respects the environment incorporating such

measures as trigger mechanisms where practicable. The Borough Council will, where appropriate, impose conditions governing the hours of operation of any approved lighting scheme.

POLICY BE42

Details of any external lighting scheme required as part of a new development should be submitted to the Borough Council as part of the planning application. Planning permission will only be granted if it is demonstrated that the scheme proposed is the minimum needed for security, operational and aesthetic purposes and that it minimises potential pollution from glare and spillage, both at ground level and skywards.

PUBLIC SPACES

4.91   Government guidance recognises that the spaces between and around buildings are of great importance. Where these form streets, squares and open spaces they represent the 'public realm'. It is the quality of the public realm which is a major determining factor in an area having either an attractive or unattractive image. Local authorities through their responsibilities for maintenance and highways are key players in establishing high quality public spaces. New development can also provide the opportunity to improve existing, and create new, public spaces.

4.92   Within town centres in particular, the quality of public spaces can have either a beneficial or detrimental effect on the vitality of the centre. Spaces need to be designed to support a wide variety of activities including eating, sitting, street entertainers etc. They also provide a setting for public art, street markets, etc. Increasingly, spaces have to be designed with safety in mind (see also paras 4.95 – 4.98 below).

4.93   If a high quality environment is to be sustained then adequate funds need to be set aside for future maintenance. A well maintained, high quality environment will also safeguard the commercial value of adjoining properties. In order to achieve this, the Borough Council will seek developer contributions towards future maintenance provision.

POLICY BE43

In considering proposals for new development the Borough Council will regard the treatment and appearance of spaces around buildings as of comparable importance as the design of the buildings themselves. Where such spaces fall within the 'public realm' they should be safe, attractive and be fully accessible. Where appropriate they should also support a wide variety of activities and provide a setting for public art. Planning obligations will be sought where necessary and appropriate towards the improvement of existing spaces, the creation of new spaces and their future maintenance.

PUBLIC ART

4.94   One way in which new developments and public spaces can be given a strong sense of place and identity is through the introduction of art in the environment. Public art can be appropriate in a wide variety of locations including the town centre, local shopping areas, open spaces, residential and commercial developments

and at key intersections in the highway, cycle and footpath network. It can take many forms – murals, sculpture, water features etc. These can transform otherwise uninteresting places and where evolved in conjunction with the community can deter vandalism, for example through the use of subway murals etc. The Borough Council is keen to take every opportunity to incorporate public art into the environment.

POLICY BE44

The Borough Council will, where necessary and appropriate, seek planning obligations towards the provision of new works of visual art and craft as an integral part of development schemes. In determining an application for planning permission, the Council will have regard to the contribution made by any such works to the appearance of the scheme and to the amenities of the area.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

4.95   The Borough Council is required to have regard to crime prevention in the preparation of this Local Plan. Research shows that the careful design and layout of new development can make crime more difficult to commit as well as increasing the risk of detection by potential offenders.

4.96   Safety and the perception of safety has become as important as the visual appearance of a new development. Environments which appear unsafe are used by fewer people, which in turn reduces the sense of security further. It is this vicious circle which must be broken if for example, the vitality of the town centre is to be retained and enhanced.

4.97   Recent guidance highlights that good planning alone cannot solve the problem of crime but when coordinated with other measures, it can make a significant contribution. A comprehensive approach is therefore required and the Council supports other measures which will improve the sense of security. These include:

a) The encouragement of residential use within mixed use developments.

b) The Living Above The Shop initiative, particularly in the town centre.

c) CCTV and the Retail Radio Link which have been introduced into Bedford Town Centre.

d) Reference in development briefs to the need to consider safety and crime prevention at the outset. For example, the segregation of pedestrian and vehicular routes is actively discouraged.

4.98   Design guidance on reducing crime in new developments is contained in the 'Police Architectural Liaison Manual of Guidance'. This document draws on experience of the 'Secured by Design' scheme which outlines best practice in the design of housing and commercial developments. The design principles embodied in these documents will be used in determining planning applications for new development and are also considered in the Council's supplementary planning guidance 'Achieving Quality in Residential

Layouts'. Where appropriate, the Borough Council will also seek the advice of the Bedfordshire Police Force Architectural Liaison Officer.

POLICY BE45

The Borough Council will not grant planning permission unless adequate consideration has been given to community safety and crime prevention. Where appropriate the advice of the Police will be sought.

SECURITY GRILLES AND SHUTTERS

4.99   Retail, and commercial premises, especially in the town centre, have in recent years been the subject of vandalism. This is also the case with community and institutional buildings particularly in isolated locations. This can result in windows being smashed and in more severe cases ram raiding can occur. In the latter case, local authorities have a key role to play in the layout of street furniture, planters, etc, which if strategically placed can deter such activity.

4.100   In response to the problem of vandalism, shopkeepers and property owners have often sought to improve the security of their premises by means of grilles or shutters. Whilst sympathetic to the need for security measures, the Borough Council is concerned that these can form a strident feature in the street scene. Solid roller shutters in particular can have an adverse environmental effect, creating 'dead' frontages and in turn, a hostile atmosphere.

4.101   When roller shutters are down, they create a featureless flat expanse of metal which in certain cases can obliterate the entire shop front, and thus reflecting a 'fortress mentality'. The architectural integrity of the building is also destroyed. The introduction of projecting storage boxes can also destroy the character of shopfronts and dominate the building facade. Such security measures can seriously undermine the 'after hours' vitality of shopping centres and the town centre in particular.

4.102   The Borough Council is keen to explore types of measures which are more sympathetic to their setting but which address the individual requirements and concerns of property owners. Suitable alternatives include:

a) The use of internal grilles. These offer a practical solution and are particularly appropriate on listed buildings or other buildings of architectural interest. Planning permission is not required;

b) The use of removable grilles. These can be sprayed to match the colour of the shop front or building and avoid the need for prominent storage boxes;

c) External roller grilles. Ideally these need to be constructed in association with new shopfronts or openings to enable provision to be made for the storage of the grille internally. These are generally less satisfactory than options a) and b) because they tend to obliterate the architectural features of the shopfront or building. They do however maintain a window display.

4.103   Solid roller shutters are unacceptable, particularly within conservation areas.

POLICY BE46

The Borough Council will not grant planning permission for security grilles unless:

i) they respect the character of the building on which they are placed in terms of materials, type, scale and colour;

ii) adequate provision is made for the storage of roller grilles internally;

iii) where appropriate, window displays can be clearly seen from street level, and the shop window provides an element of external illumination of the street.

The use of roller shutters and the introduction of external storage boxes will not be permitted.

OVERHEAD POWER LINES

4.104   The Borough Council is keen to reduce the visual intrusion, nuisance (including problems associated with bird excreta and noise) and potential loss of amenity associated with overhead power lines, towers, and electricity sub-stations particularly in environmentally sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens, the River Protection Area and the Area of Great Landscape Value. The Borough Council does however recognise the practical, technical and financial difficulties that undergrounding may cause. The Borough Council is also conscious of the public concern about possible effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields associated with overhead power lines and electricity sub-stations. The Borough Council is aware that debate continues at international level as to whether the positioning of electricity lines has an effect upon health. It is noteworthy that the National Radiological Protection Board's Advisory Group recommended further research and the United Kingdom Childhood Cancer Study is currently in progress. The Borough Council will continue to monitor advice on this issue, with particular reference to the conclusions reached by the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB). The former Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, and Department of Health issued for consultation a joint draft circular on land use planning and electromagnetic fields in 1999. This states that, whilst the Borough Council is not the determining authority for applications for electricity lines over 20,000 volts, it is consulted on such proposals. It is however the local planning authority in respect of other forms of development and will have regard to this emerging guidance when determining planning applications where this is applicable. The Council's policies on telecommunications development are in Chapter 11 of this Plan.

POLICY BE47

The Borough Council will continue to seek to reduce the visual intrusion, nuisance and loss of amenity caused by overhead power lines, towers and sub-stations (particularly in, and within sight of, designated environmentally sensitive areas), and where practical, technically and financially feasible, will encourage their location underground. The Council will also have regard to the advice from the former Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, and Department of Health concerning land use planning and electromagnetic fields as well as the National Radiological Protection Board, in determining proposals for development in proximity to overhead power lines.

ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENTS

4.105   Government guidance draws attention to the opportunity created by the development of land and buildings to secure environments which are accessible to all. Good access makes sense and benefits everyone, not just disabled people. It is the role of the Building Regulations to ensure that adequate standards are applied to new development in terms of ramps, steps, door dimensions etc. It is not therefore intended to cover these in the local plan.

4.106   Every opportunity will be taken through negotiation with applicants to improve access arrangements to both existing and new buildings. Where the Borough Council is providing financial assistance, for example towards a new shopfront, this will normally be conditional on satisfactory access being provided. Where substantial areas of resurfacing are proposed, as in the pedestrianisation of streets, the needs of disabled people, those with sensory impairment and people with pushchairs will be taken into account. The Borough Council is also supportive of the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

POLICY BE48

The Borough Council will encourage access for everyone, including wheelchair users and other disabled people, elderly people, and those with toddlers or infants in pushchairs, and will encourage appropriate provision to meet their needs in all developments.

POLICY BE49

Applications for the development of and, where practicable and reasonable, the change of use or alterations to buildings open to the public and buildings used for employment and education purposes, will normally be required to provide suitable access and facilities for disabled people.

5

INTRODUCTION / BOROUGH STRATEGY / NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING / EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM / SHOPPING / BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE
TRANSPORT / LEISURE & RECREATION / UTILITIES & TELECOMS / IMPLEMENTATION
AIMS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL / OPPORTUNITY SITES / GLOSSARY / PROPOSALS MAPS

BEDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN – 2002

HOUSING POLICIES

~~Policy H1~~	~~Provision of housing land~~
Policy H2	Britannia Iron Works
Policy H3	Austin Canons
~~Policy H4~~	~~Land at Ford End Road~~
Policy H5	College Street, Kempston
Policy H6	Biddenham Loop
Policy H7	Land west of Kempston
Policy H8	Land north of Bromham Road, Biddenham
Policy H9	Land at Shortstown
Policy H10A	Land north of Brickhill
Policy H10B	Land north of Norse Road
Policy H11	Land south of Fields Road, Wootton
Policy H12	Land north of Fields Road, Wootton
Policy H13	Land off Rousbury Road, Stewartby
Policy H14	Elstow Storage Depot
~~Policy H15~~	~~Land off Northampton Road, Bromham~~
~~Policy H16~~	~~Bromham Hospital~~
~~Policy H17~~	~~Clapham Folly~~
Policy H18	New Road, Great Barford
~~Policy H19~~	~~Land at Yelnow Lane, Sharnbrook~~
~~Policy H20~~	~~Land south-east of Sharnbrook Upper School~~
~~Policy H21~~	~~Land between A6 and Luton Road, Wilstead~~
~~Policy H22~~	~~Land off The Meadway, Harrold~~
Policy H23	Housing in Second Order villages
Policy H24	Residential development in SPA villages
~~Policy H25~~	~~Important open space~~
Policy H26	Housing in the open countryside
Policy H27	Agricultural workers' dwellings
Policy H28	Replacement dwellings in the open countryside
Policy H29	Extensions to dwellings in the open countryside

~~Policy H30~~	~~Local needs housing in rural areas~~
~~Policy H31~~	~~The provision of affordable housing~~
~~Policy H32~~	~~The mix and range of housing type and size~~
Policy H34	Mobility housing
~~Policy H35~~	~~Gypsy sites~~
~~Policy H36~~	~~Winter quarters for travelling show people~~
Policy H37	Mobile homes
Policy H38	Changes to existing dwellings and the development of garden land
Policy H39	Loss of residential stock

5 / HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

5.1 Housing is a major development activity and the main determinant for change in the Borough. In addition, major housing developments must be accompanied by supporting infrastructure provision. The role of the Local Plan is to ensure that the supply of housing land meets strategic requirements, the needs of Borough residents and is provided in the best locations. The design, character and amenity of residential areas are equally important and the plan's policies seek to ensure that in existing areas, character and amenity are maintained and enhanced, whilst for new areas they promote higher standards in layout and design.

KEY ISSUES

5.2 This chapter addresses the following key issues:

1 In the Local Plan period to 2006 new housing land must be provided to meet both the target set out in the Structure Plan 2011and the needs of the Borough's residents.

2 Living more sustainably involves giving consideration to locating development in such a way as to preserve greenfield land, reduce trips and make best use of existing and proposed infrastructure. The Structure Plan 2011 and the Borough Strategy (Chapter 2) set out a broad framework for how this can be achieved. Thus specific sites are identified to accord with the development strategy focusing on the need to bring forward enabling infrastructural improvements. However, it is not expected that the full development capacity of such sites will necessarily be achieved within the Plan period. Some development is phased in order to bring it in line with infrastructure provision and to ensure a steady supply of land consistent with needs.

3 The Local Plan has a key role to play in securing affordable housing. In order to do this the plan must give a clear indication of what housing need exists and set appropriate targets for meeting it.

4 Existing residential areas are often under pressure for change, through change of use or different types of occupation. The plan needs to protect the character and amenities of these areas and guard against inappropriate development.

5 Careful design and layout of new houses and housing areas is essential. The plan needs to ensure that its policies and proposals make a positive contribution to creating safer, more energy efficient, more accessible and better designed housing areas which add to the variety in the housing stock.

HOUSING SUPPLY

5.3 The scale of housing allocations to be made by this local plan have been determined on the basis of requirements set out in Regional Guidance and the County Structure Plan.

BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

5.4 Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 9 March 1994) provides the basis for determining the amount of land for housing which is to be provided in Bedfordshire as a whole. For the period 1991 to 2006 the figure is 37,000 dwellings. This requirement is apportioned by the Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 Policy 32 which indicates a requirement for Bedford Borough of 11,700 dwellings between 1991 and 2006, and a further 4,500 to 2011 totalling 16,200 over the full twenty year period.

5.5 The Structure Plan (Policy 33) expects that broadly speaking, the 16,200 dwellings to be provided between 1991 and 2011 will be distributed as follows; 8,900 in and adjoining the urban area of Bedford/ Kempston and 4,500 in the south west of Bedford strategic corridor. These figures are intended to act as general indicators of the amount of provision which is to be made in those areas which have been given strategic priority. The number of dwellings remaining after contributions from these areas have been maximised is viewed by the Structure Plan as a residual to be located elsewhere in the Borough.

5.6 Within the priority areas two strategic locations are identified one west of Bedford and the other at Elstow Storage Depot. The Structure Plan (Policy 33) states that 2,700 dwellings (as part of the urban requirement) will be provided in the strategic location west of Bedford; however 550 of these are accounted for by existing commitments at Biddenham Loop and Biddenham Deep Spinney. A total of 4,500 dwellings are to be provided (as part of the strategic corridor requirement) on a site focused on Elstow Storage Depot. It should be noted however, that Elstow Storage Depot is only partly within Bedford Borough's area. The strategic allocation is to be split between the Borough and Mid-Bedfordshire District and its development guided by a brief which has been prepared jointly by the authorities.

Table H1
Summary of Structure Plan 2011 Proposals

Bedford Borough Allocation	Dwellings
1991-2006	11,700
2006-2011	4,500
Total Allocation 1991-2011	16,200

of which:
Strategic Allocations (1991-2011)

West of Bedford	2,700
Elstow Storage Depot	2,250

5.7 Table H2 shows the progress that had been made towards meeting the requirements set down in the Structure Plan 2011 at 31 December 1998 taking into account the number of dwellings which have been completed since 1991, planning permissions which remain outstanding and previous Local Plan allocations

without planning permissions. The completions figure is a net figure (the total number of dwelling completions minus the number of dwellings lost). The table assumes that unidentified sites (windfall) will contribute 525 units (75 units per year) to the housing supply over the remainder of the local plan period. When this contribution is taken into account the balance to be allocated to 2006 is 3,914.

WINDFALL

5.8 The inclusion of an allowance from unidentified sites reflects the fact that it is not possible to identify every site which will come forward in the plan period. Thus an allowance is made to take into account additional dwellings created by small infill development, changes of use and the net effect of residential conversions. The allowance of 525 units (or 75 units per year) over the remaining plan period from such windfall sites is based on monitoring during the early part of the plan period. Between 1991 and 1997 the average was 85 completions per year arising from previously unidentified permissions. An allowance of 75 units per year is considered prudent to take account of the likely decline in the supply of such sites arising from the definition of Settlement Policy Areas for the first time and to ensure that plan objectives to maintain the character of existing settlements and prevent town cramming can be met.

PROPOSED HOUSING PROVISION

5.9 The role of the Local Plan is to identify the housing land needed to meet the shortfall identified in table H2 in accordance with the development strategy of this plan and to create the conditions to facilitate its delivery. In view of the considerations set down in the strategy, not least the need to ensure that development can be assimilated in a sustainable manner and to enable the necessary infrastructure to be brought forward, the Borough Council identifies additional sites for housing development having a ultimate physical capacity to provide in the order of 6,349 new dwellings.

POLICY H1

The Borough Council identifies housing development sites on the Proposals Map and as listed in table H3 these having an ultimate physical capacity to provide in the order of 6,349 new dwellings.

5.10 It is acknowledged that this allocation of sites exceeds that required by the Structure Plan and implies a rate of construction beyond that achieved in recent years. This scale of provision is considered both prudent and necessary in the light of the following:

1 In order to meet the requirements of the Structure Plan 2011. Policies 1 (development strategy) and 33 (strategic allocations) in combination, provides the Borough Council with little discretion in determining where development shall occur and the degree of reliance needing to be placed upon the early/prior provision of infrastructure;

2 To provide clarity and certainty to facilitate investment and the actual delivery of new homes. In the absence of government funding, the development of key sites is dependent upon major private sector investment in the provision of essential infrastructure (eg the Western Bypass, A6/A428 Link and A421 improvements) and it would be self-defeating for the Local Plan to create artificial obstacles to the implementation of such projects. In this context, it has been acknowledged that an integrated approach to the provision of infrastructure and housing is the most sustainable way forward. This approach is embodied in the Structure Plan and the Local Plan strategy, but does impose heavy initial costs upon landowners and developers. Thus the costs of developing these sites must be spread over the entire development and the LPA needs to be in a position to issue planning permissions which will underwrite the capital investment required, unfettered by the likely pace at which such sites can be built-out and academic plan periods.

3 To ensure a continuity of land available for housing development throughout the plan period and beyond. In the context of historic completion rates, the scale of key housing sites implies that their construction will extend beyond the Plan period. Such a continuity of supply should provide confidence to the house building industry; provide a sustainable, integrated approach and; underpin the direction and focus of the subsequent local plan. This approach will create a more fluid framework that respects

Table H2
Progress towards meeting Structure Plan 2011

Structure Plan 2011, for the period 1991-2006	11,700
Less Net Completions 1991 – 1998	5,004
Outstanding Planning Permissions at 31/12/98	1,890
Adopted Local Plan Allocations	154
Estimated future supply from unidentified sites (windfall)	525
Known Sites#	324
Non implementation	-111

TOTAL
7786

Balance to be allocated to 2006	3914

At the base date of this table (31/12/98) the following sites were included on the basis that they were expected to bring forward the following capacity: Silver Jubilee School 78, Kingsway 44, Caves Yard, Kempston 30, Miller Road 112, Ford End Road (Opportunity Site 12) c60. With the exception of Ford End Road all the sites now have planning permission. The adopted Queens Park East Development Brief includes the Ford End Road site.

the plan end date, but clearly acknowledges that the process of development and investment inevitably transcends such considerations.

5.11   For these important reasons the Borough Council recognises that there is a distinction between the likely contribution that sites will make towards 2006 development requirements and their ultimate capacity. The actual pace of development achieved in future years will be determined by market conditions and the speed with which the required infrastructure can be put in place. The Borough Council does not anticipate that the full capacity of all identified sites will be realised within the Plan period. However a figure slightly in excess of 11,700 dwellings might be achieved. Any excess achieved over and above that required by virtue of the Structure Plan by 2006 would contribute towards meeting the 2011 target.

5.12   On this basis, the Local Plan designates the following sites for residential development.

Table H3

Housing Development Sites

Ref: Site		Net Developable Area	Site Capacity in Dwellings
Urban Sites			
H2	Britannia Iron Works	5.50	180
H3	Austin Canons	0.85	25
H4	Ford End Road (construction complete)	0.48	# 0
H5	College Street	0.54	20
Sites Adjoining the Urban Area			
H6	Biddenham Loop	n/a	1450
H7	Land West of Kempston	28.50	730
H8	Land North of Bromham Road	35.10	900
H9	Shortstown (west of A600)	6.59	170
	Shortstown (east of A600)		260
H10a	North of Brickhill	12.05	400
H10b	North of Norse Road	6.54	200
Sites within the Strategic Corridor			
H11	Land North of Fields Road Wootton	17.50	450
H12	Land South of Fields Road Wootton	## 17.70	### 340
H13	Stewartby	12.85	330
H14	Elstow Storage Depot	n/a	#### 375
	Land at Canons Close Wootton	n/a	9
Sites within First Order Villages			
H15	Land at Northampton Road Bromham	2.00	45
H16	Bromham Hospital	n/a	65
H17	Clapham Folly	6.66	170
H18	New Road Great Barford	1.16	25
H19	Yelnow Lane Sharnbrook	1.16	25
H20	Clay Piece Sharnbrook	2.00	45
H21	Luton Road Wilstead	2.23	50
	Pavenham Road Oakley		14
Sites within Second Order Villages			
H22	Meadway Harrold (previously allocated)	1.80	# 0
H23	Various Village Sites	n/a	##### 71
Total			**6349**
Provision 1991-1998 (from Table H2)			7786
Total			**14135**

The dwelling capacity of these sites is included within Table H2 and are shown here as 0 to avoid double counting.
Includes the area of housing allocated by virtue of 1993 Local Plan
Excludes 114 dwellings allocated by virtue of 1993 Local Plan
The County Structure Plan indicates that the Elstow Storage Depot has an ultimate capacity of 4,500 dwellings by 2011 split between Bedford Borough and Mid Beds District Council areas.
Village sites: Cardington 5, West End Lane Elstow 3, Swineshead 2, Riseley 4, Stagsden 6, Upper Dean 2, Willington 5, Cotton End 25, Roxton 5, Turvey 14.

NOTE: The base date of this table is 31/12/1998. As at 31/10/2002 planning permission had been granted on the following sites: H5 College Street (30), Shortstown, west of A600 (240), Cannons Close, Wootton (9), H16 Bromham Hospital (65), H17 Clapham Folly (263), H19 Yelnow Lane, Sharnbrook (Outline), H20 Clay Piece, Sharnbrook (45), H21 Wilstead (86), H22 Meadway, Harrold (Outline), Roxton (8), Turvey (16), Riseley (2).

5.12a   As and where appropriate the Borough Council will use conditions attaching to outline planning permissions and/or legal agreements to achieve a satisfactory rate of development and the timely provision of infrastructure in accordance with Policies S9, and H2 to H22 consistent with strategic and community needs.

5.12b   The strategic component of the overall allocation made by this Local Plan is highly significant and this factor is material in the monitoring of housing land supply both now and in future years. Government advice is clear on the primacy of the development plan and it would be entirely inappropriate for arithmetic calculations in the context of specific site proposals to be used to undermine or frustrate policies and proposals within up to date and adopted plans, the achievement of which is to be secured within the plan period.

5.13   It has been customary to express the development capacity of sites identified in local plans in terms of so many dwellings per hectare. Such notional densities have had undue influence on development control decisions and in combination with other factors resulted in an unfortunate uniformity in layout and dwelling size. In view of the increased significance of design matters as signalled by the Secretary of State, and the preparation of local design guidance, a more context sensitive method has been employed to assess site capacities.

5.14   The capacity of specified sites is calculated with regard to the key principles for each site set out in policies H2 to H22, policies concerning design and estate layout and other matters. These are used to define net developable areas. The net developable area represents the proportion of the site which remains after the land taken up by structural landscaping and other policy requirements has been subtracted from the gross site area. The net developable area does however include the land which will be required for the provision of internal roads and for amenity and play space as specified in policies LR15 to LR17. In accordance with policies H32 and BE35 the Borough Council will expect each site to reflect an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes having regard to its context. In order to calculate a site capacity for land supply purposes therefore, assumptions have been made about potential housing mixes for each site. The actual capacities of individual sites will be determined as part of the development control process and may therefore be subject to variation.

Villages

5.15   The figure in Table H3 for Second Order village sites is a total figure for those small sites which have been identified within those Settlement Policy Areas as shown on various insets to the Proposals Map. In each case the capacity is based on an individual site assessment which takes into account the form and character of the site rather than its physical size. Proposals affecting First Order villages are referred to individually by site in the table and by policy.

Material Considerations

5.16   Thus proposals listed in table H3 should be regarded in the context of other policies of this Local Plan and specifically policies H2 to H22 which deal with the nature of development of individual sites. Developers of land should also be aware that planning applications will be considered in the context of the principles of sustainable development, and may generate the need for social, educational and other forms of infrastructure provision and the need for archaeological investigations to be carried out. Sites H2, H3, H6, H7, H8 and H15 are partly within the floodplain. This will have to be taken into account when any development proposals are brought forward. Developments will also be expected to contribute to the provision of affordable/mobility housing in accordance with Policy H34. Where necessary and appropriate any such matters will be required to be secured by way of legal agreements, and linked using pro-rata arrangements with the actual progress of the development and where a site is part of a more comprehensive scheme.

HOUSING SITE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

5.17   To ensure that landowners, developers and other interested parties are provided with clear guidance as to how the Borough Council intends that identified sites shall be developed, each site proposal comprises a policy that sets out the key principles that should be incorporated in planning applications and as necessary and appropriate in any associated undertakings. For some sites mainly within the urban area, the policy is accompanied by a sketch plan that illustrates the spatial implications of key principles. In all other cases these are shown on the Proposals Map (insets). In addition a number of identified sites are the subject of development briefs that have been formally adopted or are in course of preparation.

5.18   The Borough Strategy sets the pattern for development and distinguishes between the urban area, strategic corridors, First Order and Second Order villages and the balance of the rural area. This structure is followed in this part of the housing chapter.

HOUSING SITES WITHIN THE URBAN AREA

5.19   The provision of additional housing in and adjoining the urban area forms a main element of the Borough Strategy. In addition to allocating the urban sites listed in table H3 and detailed in policies H2 to H23 below, a number of the sites identified as Opportunity Sites have housing potential and are described in Appendix D.

POLICY H2

Britannia Iron Works – key principles of development include:

i) the provision of vehicular access from Kempston Road with associated on and off-site highway improvements as required by the highway authority;

ii) the restoration and integration of the 'listed' gateway and the railings into the development;

iii) footpath/cycleways – the extension of the riverside route and the creation of new links to Kempston Road – including a new river crossing for cyclists and pedestrians;

iv) in terms of urban design, the scale and orientation of buildings, their detailing and materials is important and should make a positive contribution to the quality of townscape in acknowledgement of the prominent location of the site and its relationship with the river;

v) a new pocket park provided in association with and linked to iii] plus additional open space on the site;

vi) major structural landscaping to mark the approach to the town centre, and the riverside location;

vii) satisfactory treatment of soil contamination prior to development and measures to attenuate noise nuisance from rail corridors;

viii) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site.

5.20   It is understood that the health authorities may be looking to extend the services and/or facilities at South Wing Hospital, and that part of the Britannia Iron Works is being considered for such purposes. The Borough Council is of the view that a comprehensive residential development incorporating elements of hospital usage could comply with the key principles set out in Policy H2.
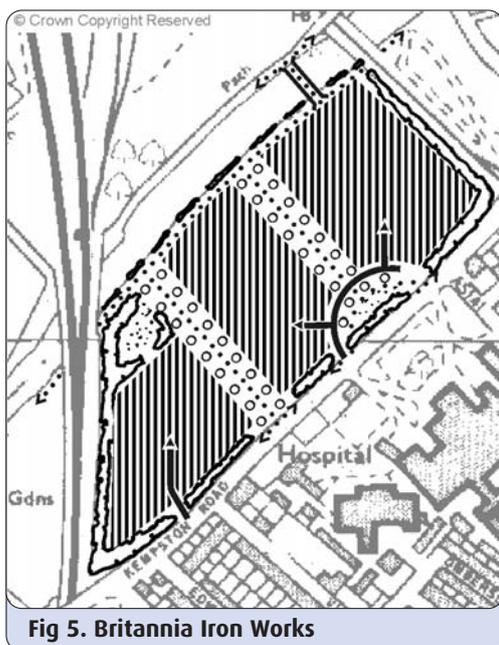
Fig 5. Britannia Iron Works

POLICY H3

Austin Canons – key principles of development include:

i) the provision of vehicular access to Bedford Road in association with on and off-site highway improvements as required by the highway authority also to secure access for the special school and the ambulance station;

ii) a comprehensive scheme for the whole site incorporating the retention and restoration of Austin Canons House and proposals for its reuse;

iii) the retention of trees on site;

iv) extensive planting on the northern, western and eastern boundaries to integrate the development into the riverside environment;

v) the provision of a pedestrian/cycle link from the north of the site to Queens Bridge and contributions to the improvement of the footpath west of Queen's Bridge on the south side of the river. (see Fig 6)

vi) appropriate separation in accordance with policy BE47 between the proposed dwellings and the adjacent transformer will be required.
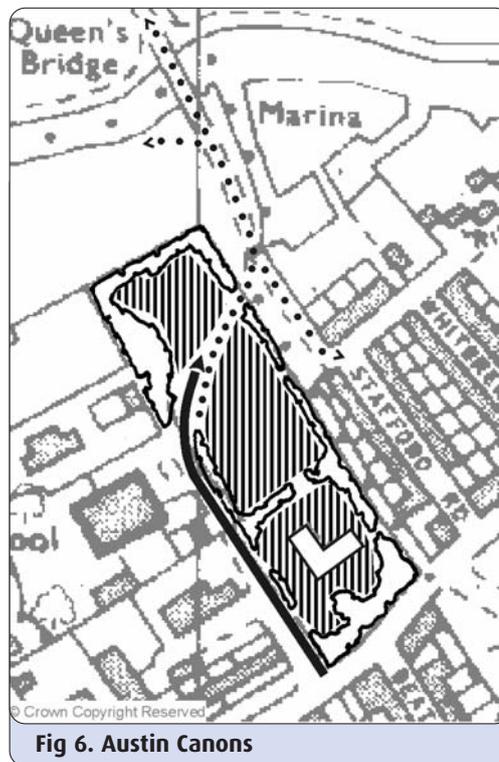
Fig 6. Austin Canons

POLICY H4
Land at Ford End Road – construction complete
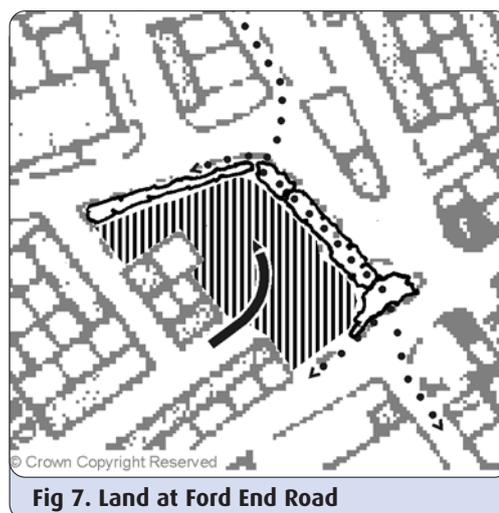
Fig 7. Land at Ford End Road

5.21   College Street has long experienced conflict between industrial and residential traffic. The redevelopment of this site will help resolve such problems by enabling inappropriate commercial uses within an otherwise residential area to be removed.

POLICY H5

Land at College Street, Kempston – key principles of development include:

i) vehicular access from College Street as required by the highway authority

ii) the provision of a through pedestrian route linking College Street and Northdale Close.
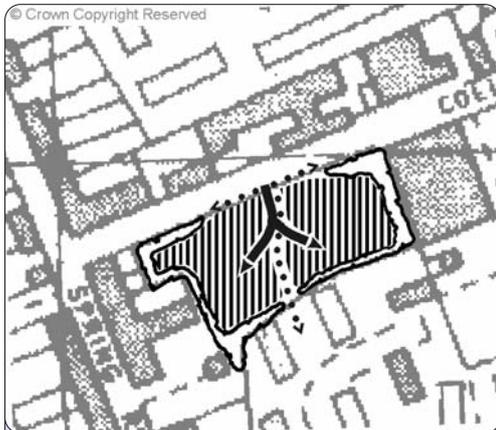
Fig 8. College Street Kempston

HOUSING SITES ADJOINING THE URBAN AREA

5.22 Major development west of Bedford has been associated in successive Structure Plans with the outer route of the proposed Western Bypass. Initially, the road was seen as marking the future edge of the urban area and necessary to provide additional road network capacity that would facilitate development. More recently the roles have to a degree been reversed and development is now expected to contribute to the costs of the road and bring forward the earlier construction of the Bypass.

5.23 The strategic allocation west of Bedford is thus associated with the creation of a distributor link road in the form of a single carriageway highway between the A428 and the A421 that would subsequently be dualled to become the Western Bypass. The development of the Biddenham Loop and land west of Kempston are regarded as enabling development for this section of the link. (See also Policy E7 concerning land at Marsh Leys Farm.) This relationship arises due to the inadequacy of the existing highway network to accommodate the additional traffic that development would generate. The first phase of development at Biddenham Loop (250 dwellings) permitted in accordance with the 1993 Local Plan and 1994 Biddenham Loop Development Brief is almost complete and a 2km link road from the A428 has been constructed. Planning permission has been granted for the remainder of the link between the A428 and the A421.

5.25 The Western Bypass has been regarded as comprising two elements; the section between the A428 and the A421 and the shorter link between the A6 and the A428. The A6/A428 link is important principally due to its ability to divert A6 traffic away from the middle of town, (Town Bridge and the High Street in particular) which would enable further environmental

improvements to be undertaken to strengthen the viability and vitality of the town centre.

5.26 Land north of Bromham Road Biddenham is included in the plan on the basis that it provides investment in the A6/A428 link and creates an opportunity to provide traffic relief in the Shakespeare Road area and on Bromham Road between the two elements of the bypass and between Bromham and Oakley.

5.27 These three development proposals are thus strategic in the sense that their purpose extends beyond the need to provide additional housing, and they achieve or contribute towards key objectives of the local plan strategy, the adopted Structure Plan and the Trunk Roads Programme. These sites underpin the strategic aims of the plan and are fundamental to the integration of land use and transportation objectives. It is imperative that the plan led system is allowed to safeguard these aims with a clear direction for investment so as to facilitate the earliest possible implementation. If ad hoc decisions divert available investment from these key sites then the success of the plan within its time frame will be seriously jeopardised. Policies related to the manner and content of their development follow.

POLICY H6

Biddenham Loop – the development of land within this area shall be undertaken in accordance with a development brief. Key principles of this second phase of development include:

i) the completion of the distributor link southwards across the River Great Ouse to the A421 prior to the occupation of the 701st dwelling sanctioned by this policy. A planning obligation will be required:

a) to secure the funding and phasing of the provision of the link

b) to ensure that the link will in fact be provided;

ii) sufficient land should be reserved to enable this road to be built and fully upgraded to dual carriageway to the satisfaction of and dedicated to the highway authority on the issue of the first planning permission;

iii) the provision of a park & ride facility and quality public transport services via Queens Park to Bedford Midland Station and the town centre, and such other works to the satisfaction of the highway authority within twelve months of the occupation of the first house sanctioned by this policy; and

iv) the provision of facilities including the country park, golf course, open space, playing fields, changing rooms, car parking, footpaths/cycle routes, landscaping, district centre, social housing, lower school, Hillgrounds bridge and sports/community facilities.

(See Figure 9)

POLICY H7

Land west of Kempston – The development of land within this area shall be undertaken in accordance with a development brief. Key principles of development include:

i) the completion of the distributor link southwards across the River Great Ouse to the A421 prior to the occupation of the 201st dwelling sanctioned by this policy. A planning obligation will be required:

a) to secure the funding and phasing of the provision of the link

b) to ensure that the link will in fact be provided;

ii) sufficient land should be reserved to enable this road to be built and fully upgraded to dual carriageway to the satisfaction of and dedicated to the highway authority on the issue of the first planning permission;

iii) access via the local road network with associated on and off-site highway improvements as required by the highway authority;

iv) the provision of a network of footpaths/cycle routes incorporating the SUSTRANS route and including safe crossing points with the proposed distributor road. This should connect;

a) the new development with the existing built up area of Kempston;

b) the new housing with the other uses on the site including on-site open space and community facilities;

c) the new development and the Forest of Marston Vale to the west and south;

v) the provision of extensive structural landscaping to assimilate the development into the wider landscape, and to provide a satisfactory interface with the existing edge of Kempston;

vi) contributions to the aims of the Forest of Marston Vale consistent with the creation of a gateway to the urban area, and to provide adequate softening of the approaches to Bedford/Kempston.

vii) the provision of adequate community and educational facilities including a local centre but excluding any retail development over and above that required to meet the needs of this site;

viii) the provision of a network of open space located within easy access of the new housing;

ix) the provision of open space and playing fields on the periphery of the development. Ancillary car parking and changing facilities will also be required;

x) adequate noise attenuation in conjunction with landscaping for the distributor road to protect the enjoyment of future residents;

xi) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site.

(See Figure 10)

5.28 The implementation of sites H6 and H7 will require agreement between the landowners of the two sites which will be reflected in a planning obligation. Any planning obligation shall include:

– a mechanism for the total cost of the A428/A421 distributor link to be paid over to the relevant authorities through pro rata contributions based on land sales;

– a commitment to be made in 2003 or by the completion of the 500th house (in total on sites H6 and H7), whichever is the sooner, to complete the link by a date to be specified.

POLICY H8

Land north of Bromham Road, Biddenham – the development of this site shall be undertaken in accordance with a development brief to be prepared. Key principles of development include:

i) the completion of a distributor road linking the A6 and A428 at Gold Lane to the satisfaction of the Highways Agency prior to the occupation of the 501st dwelling sanctioned by this policy. A planning obligation will be required:

a) to secure the funding and phasing of the provision of the link

b) to ensure that the link will in fact be provided;

ii) sufficient land should be reserved to enable this distributor road to be built and fully upgraded to dual carriageway to the satisfaction of and dedicated to the highway authority on the issue of the first planning permission;

iii) the improvement of the Ashburnham/Shakespeare Road junction and such other works to the satisfaction of the highways authority within one year of the occupation of the first dwelling sanctioned by this policy;

iv) the provision of a road from the proposed A6/A428 link to Bromham Road in accordance with a phased programme of development to be agreed as part of the development brief;

v) a mixed use development including housing, employment, local shopping facilities but excluding any retail development over and above that required to meet the needs of the development, community, educational facilities and open space consistent with the scale of development;

vi) the extension of the Biddenham Country Park along the River Ouse, integrating footpath and cycleway networks, contributions to secure the provision of a new river crossing and contributions to a footpath/cycleway to Lower Farm Road Bromham and to prepare and implement a management plan for the County Wildlife site.

vii) separation/screening of existing residential areas on the Bromham Road and extensive structural landscaping to screen the new development from the Country Park and assimilate the development into the wider landscape as well as providing adequate separation distances between the new dwellings and the distributor link.

viii) the reprovision of school playing fields.

ix) design of the internal transport infrastructure of the development to give priority to public transport, including measures to allow existing bus services to be extended into the development and the provision of a network of safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists with particular regard to safe travel to school routes.

x) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site.

xi) contributions to the provision of public transport facilities and services in order to encourage more sustainable journey patterns in particular; appropriate bus priority on the A428 Bromham Road and a Park and Ride Terminus adjacent to the A6.

xii) the provision of a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the distributor road within the length between the crossing of the railway and Gold Lane.

(See Figure 11)
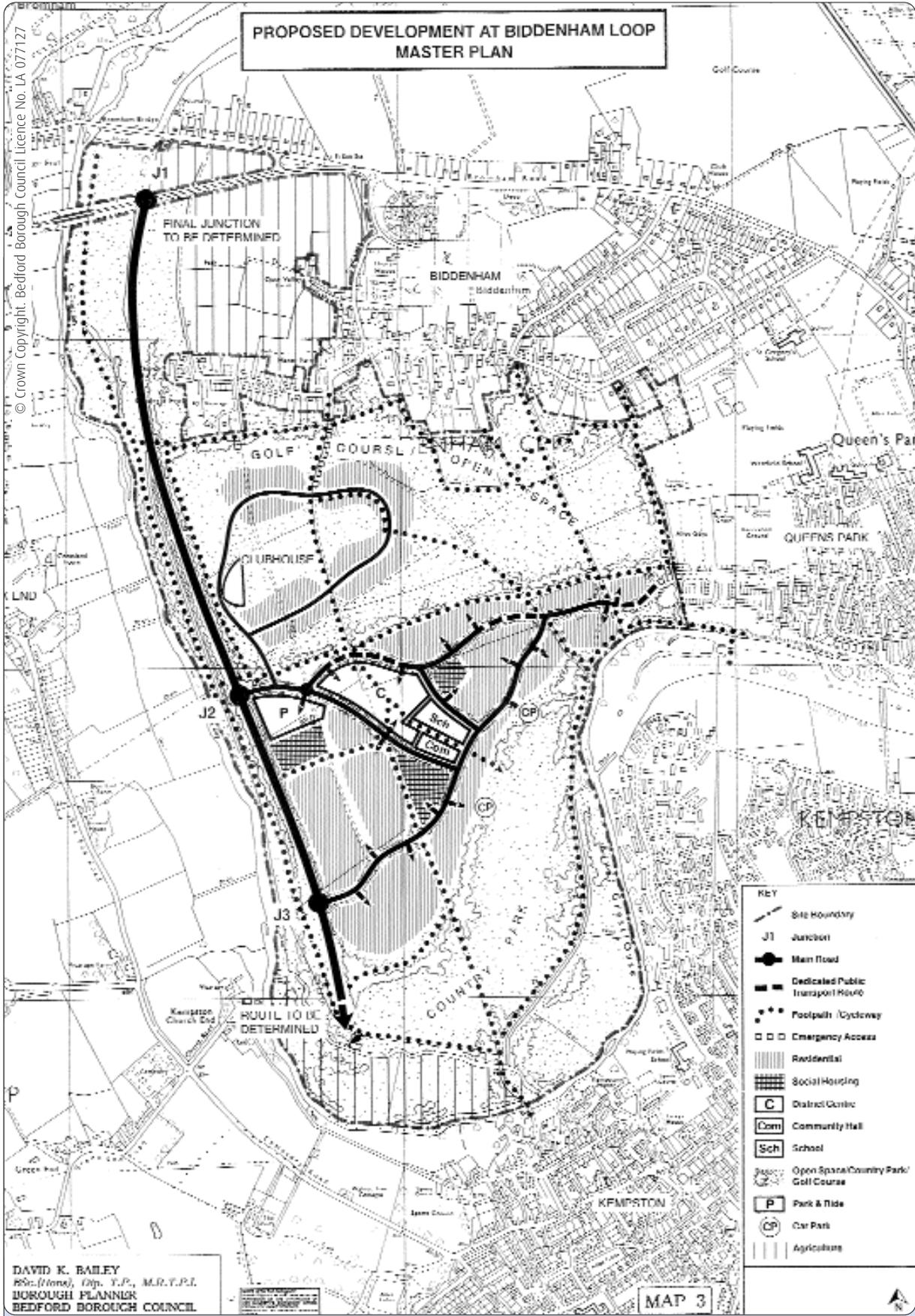
Fig 9. Extract from Biddenham Loop Development Brief 1994

LAND WEST OF KEMPSTON DRAFT DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

7. **Master Plan**

- Distributor Road
- Road
- Road (Bus only)
- Footpath/Cycleway
- Footpath
- Bridge
- Housing
- NC Neighbourhood Centre
- LS Lower School
- Employment
- Advanced Structural Planting
- Other Structural Planting
- Amenity/Play Area
- PF Playing Field
- Agriculture/Open Space

Fig 10. Extract from Land West of Kempston Draft Development Brief

Fig 11. Land North of Bromham Road, Biddenham – illustrative site layout

Legend:
- Development Site Boundary
- Residential
- Employment/ Park & Ride
- Com — Community Uses
- Distributor Road
- Principal Road
- Footpath/Cycleway
- Foot/Cycle Bridge
- Open Space/ Landscaping
- PF — Playing Fields
- Urban Open Space

5.28a   The implementation of site H8 will require agreement between the landowners which will be reflected in a planning obligation. Any planning obligation shall include:

– a mechanism for the total cost of the A428/A6 distributor link to be paid over to the relevant authorities through pro rata contributions based on land sales;

– a commitment to be made in 2004 or by the completion of the 300th house, whichever is the sooner, to complete the link by a date to be specified.

5.29   Shortstown is treated as adjoining the urban area by virtue of its close proximity. The Proposals Map shows the boundary of the area that will be the subject of a revised development brief. The purpose of the brief will be to guide the development of land in a manner which integrates proposed new housing, commercial and associated uses with the existing residential estate. In addition, the development brief will consider the operational requirements of those businesses already present in the locality including the Driving Standards Agency and users of the airship sheds.

POLICY H9

The development of designated sites at Shortstown shall be undertaken in accordance with an agreed development brief. Each site will be expected to contribute towards necessary highway improvements and transport links, community and educational facilities, affordable housing, playing fields and sports pavilion and environmental improvements in Shortstown in a manner which secures full integration between existing and new residents. The sites identified are land east of the A600 including former MOD land at RAF Cardington and land west of Scott Avenue, Shortstown.

East of the A600, key principles of development include:

i) a comprehensive and integrated development form including housing, commercial and community areas;

ii) structural landscaping of the eastern boundary of the site and to strengthen the tree lined avenue;

iii) any off site highway improvements as required by the Highway Authority.

West of the A600, key principles of development include:

iv) the provision of a village hall/sports pavilion and playing field;

v) any off site highway improvements as required by the Highway Authority (including a new roundabout on Greycote to serve the residential development west of Scott Avenue and the village hall/sports pavilion and playing fields to the south, and traffic calming);

vi) landscaping/woodland to the south of the playing field and to the west of the proposed residential area to soften the impact of the new development in the wider landscape;

vii) provision of a pocket park;

viii) environmental improvements in Shortstown.

5.30   The plan was modified to incorporate housing sites adjoining the urban area at Land north of Brickhill and Norse Road following the receipt of the Inspector's Report which recommended their inclusion.

5.31a   Development of the two sites involves extensions to the urban area to the north of the town. Urban extensions are the second preferred location for development in the Government's guidance on Housing (PPG3).

5.31b   Both sites will make a contribution to securing opportunities for access and recreation. North of Brickhill provision will take the form of a 63ha Country Park. The two sites will also provide landscaping to prevent the coalescence of Cleat Hill, Salph End and Renhold with the urban area.

5.31c   Development shall be in accordance with the key principles set out in Policies H10a and H10b below and all other relevant policies and guidance in the plan. Outline submissions should be accompanied by an urban design framework and a statement of urban design principles which will guide the development of the site. Submissions should also be supported by a landscape masterplan.

POLICY H10A

Land north of Brickhill. Key principles of development to include:

i) satisfactory distributor road access directly from Tyne Crescent. A further access as an extension to Westrope Way serving a small number of houses may follow as a final phase;

ii) traffic calming measures along the main distributor road to limit traffic speeds and safe crossing points to promote access to the Country Park;

iii) off site highway improvements as required by the Highway Authority;

iv) enhancement to foot/cycle routes between the development and local amenities;

v) a 63ha Country Park to remain open in perpetuity with appropriate arrangements for future maintenance. Footpath, cycle and bridleway networks to enhance links with the existing built up area and the networks in the Clapham Park and Mowsbury Park area;

vi) separation/screening of existing residential areas on the existing urban edge and extensive structural landscaping to screen the new development from the Country Park and assimilate the development into the wider landscape;

vii) measures to preserve and enhance the wildlife value of the site;

viii) the provision of a network of open space including pitch, play and kickabout facilities;

ix) contributions to the provision of improved public transport facilities and services;

x) design of the internal transport infrastructure of the development to give priority to public transport, including measures to allow existing bus services to be extended into the development and the provision of a network of safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists with particular regard to safe travel to school routes;

xi) in accordance with Policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site.

Fig 12a. Land North of Brickhill
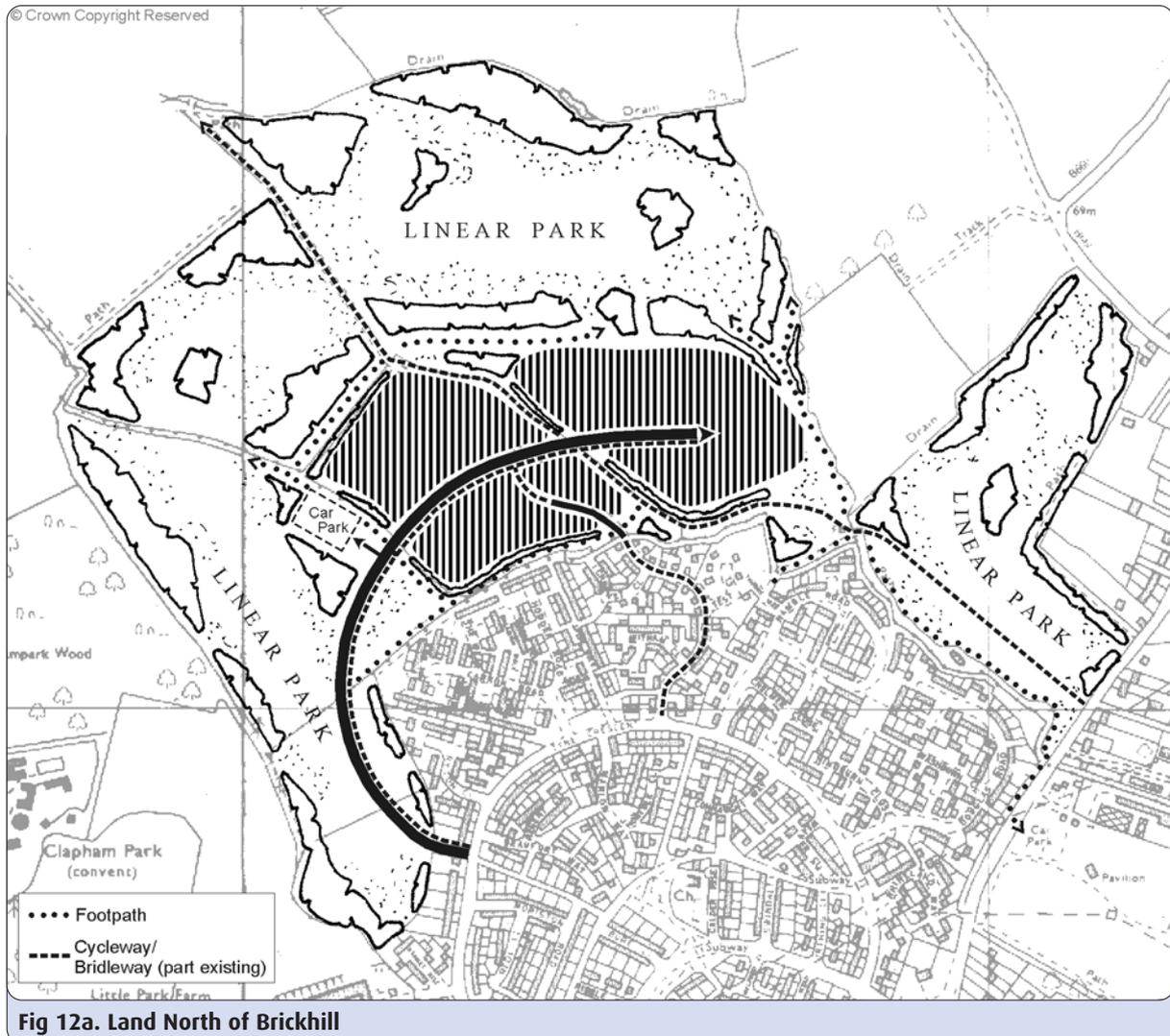
POLICY H10B

Land north of Norse Road. Key principles to include:

i) satisfactory access from Norse Road, safe crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, traffic calming on Norse Road;

ii) off site highway improvements at the Norse Road/ A428 junction as required by the Highway Authority;

iii) enhancement to foot/cycle routes between the development and local amenities;

iv) provision of an informal recreation corridor with opportunities for walking cycling and horse riding;

v) contribution towards the provision of a strategic cycleway adjacent to Norse Road between Church Lane/Hookhams Lane and the Cemetery access;

vi) extensive structural landscaping to assimilate the development into the wider landscape. Landscaping to achieve the long term separation of Salph End and Renhold from the urban area and to maintain strategic views of Renhold Church from Norse Road;

vii) the provision of a network of open space including playing pitch and children's play facilities;

viii) contributions to the provision of improved public transport facilities and services;

ix) design of the internal transport infrastructure of the development to give priority to public transport, including measures to allow existing bus services to be extended into the development and the provision of a network of safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists with particular regard to safe travel to school routes;

xi) in accordance with Policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site.

HOUSING SITES WITHIN THE SOUTH WEST BEDFORD STRATEGIC CORRIDOR

5.31   The Structure Plan 2011 requires a significantly greater scale of housing development south west of Bedford than was envisaged when the consultation draft of this local plan was prepared. The strategic corridor is defined by the Structure Plan and within this area the Borough is proposing to enlarge the villages of Wootton and Stewartby and to create a new settlement focused on Elstow Storage Depot. However, there are major implications in designating development sites in the strategic corridor, since such development will need to be matched by private sector investment to achieve
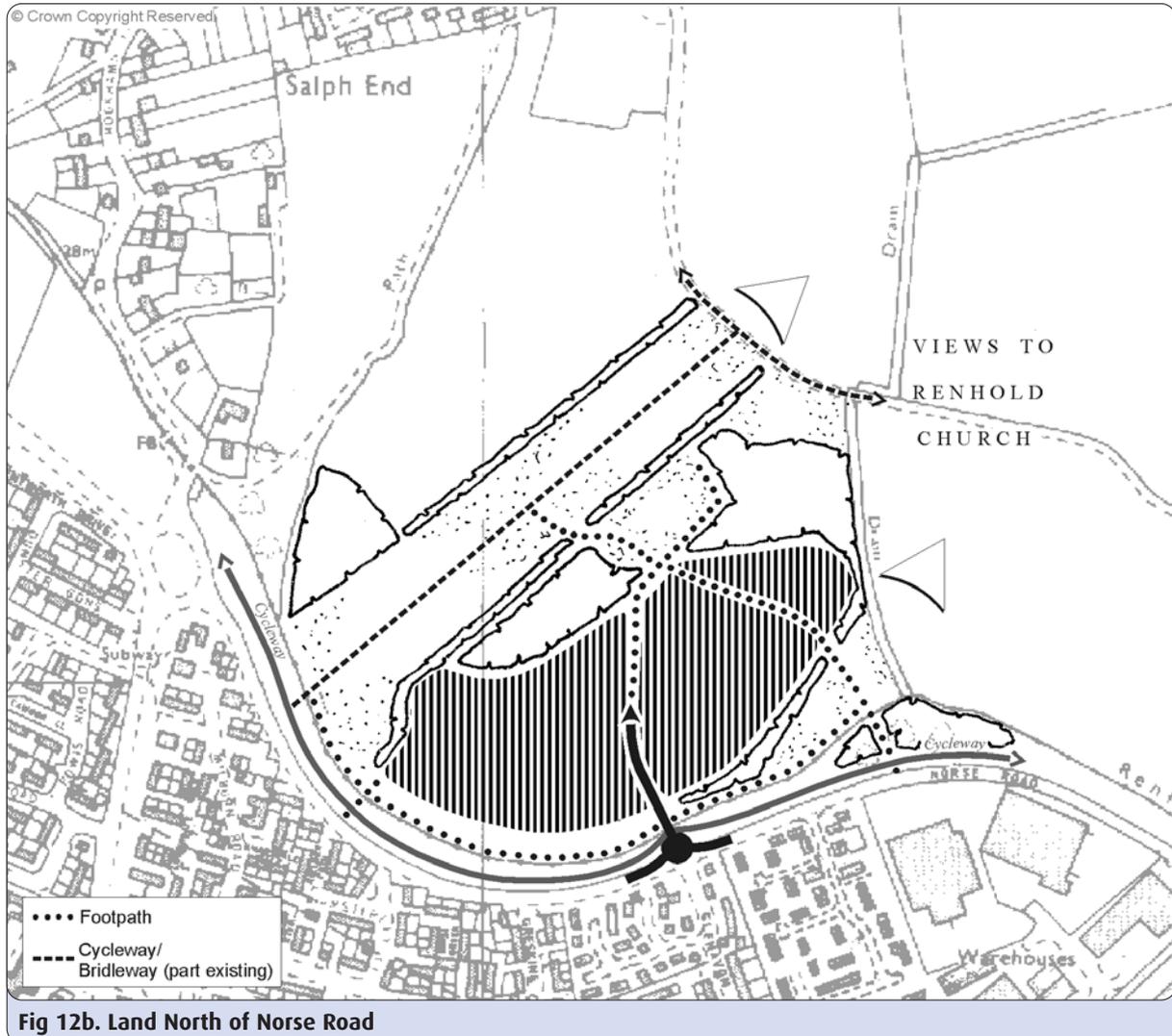
Fig 12b. Land North of Norse Road

improvements in the physical and social infrastructure. Notable amongst these are the Highway Agency's requirements to secure significant improvements to the A421 and A6 Trunk Roads and the construction of a new railway station to serve the proposed development at Elstow Storage Depot.

5.31b   Proposals in the strategic corridor also fall within the Marston Vale Strategy Area and the Forest of Marston Vale and reference should be made to policies S5 and NE21 and the need to ensure equitable contributions from each development towards necessary and appropriate infrastructure.

Wootton

5.32   Development proposals at Wootton reflect both the Structure Plan 2011 and the fact that development must underwrite the capital investment required by the Highways Agency in the Strategic Corridor. Thus proposals for Wootton have grown in scale following the adoption of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 1993 and the Structure Plan 2011. This revised area is shown on the Proposals Map (Wootton Inset). In order to secure a balance of development, proposals are also made to create an associated employment/ business area. In addition, a small site at Canons Close is identified with a capacity for 9 dwellings.

5.33   The Wootton Development Brief was adopted by the Council in July 1999. The Brief made a commitment to consult concerning the possible closure of Cranfield Road. This has been concluded but detailed arrangements will be resolved as proposals for the development come forward. At the Local Plan Inquiry it was agreed to consult further with the local community on the provision of educational and community facilities (including governance arrangements for the Lower School). These discussions are ongoing and have made significant progress. As a result of these consultations there may be detailed changes to the layout from that shown on the Proposals Map inset and the master plan in the Development Brief.

POLICY H11

Land south of Fields Road, Wootton ~ the development of land in this area shall be undertaken as shown on the Proposals Map and in accordance with the adopted development brief. Key principles of development include:

i) provision of a new road linking the development with Fields Road and Cranfield Road;

ii) a mixed development comprising housing and employment uses including leisure based employment;

iii) contributions towards school provision and the provision of new community facilities either on site or within the existing village centre;

iv) the construction of a roundabout at the junction of Fields Road and the A421 prior to the occupation of the 1st dwelling sanctioned by this policy, and the completion of improvements to the A421 as required by the highway authority, prior to the occupation of the 100th dwelling or within 3 years of the commencement of development, whichever is the sooner;

v) additions to the structural landscaping already in place to assimilate the development in the wider landscape;

vi) a network of footpaths/cycleways connecting the development with the existing built up area of Wootton and the Sustrans cycle route;

vii) the setting out, planting and dedication of the area of proposed Community Forest as shown on the inset to the Proposals Map;

viii) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site; and,

ix) contributions to the provision of public transport facilities and services in order to encourage more sustainable journey patterns in particular provision of bus priority measures.

POLICY H12

Land north of Fields Road, Wootton. Development shall be undertaken as shown on the Proposals Map and in accordance with the adopted development brief. Key principles of development include:

i) provision of a new road linking the development with Fields Road;

ii) the construction of a roundabout at the junction of Fields Road and the A421 prior to the occupation of the 1st dwelling sanctioned by this policy, and the completion of improvements to the A421 as required by the highway authority, prior to the occupation of the 100th dwelling or within 3 years of the commencement of development, whichever is the sooner;

iii) a network of footpaths/cycleways connecting the development with the existing built up area of Wootton and the Sustrans cycle route;

iv) the setting out, planting and dedication of the area of proposed Community Forest as shown on the inset to the Proposals Map;

v) contributions towards school provision and the provision of new community facilities either on site or within the existing village centre;

vi) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site; and,

vii) contributions to the provision of public transport facilities and services in order to encourage more sustainable journey patterns in particular provision of bus priority measures.

Stewartby

5.35   Development proposals in Stewartby were first signalled in the last Local Plan, but were deleted from the plan on the recommendation of the Inspector. Since then considerable progress has been made on the Marston Vale Strategy, proposals for the Forest of Marston Vale have emerged and the adoption of the County Minerals and Waste Local Plan has clarified a number of issues that were then outstanding. The proposed development extends into Mid-Bedfordshire, and the Borough Council will support its inclusion in the Mid-Beds Local Plan review (see Stewartby Inset).

POLICY H13

Land off Rousbury Road, Stewartby – Development shall be undertaken as shown on the Proposals Map and in accordance with key principles of development including:

i) housing development will proceed in a phased manner from east to west;

ii) the construction of a roundabout at the junction of Green/Hoo Lanes and the A421 prior to the occupation of the 1st dwelling sanctioned by this policy, and the completion of improvements to the A421 as required by the highway authority, prior to the occupation of the 100th dwelling or within 3 years of the commencement of development, whichever is the sooner;

iii) there shall be an adequate separation from the railway and noise attenuation;

iv) the provision of a mixture of land uses including employment, housing, a village shop, a public house (should the need arise), open space, recreational and other facilities listed below in clause x], will be required in order to create a more balanced development;

v) advance structural planting to include the strengthening of the tree belt immediately south of Stewartby Village at Rookery North Pit to provide further off-site environmental screening, extensive structure planting within the boundaries of the site and also planting within the site to sub-divide the housing areas;

vi) specific contributions towards the implementation of the Marston Vale Strategy and the Forest Plan;

vii) the provision of a new road linking Rousbury Road and Broadmead Road to serve the development. Access and egress from the site for construction traffic will be via Broadmead Road only. Access via existing village roads will not be permitted;

viii) all principal roads within the development will have broad landscaped margins, including mounding, tree and shrub planting and footpaths in order to maintain the existing character of Stewartby;

ix) the provision of design guidance, additional to the Borough Council's 'Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts', to ensure that the new development reflects the character of

the older part of Stewartby in terms of layout, urban spaces and building design. This to be prepared in conjunction with the Borough Council and approved in advance of the first phase of any housing development;

x) the provision of a landscaping scheme and additional open space provision within the site, improved leisure and sports facilities to the existing sports and recreational ground and Stewartby Club, contributions, where appropriate, towards traffic calming measures in the village, improvements to Montgomery Close in order to improve the environment and provide additional car parking over and above current levels of provision;

xi) improvement of public transport facilities including Stewartby Station;

xii) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on the site;

xiii) there should be an adequate separation from any future clay extraction site at Broadmead Pit and environmental attenuation.

Elstow Storage Depot

5.36   The successful recycling of redundant developed and derelict land – brownfield sites – is a difficult task that potentially yields great benefits in terms of conserving natural resources and moving towards more sustainable forms of development. Elstow Storage Depot has had a chequered history and has been the subject of various proposals none of which have so far been pursued (site for a power station, a prison, a nuclear waste dump etc).

5.37   In identifying Elstow Storage Depot as the focus of a development comprising 4,500 dwellings, the Structure Plan in effect requires the construction of a new settlement that straddles the Borough boundary with Mid-Beds District. This is a major and complex project that will require site assembly, the coordinated provision of social, economic and transport infrastructure and a high level of cooperative and joint working by landowners, developers, the providers of public services, and official agencies. It will also require a high degree of commitment and determination on the part of all those involved. The two Councils resolved to grant planning permission (subject to a section 106 agreement) for the settlement in April 2002.

5.38   The Borough Council has an agreement with Mid-Bedfordshire District Council as to the nominal division of this strategic allocation between the two local planning authority areas for the purposes of monitoring Structure and Local Plan policies (so that dwellings provided in one Council's plan area may count towards the dwelling requirement in the adjoining Council's plan area), and for the need to prepare and adopt a joint development brief. A development brief for the new settlement has now been adopted. Given the overall scale of the development, site preparation and required infrastructure, the Borough Council has assessed that only a proportion of the total housing capacity of the project will come forward during the Local Plan period.

POLICY H14

Elstow Storage Depot – Development focused on the Elstow Storage Depot shall be permitted in accordance with the adopted development brief. Key principles of development, to be secured by condition and/or legal agreement, will include:

i) mixed use development to meet the needs of a self-supporting and balanced community providing employment, leisure, open space and play space, community, social and educational facilities;

ii) the provision of a new railway station on the London-Bedford railway, track, and signalling with ancillary car parking, together with appropriate provision for bus, cycle and pedestrian access, thereby providing a significant facility for modal interchange;

iii) dualling and realignment of the A6 and the provision of two access points to the site between the Bedford Southern Bypass and Bedford Road, Wilstead;

iv) extensive on and off site landscaping, including structural planting and environmental improvement to be achieved as part of the Forest of Marston Vale and the Marston Vale Strategy;

v) arrangements for the relocation of the existing employment uses and the retention of suitable premises;

vi) measures to mitigate traffic impact as indicated by a travel assessment and guided by the requirements of a scoping study, for example on routes to junctions 12, 13 and 14 of the M1, A6, A421 and the B530;

vii) exploration of the potential of any scheme to provide a sustainable energy system, such as combined heat and power to serve the development;

viii) measures to protect the amenity of residential properties adjoining the site and to avoid coalescence with neighbouring settlements;

ix) design of the internal transport infrastructure of the development to give priority to public transport, including measures to allow existing bus services to be extended into the development;

x) provision of a network of walking/cycling links, including links to both Bedford/Kempston and into the rural area surrounding the development in conjunction with the network being developed as part of the Forest Plan and SUSTRANS initiative;

xi) the Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided in accordance with an affordable housing brief prepared jointly by the two authorities.

HOUSING SITES IN THE RURAL AREA

FIRST ORDER VILLAGES

5.39   Chapter 2 of this Plan provides the basis for the designation by Policy H1 housing development sites in the rural First Order Villages. Policies H15 to H21 deal with proposed development sites within these villages, (Bromham, Wilstead, Clapham, Sharnbrook, Great Barford and Oakley).

5.40   Bromham has undergone considerable development in recent years and there is more in the pipeline due to existing commitments and potential infill sites. Construction of 65 dwellings at Bromham Hospital was completed in 2002. The strategic policy guidance in the Structure Plan 2011 does not support a further major expansion of Bromham. Indeed it would undermine the strategic aims of the Local Plan. A modest allocation is considered to be justified which together with existing commitments will help to sustain the local community.

POLICY H15
Land off Northampton Road, Bromham – key principles of development include:

i) a satisfactory access will be provided off the Northampton Road in conjunction with off site highway improvements as required by the highway authority;

ii) the development will make provision for a cemetery and open space;

iii) the provision of a network of footpaths/cycle routes within the development linking to existing routes including the bridleway;

iv) extensive structural planting will be required both within the development and in particular in green buffers to the north, south and west of the site;

v) contributions to education provision; and,

vi) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate affordable housing to be provided on this site.

(See Bromham Inset)

5.41   The Borough Council is of the view that the development of Bromham Hospital is acceptable only up to a limit of replacing the existing footprint of the redundant hospital buildings, and where such development ensures the integrity of Salem Thrift, the mansion house and the parkland character and setting of the site (see Fig 13). A part of the site adjacent to the Salem Thrift is being retained by the Health Authority for the continuing provision of healthcare.

POLICY H16
Bromham Hospital Site – construction complete.

5.42   In comparison, Clapham has not seen such a scale of development in recent years due to limitations imposed by the inadequacy of the foul water drainage system which have now been resolved (methods of surface water drainage however will require agreement with the Environment Agency with a view to securing a positive

system for disposal). Construction of the Clapham bypass began in May 2001. The development on land at Clapham Folly will help to sustain the community and support local services. It is well related to the current A6 and forthcoming bypass and is considered best likely to integrate successfully into the existing character of the village and surrounding landscape.

POLICY H17
Clapham Folly, Clapham – planning permission granted.

5.43   Small scale development is proposed in Great Barford in recognition of the need to sustain the local community and support local services. Both strategic policy and highway considerations suggest that more substantial development would be inappropriate.

POLICY H18
New Road, Great Barford – key principles of development include:

i) Satisfactory access to the site from New Road including speed reduction measures;

ii) provision of car parking for church and village use to be accessed from New Road;

iii) extension to the bowls club green and car park;

iv) the provision of extensive structural landscaping to screen the development and provide a buffer between the development and adjacent properties;

v) buildings should be orientated to maintain and enhance views to the parish church;

vi) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate affordable housing to be provided on this site.

(See Great Barford Inset)

5.44   Development at Sharnbrook is closely linked with the ability of two schemes to provide tangible and worthwhile community benefit to a village that is a centre to quite a wide rural hinterland. The designation at Yelnow Lane secures the future of open space within the village that has nature conservation interest, whilst that to the rear of properties in Odell Road is associated with the expansion of the Sharnbrook Upper School and Community College.

POLICY H19
Land at Yelnow Lane, Sharnbrook – key principles of development include:

i) satisfactory access will be provided from Yelnow Lane with any necessary additional off-site highway improvements as may be required by the highway authority;

ii) the retention of the wooded area to the Yelnow Lane frontage;

iii) the dedication of adjacent land having nature conservation interest including satisfactory arrangements for the protection and future management;

iv) the retention and creation of footpaths and cycleways; and,

v) the provision within the scheme for eleven affordable homes.

**BROMHAM HOSPITAL
DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

4. Master Plan

Uses to be Retained
Salem Thrift woods
Mansion and Parkland setting
New Residential Development
Agricultural Land
Public Open Space
Playing Field
Grazing Land
Pedestrian Access
Chestnut Avenue
Right of Way
Circular Rides
Water Tower

Scale

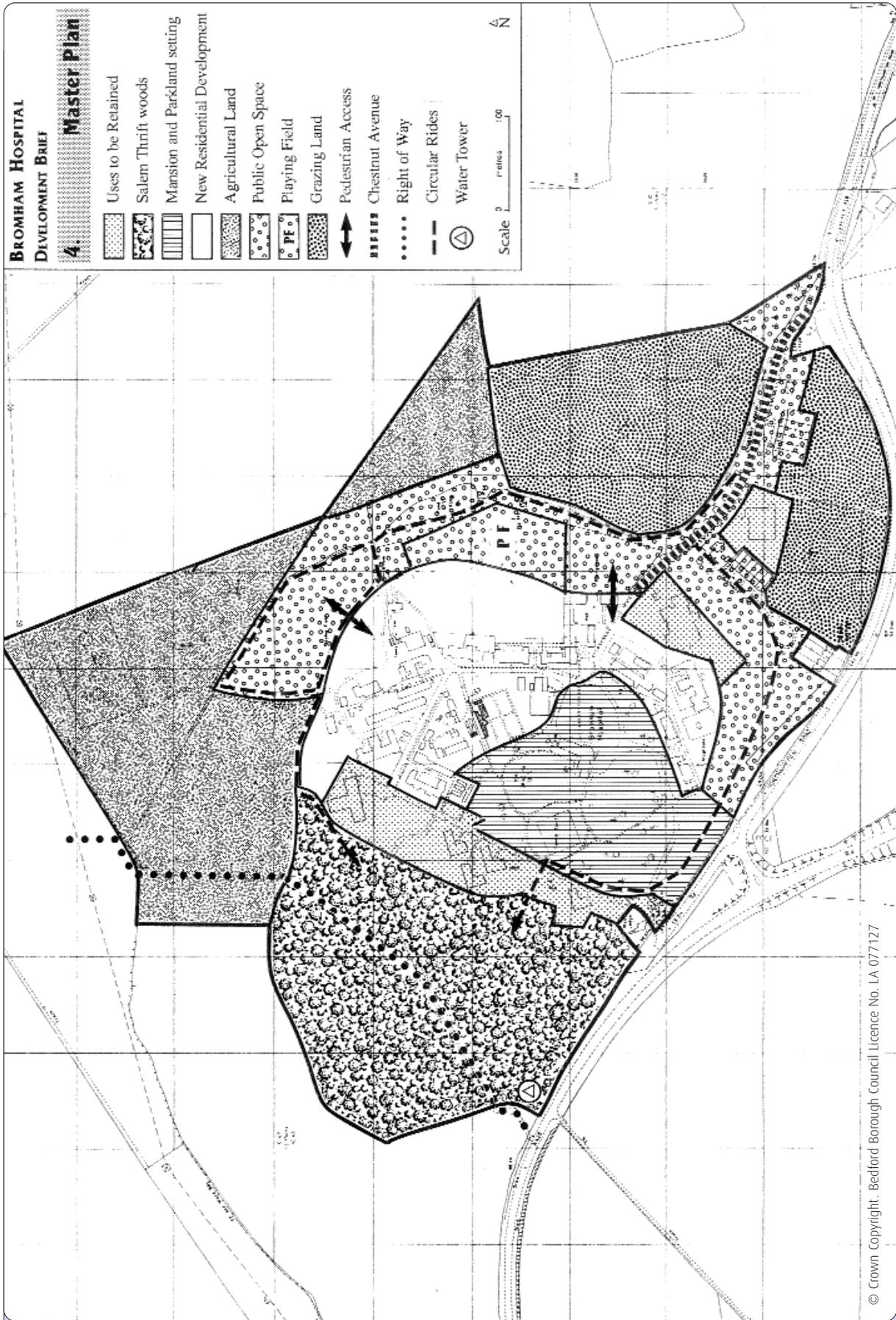© Crown Copyright. Bedford Borough Council Licence No. LA 077127

Fig 13. Extract from Bromham Hospital Development Brief

POLICY H20
Land south-east of Sharnbrook Upper School, Sharnbrook – key principles of development include:

i) the improvement of the existing access road to the school and any other highway improvements as may be required by the highway authority;

ii) extensive structural planting required on the periphery of the development to screen the new housing from adjoining uses. In addition, off-site planting should be provided on the southern side of the school access road, to screen the development from the western approaches to the village and create a softer edge to Sharnbrook;

iii) the dedication of adjacent land for school purposes, prior to the occupation of the housing development;

iv) contribution to improved footpath and cycleway links between the site and the centre of Sharnbrook in order to facilitate the integration of the new development into the existing built fabric; and,

v) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site.

(See Sharnbrook Inset)

5.45   In considering the development potential of Wilstead, regard has been had to its location beyond the Strategic Corridor south west of Bedford, the proximity of Elstow Storage Depot (see Policy H14) and the need to maintain a degree of separation and distinctiveness from this strategic allocation. However since the village is well established a modest development is proposed in order to sustain the community and to support local services.

POLICY H21
Land between A6 and Luton Road Wilstead – key principles of development include:

i) satisfactory access off Luton Road in conjunction with off site highway improvements where appropriate;

ii) extensive structural planting will be required both within the development and in particular in the green buffer to the west of the site sufficient to provide noise attenuation and landscape screening;

iii) the development will include provision for employment uses located to the south of the new housing;

iv) a contribution towards the implementation of the Forest Plan is required;

v) a contribution towards the provision of a new village hall;

vi) buildings should be orientated so as to front onto the open space and footpaths within the site; and,

vii) in accordance with Policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site.

(See Wilstead Inset)

OTHER PROPOSALS
5.46a   Despite the constraints on development in Oakley, there is scope for some limited growth at land off Pavenham Road, Oakley. This site has a capacity for 14 dwellings that should be set in an extensive landscape framework which should include a substantial buffer on the eastern and northern sides of the site.

5.46   A site off the Meadway Harrold was allocated for housing in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 1993 and was the subject of a draft development brief. This proposal is carried forward into this plan with key development principles that reflect earlier guidance. The site is adjacent to an area that has been prone to flooding from watercourses to the west and south. This will have to be taken into account when any development proposals are brought forward.

POLICY H22
Land off the Meadway Harrold – key principles of development include:

i) development to be served by a single access via the Meadway with off-site improvements as required;

ii) emergency access via Dove Lane and measures to restrict its use to emergency vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists only;

iii) measures to prevent uncontrolled access onto the adjoining County Wildlife Site to the north;

iv) contributions towards the provision of an additional classroom at Harrold Lower School;

v) extensive structural planting and earth mounding within the site along the western boundary to act as a visual and noise barrier;

vi) existing public footpaths on the site boundaries to be maintained and enhanced;

vii) development of the site will not exceed 40 dwellings;

viii) a second vehicular access and parking provision for the adjacent Doctor's Surgery; and,

ix) in accordance with policy H31 the Borough Council will negotiate for affordable housing to be provided on this site.

(see Harrold Inset)

HOUSING IN SECOND ORDER VILLAGES
5.47   Consultations with Parish Councils have confirmed that there is a concern that a number of communities within the rural area should have some, albeit limited capacity for organic growth in order to maintain the life and vitality of the village. In drawing the boundaries of the Settlement Policy Areas the Borough Council has taken these particular concerns into account and after detailed discussions with the parishes small scale sites for development were identified in some villages.

POLICY H23
In the villages listed, potential has been identified for small scale development as described below and shown on insets to the Proposals Map.

List of village sites

i. Land South of Cople Road, Cardington.
Site capacity: 5
Key principles: Development of the site will be limited to the frontage only with extensive tree planting and noise attenuation measures to the rear of the site. In addition an agreement will be sought requiring the provision of control measures for the nearby grain drier. The development should also make provision for a car park for the adjoining chapel in the interests of

highway safety. Contributions will be sought towards the provision of the Forest of Marston Vale. An access which is wide enough to accommodate agricultural machinery should be provided to link Cople Road with the land to the rear of the proposed housing site. Details of this access to be determined as part of the development control process.

ii. Land at West End Lane, Elstow.
Site capacity: 3
Key principles: This is an important 'gateway' site on the approach to the village and its conservation area. A very limited number of dwellings will be acceptable, and any scheme must include the restoration/ conversion of the adjoining barn/farm building. Peripheral planting will be required to the western and southern boundaries in order to achieve a 'soft' approach to the village. Any proposal should be sensitively designed and be respectful of its position within the Elstow Conservation Area and at one of the main gateways in the village.

iii. Land off Pavenham Road, Oakley
Site capacity: 14
Key principles: The dwellings should be set in an extensive landscape framework which should include a substantial buffer on the eastern and northern sides of the site. Dwellings should be located to take account of the noise environment of the site.

iv. Land off Sandye Lane, Swineshead.
Site capacity: 2
Key principles: This site is suitable for a total of two dwellings with access off Sandye Lane. Development will be restricted to the frontage of the site only. Development on land to the rear will not be permitted. Off -site highway improvements will be required in addition to the provision of a service vehicle turning head.

v. Land off Keysoe Road, Riseley
Site capacity: 4
Key principles: The site is suitable for frontage development only and is divided into two plots. Development of the land to the rear will not be permitted. Off site highway improvements will be required.

vi. Land to the north of School Lane, Roxton.
Site capacity: 5
Key principles: The site has potential for 5 dwellings but the scheme must also include a public car park and a bus turning area at the western end of the site. The northern edge of the site should be extensively planted to provide landscaping.

vii. 'Village Green', Spring Lane, Stagsden
Site capacity: 6
Key principles: The village has capacity for a small scale development of 6 houses accessed off Spring Lane in association with the provision of a 'village green' formed by incorporating the previously designated Important Open Space.

viii. Newton Road, Turvey
Site capacity: 14
Key principles: No more than 14 dwellings, development limited to northern part of field 0010 to ensure that development is assimilated into the landscape, with extensive peripheral planting particularly in order to protect the views of the site from the west. Satisfactory treatment of any ground contamination will be required prior to development.

ix. Land adjoining the Old Pond House, Upper Dean.
Site capacity: 2
Key principles: This site has potential for two dwellings on land adjoining the Old Pond House. Sensitive design will be required to create a development which is complementary in scale and character to the existing house and enhances its setting. The development should not encroach on the important open space on the frontage of this site.

x. Canons Close, Wootton
Site Capacity: 9
Key principles: The development should be heavily landscaped on its western, southern and northern boundaries.

xi. Church Lane, Wymington
Site capacity: 15
Key principles: To be developed in association with improvement to the existing Church Lane estate, east and north boundaries to be screened from the countryside, off site works may be needed to services and roads.

xii. Land between High Road, Hall Way and Meeting Close, Cotton End
Site capacity: 25
Key principles: The site is contained by existing development on the High Road, Hall Way and Meeting Close. The adjoining land to the north west has planning permission for 13 dwellings and will provide access from the High Road. Development will be required to provide substantial landscaping and adequate gardens for all properties ensuring that there is no loss of amenity for existing residents arising from overlooking. It will be particularly important to provide appropriate separation between the new development and properties adjoining the site on Hall Way. Subject to the submission of a detailed site layout and where the above principles and all other relevant plan policies are met the site capacity may increase to a maximum of 30 dwellings.

xiii. Land south of Bedford Road, Willington
Site capacity: 5
Key principles: This site is suitable for five dwellings with access off Bedford Road. Two dwellings should be built on the frontage to continue the development pattern along Bedford Road with the remainder to the rear. Sensitive peripheral planting will be required along the western and southern boundaries to provide a soft rural edge.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SETTLEMENT POLICY AREAS

5.48 Within the Settlement Policy Areas, the development in addition to that identified in Policies H2 to H23 will only be allowed where there is no detrimental impact on the form and character of the village or loss of residential amenity, important open space and employment land/premises.

5.49 The presence of open space in a village is very important in defining the form and character of a village. The term open space includes any land which is not built on but has a role in giving a village its individual character along with factors such as the materials used for the buildings, the buildings themselves, the street pattern, trees etc. Open spaces may include therefore, the spaces between buildings which help to define the structure and form of a village. A number of important open spaces/views have been identified and are shown on the insets to the Proposals Map. Although different notation is used to identify open spaces and views there is no difference between them in policy terms. In the case of the views identified in the policy it would be impractical for the notation to seek to identify the entire view on the Proposals Map as it may extend some distance from the edge of the village. Instead it is intended that other restraint policies in the plan (eg. BE5 and H26) will afford the protection necessary to maintain the important view beyond the notation. The plan also identifies urban open spaces. The relationship between these and important open spaces is explained in paragraph 3.38.

Open spaces have been identified as important open spaces/views where:

i) they give identity to a settlement or village by helping to retain its form and reflect past history (examples include village green and playing fields), or

ii) a gap or break in the frontage contributes to the character of a settlement for example by providing a view into a village which forms part of the village setting, or

iii) a gap in the frontage provides a view into open countryside establishing the relationship between the form of the village and the countryside beyond, or

iv) gaps provide visual relief in an otherwise built up area punctuating the street scene, or

v) open space assists the transition between village and countryside providing a soft edge to the village which is pleasing visually.

5.53 The fact that non-designated undeveloped land may exist within a Settlement Policy Area, should not be taken to indicate that its development for whatever purpose, will necessarily be found acceptable to the Borough Council.

5.55 Within the SPAs it is expected that the following forms of development will normally be allowed.

Small plots within the SPA:

5.56 Within a SPA there may be small plots or gaps in the frontage which may be suitable for development. These plots should normally have a frontage that is compatible with the character of the plots on which existing adjoining buildings are located. Policy H24 sets out the criteria against which the suitability of these sites will be assessed.

Local needs:

5.57 Limited residential development to meet specialised local housing needs which can only be met satisfactorily in a particular locality (in accordance with Policy H30).

Other sites within SPAs:

5.58 Within SPAs there may also be some slightly larger plots which could be built upon without harming the character of the village. This may include redundant or under used buildings which are suitable for conversion or redevelopment.

5.59 Consultation with Parish Councils has also confirmed the Borough Council's concern that the nature of development over recent years has had the effect of forcing young people to leave the villages. It is felt that there is a strong case for encouraging developers to provide one and two bedroom dwellings rather than all larger 3 and 4 bedroomed dwellings.

POLICY H24

Residential development will be permitted within the Settlement Policy Areas where the development proposed:

i) is sensitive to the form and character of the village;

ii) its character and scale is compatible with local building styles and materials;

iii) is of a density appropriate to the form of the village;

iv) has no adverse effect on the overall character of the village or setting of the defined important open spaces in the village;

v) contributes to the range and size of housing available in the village thus maintaining a balanced social mix;

vi) is in accordance with the other policies of the plan relating to site layout, access, drainage etc; and,

vii) does not lead to a loss of land in classes B1-B8 unless significant environmental or community benefits would be achieved.

viii) safeguards existing public rights of way.

~~POLICY H25~~

~~Development will not be permitted on land designated as an important open space as shown on the Proposals Map.~~

HOUSING IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

5.60 The open countryside includes all land outside the Settlement Policy Areas. Within the open countryside there are small groups of housing (which in Bedfordshire are often known as Ends) and some small settlements. In the open countryside a strategy of rural restraint and a general presumption against development apply.

POLICY H26
Planning permission will not be granted for housing in the open countryside except as provided for under policies H27, H28 and H30.

5.61   It is recognised, however, that in some circumstances an exception to this policy of restraint may be justified. These are:

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' DWELLINGS
5.62   An exception may be made to enable farm workers to live in the immediate vicinity of their place of work; such an exception will only be made when it is deemed essential for them to do so. In assessing applications the Council will require a functional and financial test and will have regard to current Government guidance. In all cases where planning permission is granted an occupancy condition will be imposed to ensure that the dwelling remains available to meet the agricultural need.

POLICY H27
Planning permission will only be granted for agricultural or forestry workers' dwellings in the countryside for farming activities subject to functional and financial tests. Where proposals involve new farming activities the dwelling should for the first three years take the form of a caravan or other type of temporary accommodation. Permission for permanent dwellings will only be granted to support existing agricultural activities on well established units in order to provide accommodation for full time workers.

REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS
5.63   Each year the Council receives applications for the replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside. Such proposals will not automatically receive favourable consideration, as the loss of smaller dwellings and the introduction of new dwellings in themselves result in a loss of rural character, and imbalance in the rural housing stock. Each case will be considered on its merits based on the recent history of the original dwelling. Before granting permission for demolition the Borough Council will need to be satisfied that the opportunities for repair and renovation have been thoroughly investigated. Evidence of this assessment will need to be submitted with any application.

POLICY H28
Proposals for replacement dwellings in the open countryside will be permitted on a one for one basis provided:

i) the original dwelling has not been demolished or abandoned;

ii) the original dwelling is not a temporary, prefabricated or mobile structure;

iii) the original dwelling is not of architectural or historic merit;

iv) the replacement dwelling is within the curtilage of and respects the siting of the original dwelling, and;

v) the replacement is of a size and scale similar to that of the original dwelling.

EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE
5.64   Large extensions to dwellings in the open countryside can have a detrimental effect on the character of the rural area by introducing a scale or style of building inappropriate for the rural area producing a building which is tantamount to the creation of a new dwelling. The Borough Council will therefore expect proposals to reasonably reflect the size and scale of the original and take account of the need to protect rural character.

POLICY H29
Proposals for the extension of dwellings in the open countryside will be permitted provided:

i) the layout of the extension respects the siting of the original dwelling;

ii) the extension reflects the architectural character, size and scale of the original dwelling;

iii) the proposal has no adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area.

HOUSING FOR LOCAL NEEDS
5.65   For some time it has been recognised that people in the rural areas may experience particular difficulties in finding housing locally. In order to meet such needs the Council will be prepared to consider allowing small-scale development on land immediately adjoining SPAs as well as on suitable sites within the SPA.

5.66   Suitable sites may come forward with the assistance of the Bedfordshire Rural Land Bank. Bedfordshire Rural Land Bank is supported by the Countryside Agency, the Housing Corporation, the local authorities and housing associations. It is an initiative designed to facilitate provision of affordable housing in the villages by taking options for purchase or gifts of land which has a reasonable expectation of planning permission to meet such local housing needs.

5.67   The Borough Council will therefore encourage schemes for low cost housing for local people; in particular small dwellings designed for young and elderly people as well as family accommodation. These dwellings are likely to cater for existing residents who need separate accommodation, those whose work requires them to live locally or people who have long-standing links with the community. Ensuring such schemes are attained at low cost for local people can normally only be achieved with cheap land or in the case of development within a SPA, cross subsidy. In the case of sites which fall outside a SPA this form of cross subsidy will not be acceptable. Low cost housing schemes will relate to sites either within or immediately adjoining established villages which would not otherwise be allocated for housing. This does not relate to sites which have been identified as important open spaces. In addition, it is important to ensure that the benefits of low-cost provision pass not only to the initial occupants but to subsequent occupants as well.

POLICY H30

The Borough Council will grant planning permission for local needs housing in the rural area as an exception to existing planning policies where all the following criteria are met:

i) the site must be within, or immediately adjoining, SPA villages and relate satisfactorily to the village's structure, form and character;

ii) sites on the edges of SPA villages will only be considered where there is sufficient undeveloped land between the site and other settlements to prevent their coalescence, and to protect their separate identities;

iii) the site must be small in scale and be capable of development in terms of access, infrastructure and relationship to adjoining properties;

iv) the Borough Council will expect a Parish housing survey to be carried out either by the Parish Council or Housing Association to demonstrate that the local need for that type of housing exists within that particular rural locality* and cannot be satisfactorily met elsewhere; and,

v) the type of housing proposed must meet this need and it must be capable of management by the Parish Council, Housing Association, Village Trust or other similar organisation. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that one of these bodies has expressed a clear interest in the scheme and that interest should form part of a draft legal agreement to be submitted with the initial planning application. Future management will be controlled using planning agreements, to ensure that the housing continues to be made available to local people in the future. Additional controls will be introduced to prevent 'staircasing' to 100% ownership, thereby ensuring that the dwellings remain 'affordable' and to ensure that the dwellings are not extended to form much larger properties.

*For the avoidance of doubt, rural locality is defined as Rural Parish and the Rural Parishes which adjoin it.

MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

5.68 The Borough Council is a housing enabler which means that although it is not a direct provider of housing it seeks to ensure that housing for those with particular needs is available. Each year the Borough Council produces a Housing Strategy Statement which includes an assessment of housing need. In 1995 the Borough Council received the results of a consultant's study into Borough wide housing need. This survey has subsequently been updated in April 1998.

5.69 Households in housing need as defined in the Housing Need Survey are those who are unable to afford market housing to rent or buy and whose current housing is unsuitable. Amongst those in housing need are a wide range of client groups including those with special needs, the homeless and low income groups.

5.70 The local plan has a part to play in meeting affordable housing need because such needs are a material planning consideration. PPG3 states that affordable housing may be sought where housing need has been demonstrated. It also says that councils may define affordable housing and set reasoned targets for the provision of affordable housing. Such targets form the basis for negotiation with the developers of allocated sites. Circular 6/98 qualifies PPG3 by implying affordable housing to include a wide range of subtenures; low cost market priced housing, low cost discounted, shared ownership and social rented housing. As part of its update to the Housing Need Survey the Council has conducted an analysis of the four subtenures. The survey shows that there is no justification for seeking low cost market or discounted low cost housing since they do not meet housing need. A small number of households may benefit from the provision of shared ownership housing. The only sub tenure which will meet significant amounts of housing need is the social rented one.

5.70a In general the main result from the 1998 update survey are similar to those found in the original 1995 survey. The number of households in housing need as at April 1998 was 3,795.

5.70b Whilst it would of course, not be feasible for the local plan allocations to meet all housing need, the Housing Need Survey has demonstrated that there is a significant housing need in the Borough and the Borough Council expects that new housing developments will make a contribution to the meeting of this need. Without seeking to impose a rigid quota the target will apply to all allocated housing or windfall housing sites which meet the threshold criterion stated in the policy. The Council will have regard for the advice in Circular 6/98 regarding the provision of affordable housing on application or allocated sites on alternative sites within the Borough.

5.70c The Borough Council recognises that housing needs vary across the Borough and that the ability of sites to carry affordable housing will vary. In addition the situation as regards site and market conditions may vary over the plan period. The Council has considered all the sites identified in this plan and considers that all of them (which meet the policy threshold) are suitable for affordable housing. The Council does however, recognise that affordable housing is to be negotiated and will take full account of the current position of each site when it comes forward for development.

5.70d Given the significance of the need demonstrated by the survey the Borough Council sets a target of a total of 30% of new houses to be affordable on suitable sites. This will need to be predominantly social housing although the other sub tenures may have a limited contribution to make in allowing some households which would not otherwise be able to do so to meet their own requirements, in the process freeing some rental housing for those in definite need. In deriving this target it is recognised that to include a figure directly reflecting the total of those who need to move soon would be unrealistically large given the constraint implied by the number of units being allocated in the plan. The 30% figure therefore reflects what is a reasonable maximum derived from national custom and practice.

5.71   Once the housing has been provided it is important that it is secured in such a way which ensures that the subsidy is available also to succeeding occupiers. The Council will use its statutory power to secure the housing in perpetuity where legally possible. The Borough Council will use planning conditions and obligations and the involvement of Housing Associations and Housing Cooperatives to achieve this end. In order to achieve affordable rents and to make the most efficient use of government grant, the Council will normally seek a zero or substantially reduced land price for the social housing element.

POLICY H31

The Council will expect affordable housing contributions on sites of 25 units and over (or 1 hectare and over) and in villages having a population of less than 3,000 on sites of 15 units or more (or 0.5 hectare and over). The Borough Council will, on the basis of the current Housing Need Survey, seek to negotiate a total of 30% of affordable housing on sites which qualify on this criterion. On qualifying sites 25% will be sought as social rented housing and 5% for the market subtenures involving equity ownership. This policy will exceptionally apply to sites of a smaller site area where a planning application could have been submitted for a larger site within the above policy thresholds.

HOUSING MIX

5.73   In order to encourage the creation of balanced communities new development needs to provide a mix and range of dwelling types and sizes which reflect the needs and composition of the population and take account of the increasingly varied types of housing requirements. At present the trend in household sizes is towards smaller households as the numbers of single person, lone parent and single elderly households increases. The mix of dwelling types should reflect this trend whilst taking account of the fact that single person households often need the physical capacity to accommodate more than one person. Bedfordshire County Council forecasts for household increase in the period 1991-2006 estimate that 29.1% of that growth will be lone parent households and 47.2% will be one person households. 29% of the one person households will be in the single elderly category. The Borough Council will therefore expect all new developments to provide a reasonable mix and range of house types to reflect the needs of the community particularly in the rural area.

POLICY H32

The Borough Council will expect the mix and range of housing types and sizes to reflect the needs of the community particularly those who require smaller homes.

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

5.74   The Borough wide housing survey found that 12% of households had special needs. Of these the majority were in the categories of frail elderly or physically disabled and 60.7% of the total were in owner occupation. Given that disability affects most people at sometime in their lives and that the number of people in the most susceptible elderly group is increasing it is important that the stock of housing meets these needs. This can be done by providing housing which takes

account of varying levels of mobility and the need to be able to visit friends and relatives. Part M of the Buildings Regulations contains provisions to enable disabled people to visit new dwellings and to use the principal storey.

5.75   The Borough Council has prepared standards for mobility housing which have been adopted as supplementary planning guidance. The Borough Council will seek a percentage of new housing to meet the standards, which will be assessed by reference to up to date survey information. At the date of adoption of this Plan the general guideline figure is assessed at 10%. Sites on which mobility housing is provided should be well located in terms of shops, services and public transport.

POLICY H34

To increase the choice of housing available to disabled people the Borough Council will seek to negotiate agreement with developers to construct a proportion of mobility housing on suitable sites. Such units should be spread throughout the areas of development particularly where there is convenient access to shops, services and public transport.

OTHER HOUSING NEEDS

GYPSY SITES

5.76   On the basis of current information and in view of the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1994 the Council does not itself propose to provide or support the provision of further publicly funded gypsy sites. Applications from private individuals will be assessed on the basis of policy H35.

POLICY H35

Proposals for the establishment of gypsy sites will be determined on the basis of the following considerations:

i) the proximity of the site to local services and facilities;

ii) the impact on the character of open countryside and the amenity of adjoining uses;

iii) the need to retain high-quality agricultural land; and,

iv) the need to preserve sites of archaeological and wildlife importance.

ACCOMMODATION FOR TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

5.77   The main requirement of travelling show people is for 'winter quarters' which are the bases to which they return when summer fairs end. The function of the sites is to provide winter accommodation and also space for the storage and maintenance of equipment.

5.78   For some years accommodation has been provided for the Thurston's fairground in Kempston. The Council considers that there is no need for further accommodation at the present time

~~POLICY H36~~
~~The Borough Council will not allow the development of~~
~~additional winter quarters unless:~~

~~i) there is a proven need; and,~~

~~ii) there would be no adverse impact on the character and~~
~~amenity of surrounding area.~~

MOBILE HOMES

5.79 Mobile homes can make a contribution to the provision
of low-cost housing. A number of mobile home parks
already operate in the Borough. Should further parks be
required, especially in the rural area, applications will be
considered on the same basis as all other applications
for new housing.

POLICY H37

Planning permission will only be granted for residential
caravans and mobile homes on sites where built residential
development would be permitted.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

5.80 The pattern of development, the size and appearance
of dwellings and garages, the extent and maturity of
gardens and their features – such as trees, hedges, walls
and fences, natural flora and fauna – will together, help
to determine the character of an area. The character of
many of the older areas of the Borough has been
changing as a result of redevelopment or the conversion
of family dwellings into flats or into accommodation
suitable for particular groups such as the elderly or
handicapped; the buildings are also often extended.
Additionally residential garden land has also been under
pressure for development. The following policy provides
the basis upon which planning applications involving
existing residential buildings or curtilages will be
considered. The key factors to be taken into account
are amenity, access and design.

POLICY H38

The subdivision and/or extension and conversion of
residential properties into flats and multiple paying
accommodation or special needs housing or redevelopment
and development of garden land will be permitted where:

Amenity
i) there is no loss of privacy for local residents resulting
from overlooking, noise nuisance, accesses or parking
arrangements;

ii) there is no harm to the existing character of the area;

iii) the garden/amenity area is sufficient to maintain the
character of the area and provides adequate separation
from surrounding uses or buildings;

iv) parking provision (where deemed necessary) does no
harm to the character, appearance and amenity of the area;

Access
v) satisfactory access and car parking can be achieved;

Design
vi) the form, design and facing materials of any new
building complements the character of the main building
and any others nearby; and

vii) the proposal includes measures to minimise the impact
of the new development (eg. by incorporating landscaped
buffer strips on the plot boundaries, by locating bin storage
and drying areas to the rear and by limiting the extent
of hard surfaced areas).

5.87 For the avoidance of doubt, a clear distinction is
recognised between extensions and annexes to existing
dwellings, and the creation of new separate dwellings.
An extension/annex will be physically and functionally
part of the parent dwelling and will usually be
acceptable, subject to design and space standards.
A separate dwelling, even if it is to physically abut an
existing dwelling will be treated as such and not as an
extension. Some larger gardens contain buildings such
as coach-houses. Proposals for their conversion into
separate dwellings will be subject to the same criteria
as that for new build.

5.88 It is important that in addition to protecting the character
of residential areas, the dwelling stock itself is not
eroded by inappropriate changes of use which could
lead to the loss of valuable residential accommodation.
The existing dwelling stock should therefore be
maintained except where there is a clear need to
provide for community facilities such as doctors, dentists,
children's day care facilities and meeting places.

POLICY H39

Proposals leading to a loss of residential accommodation
will only be permitted where:

i) a residential building is incapable of offering a satisfactory
standard of accommodation;

ii) where alternative uses would provide an overriding
benefit to the community and such use would have no
adverse impact on the surrounding environment.

BEDFORD BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN
OCTOBER 2002

EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM POLICIES

6 / EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM

INTRODUCTION

6.1   As the County Town, Bedford is an important administrative centre for both public and private organisations and a regional base for professional, retail and cultural services. It is home to technological and research enterprises as well as a diverse range of industrial sectors including engineering, food and drink, health care and distribution. It is an important focus for economic and employment growth in the county.

6.2   The Borough Council is committed to supporting the local economy. The aim of the Borough Council as adopted in 1995 states 'Working in partnership with our community we aim to create and sustain across the whole of Bedford Borough an environment which stimulates prosperity and is conducive to social cohesion and a good quality of life for all'. The Council's new objectives place an increased emphasis on economic development and regeneration of the Borough and are underpinned by the ethos of community development and partnership working.

6.3   The Local Plan is one element of the Borough's strategy to enhance the economic prospects of Bedford, to attract investment and to create a good environment for jobs. As such it dovetails with the Borough's Economic Development Strategy which identifies the key actions for the Council and other bodies with which it works in partnership, to ensure continued prosperity for the town and its residents.

6.4   The Local Plan is also concerned with ensuring that the Borough can offer a range of sites in terms of type and size which will meet the needs of industry, in locations well related to residential areas and existing public transport networks which provide the potential for a reduction in travel to work trips. The Structure Plan 2011 encourages this approach.

6.5   The consideration of planning policies to promote and guide tourism development in the Borough begins at para 6.58 below.

KEY ISSUES

6.6   This chapter addresses the following key issues:

1 The value of Bedford developing its role as the County Town maximising its function as a key employment and service centre to its hinterland, and capitalising on proposed improvements to the strategic road network.

2 The continuing reduction in the local employment base which forces greater reliance upon employment opportunities elsewhere, notably London, so acting against the interests of achieving improved levels of environmental sustainability.

3 In the context of Bedfordshire, levels of unemployment in some areas of the Borough which are considered unacceptable.

4 The decline of the traditional employment opportunities in the urban area and the need for reinvestment in order to maintain a range of opportunities and a balanced land use mix.

5 The need to maintain a healthy rural economy.

6 The need to ensure that the reuse of Thurleigh Airfield contributes significantly to the provision of employment opportunities.

STRATEGIC & LOCAL CONTEXT

6.7.   The Structure Plan 2011 seeks to move the weight of new housing development to the north of the County and the allocations for Bedford Borough are as a result greater than would be implied by 'natural growth'. In addition there were 4,056 people registered as unemployed in the Borough in October 1996 (above the County average) and over recent years the rate of job creation has not kept pace with job losses from firms like George Fischer, Eatons, Texas Instruments and Meltis. Overall the thinking behind the Structure Plan is that the existing level of employment land provision in the county is broadly sufficient to meet the needs to 2011. However the mix, quality and location of existing provision needs to be appraised by the local planning authorities against the changing demands of industry and local employment needs.

6.8   Embodied in the Structure Plan is a strategy to encourage the County and its major towns to become more sustainable. This implies a reduction in the number and length of trips particularly by road and thus the creation of increasingly self-sufficient communities. In Bedford 22.4% of the local workforce commuted out of the Borough to work (1991 census), compared with 17.4% ten years earlier. This may indicate that Bedford is tending to become more of a dormitory community. From 1991 the Structure Plan proposes that there should be accommodation for an additional 11,700 dwellings in the Borough by the year 2006. Furthermore, given the burden of additional housing development requirements in the north of the County, it is essential to ensure a reasonable balance between employment and housing.

6.9   Account should be taken of the need to reduce high levels of local unemployment which have been compounded by recent job losses at major employers and the need to broaden the local employment base. With the completion of the Southern Bypass Bedford needs to be in a good position to attract new investment. In short, the Local Plan needs to contain planning policies that encourage investment and job creation and ensure that the supply of land is not an obstacle to further economic development.

EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY

6.10 The Council must ensure that sufficient land is available to meet the needs of new and expanding firms, and firms wishing to relocate, enabling full advantage to be taken of the opportunities which Bedford offers and to provide job opportunities for new households to be created during the plan period and beyond.

6.11 The monitoring of employment land supply over recent years reveals that between 4 and 5 hectares of land have been developed for business purposes on average each year, but that at the same time 3 to 4 hectares of existing employment land have been lost to other uses notably housing and retail warehousing. Whilst this may represent the partial restructuring of the local economy, it does demonstrate that overall little real progress has been made in improving the scope for increased employment opportunities. In addition, of the land with outstanding planning permission in January 1996, approximately a quarter comprised the Priory Business Park. Since the first of January 1995 28% of the outstanding employment permissions has been lost to non-business uses, and none of the sites designated by virtue of the 1993 Local Plan have been developed. The Norse Road Appeal decision in August 1996 accounts for a significant part of this loss. The Borough undertakes annual surveys of the supply of employment land and the results of the most recent survey is shown in Table E1.

Table E1
Employment Land Supply

Bedford Borough Employment Land Monitoring	Position as at 1st January 1997
	Hectares
Completions since 1 Jan 1988 (net)	6.0
Sites with planning permission as at 1 Jan 1997 (net)#	42.0
Adopted Local Plan allocations to 1996 (net)	6.4
Current supply	**54.40ha**

(# This includes changes of use on brownfield sites, redevelopment of existing employment sites and some residual land on large industrial/business parks)

6.12 Whilst the supply of employment land is perhaps theoretically sufficient to meet a continuation of such take-up rates during the plan period, this rate is insufficient to generate enough local jobs over the plan period for a growing population.

6.13 Bedford needs to rapidly expand its job opportunities. Investment decisions made by business are influenced by a wide range of factors, but the fact that the Borough has not performed as well as Milton Keynes or Northampton indicates that local factors are at work. Some of these are amenable to change and some of these in turn are land use related. It is clear that a quantitative analysis fails to consider the needs of the market in qualitative terms or the need for Bedford to establish a competitive edge in promoting its local economy.

6.14 The town has much to offer as a new employment location. It can provide a high quality of life, in a clean and attractive environment and it has a skilled and adaptable workforce. Bedford is positioned between the A1 and M1 and the opening of the Southern Bypass together with greater certainty that other key links in the strategic network will be built, should dispel the image of Bedford as being locationally disadvantaged. These events mark an important opportunity to promote economic growth and increased signs of activity are apparent.

6.14a This opportunity is also reflected and promoted by the Borough's location within the Oxford to Cambridge ARC. The ARC is an important initiative that builds on the strength of the local knowledge based business cluster and locates Bedford Borough within a high profile corridor of growth associated with the centres of excellence at Oxford and Cambridge. As the ARC initiative gains momentum it has the potential to significantly shape the employment opportunities in the Borough.

6.15 To capitalise on this situation, the Borough must ensure that the range of sites available for new investment is both attractive and competitive in the wider regional context. Bedford as the main centre in the north of the county has the responsibility and the advantage of acting as a focus of growth over an area greater than the Borough.

6.16 In this context and in the light of representations made at the consultation draft stage, the Borough Council has reviewed employment land availability, and now makes proposals to designate 80 hectares which includes land that in the opinion of the Council represents the most attractive sites for a range of employment purposes in order to ensure that economic growth is encouraged and not fettered. The figure given for each site area is a net developable figure and provides an indicative figure, prior to detailed site assessments and layouts being produced.

POLICY E1

The Borough Council identifies approximately 80 hectares of additional employment land (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) on the Proposals Map to foster local economic growth and provide for a range and variety of sites for economic development and will seek to ensure that such land is brought actively to the market.

6.17 The allocation of employment land for the purposes defined in classes B1, B2, B8 of the Use Classes Order, is made taking into account all the above matters and the future loss of employment land as anticipated by this Local Plan. Allocation in itself does not create jobs and the Borough Council looks to landowners and developers to take the necessary positive steps to bring sites forward for development. In order to prevent allocated employment sites falling to more commercially attractive uses (such as housing) the Borough Council will normally refuse applications for development of them outside the B1, B2, B8 range. This will ensure that both the quantity and quality of available new employment sites is maintained for the duration of the plan and complements Policy E12 relating to the loss of existing employment sites.

6.17a   The Council will continue to monitor employment floorspace and produce a yearly position statement. This process will involve monitoring the local plan allocations set out in Table E2. The absence of clear action may indicate an oversupply that would need to be adjusted and the Council may consider de-allocating selected sites in due course. In such circumstances, alternative uses will not necessarily involve built development.

6.18   The identification of employment development sites accords with the development strategy described in Chapter 2 of this Local Plan The proposals listed in Table E2 should be regarded in the context of other policies of this Local Plan and specifically policies E2 to E11 which deal with the nature of development of individual sites and policy E16 which deals with the provision of accommodation for small businesses.

Table E2
Employment Sites

In and adjoining urban areas	Net developable area in hectares
Land south of Cambridge Road	10.88
Land West of A6 at Elstow	*0
Land west of B530	3.40
Land east of B530	1.36
Land west of Kempston	2.00
Land north of Bromham Road (Cut Throat Lane)	4.00
Shortstown	***0
Sub total	**21.64**

South West Bedford Strategic Corridor	
Marsh Leys Farm	31.00
Elstow Storage Depot	**11.00
Land at former Elstow Brickworks	**2.00
Land at former Coronation Brickworks	**8.00
Land south of Fields Road, Wootton	9.00
Land west of Broadmead Road, Stewartby	2.40
Sub total	**63.40**

Other areas	
Luton Road, Wilstead	0.44
Total	**85.48**

* Already counted in previous Local Plan allocation.
** Nominal figure subject to consideration as part of the proposed development brief
*** Land may also be available as part of the mixed use development at Shortstown – amount to be determined in revised development brief.

6.19   In much the same way as sites are dealt with in the Housing chapter, the designation of additional employment land is on the basis of the net developable area of each site. The Borough Council has made allowance for known site constraints and requirements for worthwhile landscaping not least to help ensure that new industrial and commercial development can make a positive contribution to environmental standards and the quality of design. A number of the sites designated for employment development are highly prominent and are at the main road and rail entrances to the urban area. As such the quality achieved in their development will create a strong initial impression. Thus consideration will

be given to the height, massing and orientation of proposed buildings, their disposition within the site and in relation to neighbouring property and the public highway, the quality and reflective nature of materials, and the disposition and strength of internal and peripheral landscaping. These are matters of urban design and in this regard reference should be made to the Built Environment chapter.

6.20   At the same time as encouraging employment investment in relation to transport corridors there is a need to promote a more sustainable pattern of development (for example mixed use developments) and to protect existing employment in areas which are well related to residential areas, and overall to provide the opportunity to reduce travel to work journeys and make further use of public transport.

PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT SITES

6.21   To ensure that the sites listed in Table E2 and shown on the Proposals Map are developed in accordance with the strategy and in a manner sensitive to their setting, the Borough Council has formulated a policy in relation to each proposal. These establish the key principles against which any subsequent planning applications will be considered, in addition to relevant policies contained elsewhere in this plan and other material considerations. Constraints exist on many of the sites arising from archaeological concerns, flood risk, access and other infrastructural criteria. These will be addressed in development briefs and/or at the planning application stage. Where necessary and appropriate the Borough Council will seek to enter into legal agreements in order to secure the provisions of these policies and other matters.

6.22   The development of business premises in recent years has almost exclusively been as a direct response to a specific tenant/occupier requirement and there has been little if any speculative development. Whilst this is a reflection of current market conditions, the position will change and the Borough Council would wish to encourage investment across the range of unit types and sizes in order to ensure an adequate qualitative supply of premises for local businesses and those that might be attracted to the area. The scope for particular sites to provide a range of units will vary and as planning applications are submitted in relation to designated sites such considerations will be examined and as appropriate taken into account.

SITES IN AND ADJOINING THE URBAN AREA

6.23   In accordance with the Borough Strategy allocations are made first in relation to the urban area and adjoining sites with a particular emphasis on the strategic accessibility afforded by the Southern Bypass. The employment potential of 'opportunity sites' should also be taken into account (see Policy S2 and Appendix D) in this regard as should the value of existing employment sites within Bedford/Kempston in meeting strategic needs and local requirements.

6.24 The development of land south of Cambridge Road was discussed at the last Local Plan Inquiry and the Inspector recommended that it be allocated if necessary to create an adequate supply of employment land in the context of targets set by the then Structure Plan. In these circumstances and because the Borough Council is concerned that economic investment should not be restrained, it is suggested that this site could be released for development immediately. The opening of the Southern Bypass has raised the profile of this site, and the need for high quality development at this important Gateway site is now emphasised by its increased visual prominence.

POLICY E2

Land south of Cambridge Road as shown on the Proposals Map shall be developed for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. Key principles of development include:

i) the design, height, and orientation of buildings and the choice of materials and the extent and strength of internal and peripheral landscaping shall be appropriate to this prominent gateway site;

ii) vehicular access should be provided from both the roundabout at the junction with the A600/A421 slip road and at the eastern part of Cambridge Road, to the satisfaction of the Highways Agency and the highways authority, including any necessary off-site improvements as required;

iii) extensive planting to protect the residential amenity of properties in Cambridge Road and Harrowden Road, and to contribute to the mitigation of the visual impact of the proposed development; and,

iv) the provision of cycleways/footpaths linking with the urban area in a safe and convenient manner including satisfactory provision for pedestrians/cyclists to cross the A600.

v) progress the closure of Cambridge Road to normal through traffic within the timescale of the development of the Cambridge Road employment site, subject to the requirements of the highway authority for maintaining a public transport route and both cycle and pedestrian movement here, and provision of a turning head for service vehicles;

vi) contribution to the provision of public transport facilities and services to encourage more sustainable journey patterns.

Fig 14. Land south of Cambridge Road
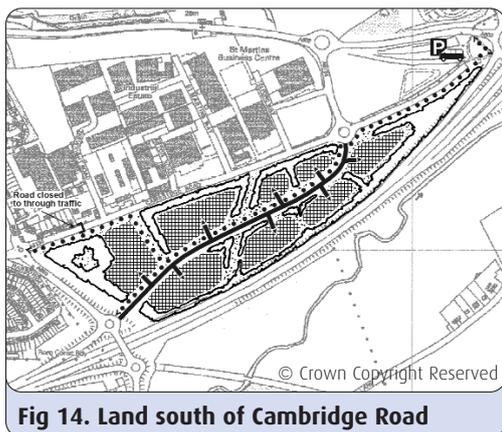
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6.25 Land west of Elstow Bypass was allocated in the 1993 Borough Local Plan. Only a small part of this site remains to be developed. It lies beside key road and rail approaches to Bedford and this, by virtue of Policies BE30, BE31, BE32, BE34 and NE20, will be a material consideration in the determination of any further applications. The site is also within the Marston Vale Strategy Area and the Forest of Marston Vale and Policies S5 and NE21 will apply.

POLICY E3

Land west of Elstow Bypass as shown on the Proposals Map shall be developed for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 and to provide a park and ride facility. Key principles of development include:

i) the design, height, and orientation of buildings and the choice of materials and the extent and strength of internal and peripheral landscaping shall be appropriate to this prominent gateway site;

ii) the provision of footpaths and cycleways which link in a safe and convenient manner with adjacent residential and employment areas as part of an integrated network covering E3, E4 & E5, the Interchange Retail Park, rail access and the wider urban network;

iii) vehicular access to the employment area to be provided by a single access to the A6/Elstow Bypass and include any necessary on or off site improvement works as required by the Highway Authority in connection with both the employment and park and ride uses;

iv) existing wildlife features including the hedge on the eastern periphery and the copse to the north are to be retained and enhanced for nature conservation purposes;

v) contribution to the provision of public transport facilities and services to encourage more sustainable journey patterns, including making provision for a park and ride facility of 2 hectares to be dedicated to the highway authority; and,

vi) provision towards the implementation of the Marston Vale Strategy and the Forest of Marston Vale.

6.26 Two smaller sites on the other side of the railway in a key gateway location close to the Southern Bypass are also allocated for employment purposes. Planning permission has been granted by the County Council for a tidy tip in the northern section of this site E5 and this use will be encouraged.

POLICY E4

Land west of B530 as shown on the Proposals Map shall be developed for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. Key principles of development include:

i) the design, height, and orientation of buildings and the choice of materials and the extent and strength of internal and peripheral landscaping shall be appropriate to this prominent gateway site;

ii) vehicular access to be provided from the B530 together with any necessary off-site improvements as required by the highway authority;

iii) the provision footpaths and cycleways which link in a safe and convenient manner with adjacent residential and employment areas as part of an integrated network covering

~~sites E3, E4, E5, the Interchange Retail Park, rail access and the wider urban network;~~

~~iv) provision towards the implementation of the Marston Vale Strategy and the Forest of Marston Vale; and~~

~~v) contribution to the provision of public transport facilities and services to encourage more sustainable journey patterns.~~

POLICY E5

Land east of B530 as shown on the Proposals Map shall be developed for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. Key principles of development include:

i) the design, height, and orientation of buildings and the choice of materials and the extent and strength of internal and peripheral landscaping shall be appropriate to this prominent gateway site;

ii) vehicular access to be provided from a fifth arm to the A421/B530 roundabout together with any necessary off-site improvements as required by the highway authority;

iii) the retention of existing trees;

iv) the provision footpaths and cycleways which link in a safe and convenient manner with adjacent residential and employment areas as part of an integrated network covering sites E3, E4 & E5, the Interchange Retail Park, rail access and the wider urban network;

v) provision towards the implementation of the Marston Vale Strategy and the Forest of Marston Vale; and,

vi) contribution to the provision of public transport facilities and services to encourage more sustainable journey patterns.
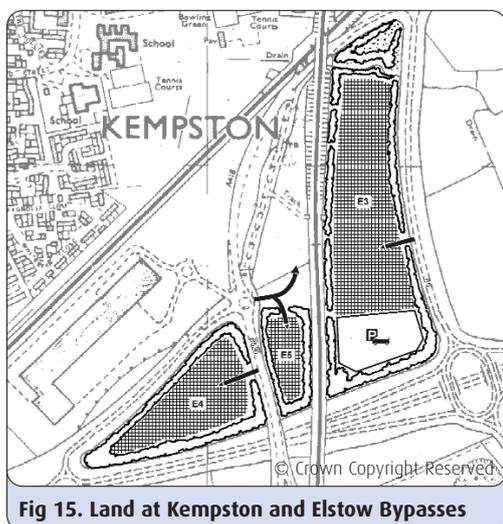
Fig 15. Land at Kempston and Elstow Bypasses

6.28   In addition to these sites in and adjoining the urban area, development proposals affecting land west of Kempston (see Policy H7) and land north of Bromham Road (Cut Throat Lane) (see Policy H8) have an employment component.

EMPLOYMENT SITES IN THE SOUTH WEST BEDFORD CORRIDOR

6.29   The designation of employment sites in the strategic corridor as defined by the Structure Plan is required to expand the qualitative range of prime sites available to facilitate economic growth, to balance with housing allocations and to compensate for the long term down sizing of traditional local industries like brick making.

6.30   Land at the proposed intersection of the Southern and Western Bypasses known as Marsh Leys Farm is allocated in this plan since it provides an immediate high profile and quality site in a strategic location that is best placed to attract inward investment and help provide sustainable development opportunities balancing the areas of housing development close by. A business development here on the south western side of Bedford provides an opportunity to balance and extend the high quality provision afforded by Priory Business Park on the eastern side of the town, and provide an attractive landscaped setting for the location of further B1, B2, B8 businesses, at this strategic gateway location.

~~POLICY E7~~

~~Land at Marsh Leys Farm as shown on the Proposals Map shall be developed for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 in a highly landscaped setting and incorporate the following key principles:~~

~~i) the design, height, and orientation of buildings, the choice of materials, and the extent and strength of internal, peripheral and off-site landscaping shall be appropriate to this prominent gateway site and shall take account of both the need to ensure a clear visual separation from the urban area of Kempston and future road proposals;~~

~~ii) vehicular access to be provided from the A421 together with any necessary off-site improvements as required by the highway authority. Any and all land required in this connection shall be dedicated to the highway authority on/prior to the grant of any planning permission. Prior to the occupation of the site for any non agricultural purpose, the developer shall commit sufficient resources to the highway authority to facilitate the dual carriageway improvement of the A421;~~

~~iii) the provision of footpaths and cycleways linking with the urban and other modal forms of transport in a safe and convenient manner and to improve access to the countryside;~~

~~iv) existing wildlife features including hedges, balancing ponds etc, shall be retained and enhanced for nature conservation purposes;~~

~~v) provision towards the implementation of the Marston Vale Strategy and the Forest of Marston Vale within the site;~~

~~vi) the site can accommodate a range, mix and distribution of development in terms of Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 consistent with other policies and criteria; and~~

~~vii) provision of enhanced access to the existing adjacent rail services.~~

Fig 16. Land at Marsh Leys Farm

6.31 Elstow Storage Depot is strategically located, under-used and part derelict. It is viewed by Innogy, the landowner, as having major long term development potential. Within the South West Bedford Strategic Corridor, the Structure Plan 2011 identifies a strategic housing allocation focused on this site which straddles the borough boundary with Mid Beds District. It is envisaged that development will be in the form of a new settlement comprising an appropriate balance of land uses including employment. In this connection policies BE3 and H14 should be referred to. A nominal figure of 11 hectares of new employment land has been given in Table E2 for the purposes of this Local Plan.

6.33 Close to the depot are the sites of two former brickworks long since demolished which need to be taken into account in the context of the new settlement. Whilst their locations would suggest an employment re-use, the nature of this and the way that they relate to

the requirements of the existing minerals permissions, possible future landfill sites, the Elstow Storage Depot and emerging East -West Rail proposals need to be clarified before new permanent uses are permitted.

POLICY E9

The former site of the Coronation Brickworks shall be developed for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 in accordance with the proposed Elstow Storage Depot development brief.

POLICY E10

The former site of the Elstow Brickworks shall be developed for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 in accordance with the proposed Elstow Storage Depot development brief.

6.34 Other employment sites are proposed in relation to housing development proposals designated at Stewartby (see Policy H13 and Stewartby Inset to Proposals Map) and at land south of Fields Road Wootton (see Policy H11 and Wootton Inset). In the case of land south of Fields Road Wootton, leisure based employment uses may also be appropriate.

OTHER AREAS

6.35 Beyond the urban area and outside the Strategic the only major opportunity for employment development is at Thurleigh Airfield (see Fig 17). Following extensive public consultation the development brief for this site was adopted in July 1995 and substantial progress has already been made towards its implementation. Elsewhere a small site suitable for business use has been identified at Wilstead and this is shown on the inset to the Proposals Map.
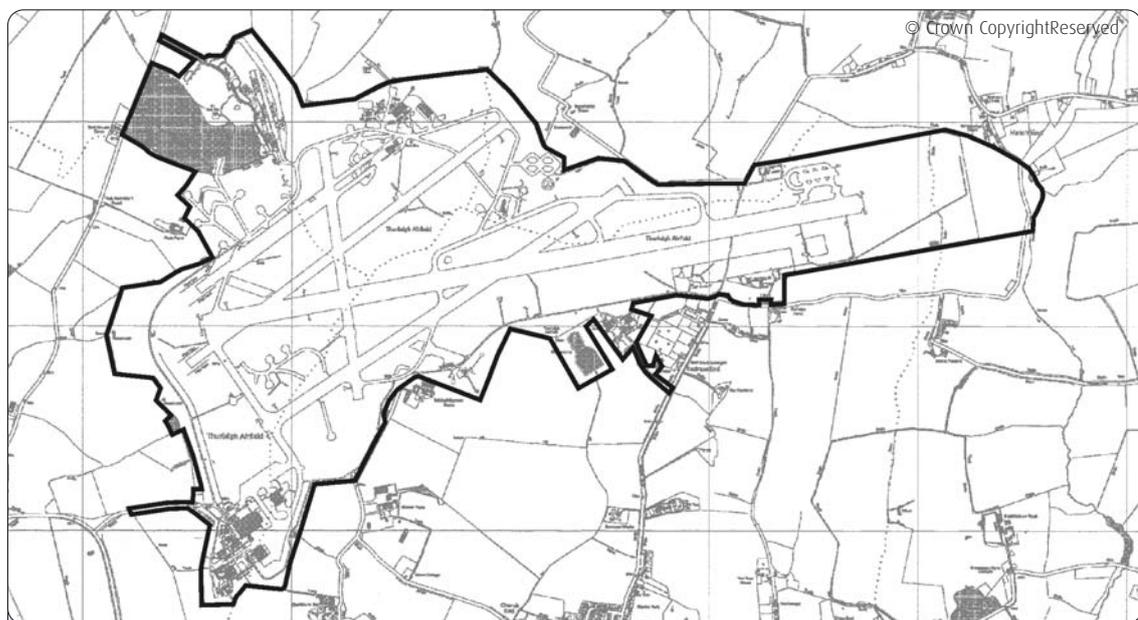
Fig 17. Extract from Thurleigh Airfield Development Brief

POLICY E11

The Council will continue to support the re-use and development of Thurleigh Airfield in accordance with the adopted development brief and all proposals will be determined in the light of the following considerations:

i) the character and environment of the surrounding area are to be safeguarded;

ii) within areas identified in the brief, employment creating uses will be encouraged, particularly activities which can utilise the skills of the workforce and facilities currently available;

iii) existing floorspace should be utilised or demolished before replacement or new additional floorspace is created in order to avoid dereliction;

iv) a high quality employment area is to be created, by the appropriate use of size, form, massing, materials, location and design of development and associated landscaping.

v) the two main runways and the associated taxiways, together with other safeguarded areas should be reserved undeveloped to retain the aviation option during the plan period;

vi) any proposal involving flying or engine testing will be assessed in relation to i) above; the hours of operation, the volume of aircraft movements and any night flying will be tightly controlled; major passenger services including those associated with scheduled and inclusive tour services will not be acceptable, although it is accepted that small numbers of passengers will be included with business related general aviation; and a full community and environmental evaluation shall be carried out to assess the scale and nature of any benefits arising;

vii) vehicular access shall be obtained only from the A6 via the C26 and shall incorporate off-site improvements and provisions as required by the highway authorities. Measures shall also be included to safeguard nearby settlements from additional traffic nuisance, to make provision for public transport, and the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes. All access to the Airfield (other than emergency and authorised vehicles) shall be via the existing main gate;

viii) a satisfactory and comprehensive form of development is to be secured, and any fragmentation of the site and piecemeal development will strongly be opposed; and,

ix) planning applications made in relation to the use or development of the airfield shall be in a form facilitating reasonable control to be exercised over such matters as the provision for site maintenance, security and other matters referred to in the adopted brief.

6.36   Thurleigh Airfield is no longer in use by the Ministry of Defence and has been sold. In anticipation of a new use needing to be found for the Airfield the Council has prepared and adopted a planning brief for the site. The brief establishes a number of criteria based on this policy. It encourages selected employment use for up to 2,000 employees and seeks to retain an aviation option up to the year 2015. Acceptable aviation activities could include aircraft maintenance, air freight, business related general aviation and pilot training with aircraft movements limited to 22,000 movements a year. Proposals for night flying will be considered having full regard for environmental implications. Where

appropriate the Council will expect a noise budget to accompany any planning application. Scheduled and inclusive tour services are not considered an acceptable use.

EXISTING EMPLOYMENT AREAS

6.37   The major employment areas in the town have been identified on the Proposals Map. These are areas where the dominant established use is employment (the B1, B2, B8 range) or sites which have outstanding planning permissions for business uses. It is these sites which have provided for the majority of local employment and many new jobs in recent years. A failure to maintain this stock would erode the range of sites and premises available as such sites can provide the opportunity for reinvestment in small units either by rationalisation and sub-division or by renewal, thereby adding to the range of accommodation available to local businesses.

6.38   In addition, the maintenance of a stock of employment land within the urban area makes an important contribution to both the well being and the vitality of Bedford and Kempston, offering the choice to live and work in the same area and the potential for reducing long distance commuting. The loss of such sites would therefore diminish the asset base of the town, adversely affect the balance of mixed land uses and offset the benefit of the additional allocations made by virtue of Policy E1.

6.39   The importance of sites which have planning permission for B1, B2, and B8 uses is that they provide a stock of land for future business investment. Their protection is important in seeking to provide a broad range of employment sites in quality locations. Reference should be made to policies H24 and E19 which also refer to the potential loss of employment floorspace.

6.40   For these reasons the Borough Council is concerned to maintain the presumption against the loss of further employment land. The Borough Council recognises however that the nature and location of some of the oldest employment areas may give rise to problems of amenity, and may in exceptional circumstances warrant a relaxation of this policy. In such cases the Council will need to be satisfied that a change of use and/or relocation is the only way to resolve the problem, and that a specific community benefit can be achieved as a direct result. It is not intended that policy E12 should frustrate the plans of substantial existing employers wishing to relocate within Bedford.

6.41   In cases where the redevelopment of existing sites takes place for new employment uses the Council will seek to achieve specific environmental benefits.

POLICY E12

~~The Borough Council will not grant planning permission for uses outside the B1, B2, B8 range on existing employment sites or on sites with existing planning permission for such uses, except in exceptional circumstances and where specific community and environmental benefits can be demonstrated and achieved.~~

POLICY E13

Where redevelopment of an existing employment site for new employment uses takes place the Council will seek to ensure that any proposal is of an acceptable standard. The Council may seek improvements in the following:

i) design and layout of buildings including internal layout and relationship to adjoining uses;

ii) improved access arrangements including provision for walking, cycling and public transport;

iii) ensuring that all parking requirements can be met on site;

iv) improved landscaping and screening.

6.42   The use of legal agreements may be necessary and appropriate to secure such benefits.

OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

6.43   In its role as an administrative centre, Bedford provides a range of office jobs. Office development includes High Street type offices under Class A2 known as financial and professional services, in-town speculative offices and B1 type offices found in industrial estates and business parks. The balance of these office types is important in its influence on the vitality of the town centre and travel to work patterns.

6.44   Town centre offices bring people into the town centre giving support to shops and contributing to the vitality of the town. The balance of A2 type offices within the primary shopping frontage must however be controlled and this aspect is considered in more detail in the Shopping chapter of the plan. In the primary shopping area of the town centre any additional non A2 office provision should be a part of a mixed use scheme rather than in the form of free standing offices. The Borough Council will therefore encourage mixed use schemes in the primary shopping area but resist applications for future free standing schemes. This issue is covered by Policy TC9.

THE NEEDS OF SMALL BUSINESSES

6.45   Development trends in recent years have shown both the loss to residential use of many small workshops and other premises suitable for businesses, and the investment in business floorspace in the form of large units on industrial estates. This has the effect of reducing the provision of units suitable for small and start-up businesses. The Borough Council is concerned to ease this situation by defining its policy for working from home and for small businesses in residential areas, and by increasing the provision and availability of small business space.

6.46   Start-up businesses often require small low cost premises etc. There is a need within the policy framework to create a seedbed for new business initiatives to flourish. Many small businesses are started by people working in their own homes and technological innovations are likely to increase the incidence of homeworking. This does not necessarily require planning

permission. Permission is not normally needed where the use of part of a dwelling-house for business purposes does not change the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling. Those considering working from home are advised to seek the advice of the local planning authority at an early stage.

6.47   Once the business use of the property ceases to be ancillary to its use as a single dwelling because the business has grown and the use intensified, a material change of use is likely to have taken place for which planning permission will be required. The Borough Council will ensure that such uses are effectively controlled and will be prepared to refuse planning permission or to exercise enforcement powers where appropriate. In these circumstances it may be necessary for the business to move to more suitable premises.

6.48   In new housing developments there is the opportunity to introduce house types specifically designed to allow for working from home.

POLICY E14

Within new residential development, the Borough Council will encourage the provision of dwellings suitable for working from home.

POLICY E15

Planning permission will be granted for compatible business/employment uses in residential areas except where:

i) the proposal would have an adverse effect on residential amenity;

ii) the scale and nature of the proposed employment use of the site would be incompatible with the residential nature of the area;

iii) the activity would create noise, vibration or air quality incompatible with the residential environment;

iv) there would be excessive traffic generated or inadequate access and parking provision; or

v) the proposal relates to the complete use of a single dwelling and the loss of residential accommodation would be contrary to Policy H39

6.49   In most cases planning permission for business uses in residential areas will be conditional and will seek to control such matters as the intensification of the activity, hours of operation etc, in the interests of avoiding neighbour nuisance and protecting residential amenity. In order to encourage enterprise whilst providing a mechanism to monitor and control the impact of business activities, it may be appropriate to grant temporary consents for the establishment of new business uses. The Council will seek to ensure that as businesses outgrow a residential location, a range of alternative premises is available for them to move in to. With this and other demands in mind, the Borough Council is promoting mixed use developments (see also Policies BE3 & BE4), and the introduction of small scale employment sites.

6.50   The creation of job opportunities in tandem with substantial housing schemes in the form of mixed development is important in terms of both promoting local economic growth and achieving more sustainable forms of development. The Borough Council's response to this is in a number of occasions to include employment requirements within major housing allocations.

6.50a   A range of employment provision is necessary to meet the needs of the local economy. The provision of premises suitable for small scale business will be encouraged, as these can form the seedbed of a buoyant economy. Where it considers affordability to be a material planning concern, the Council may seek the ability of initial occupants of such accommodation to pass on any negotiated low cost provision to subsequent occupiers by means of a planning condition or planning obligations.

POLICY E16
The Borough Council will encourage and, where it considers appropriate, negotiate for the provision of premises suitable to accommodate small business as part of the development of sites allocated for employment use.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE RURAL AREA

6.51   The Government's advice in its recent White Paper and planning guidance is based on ensuring both rural prosperity and the protection and enhancement of the character of the countryside. Development should both benefit economic activity and maintain and enhance the environment. The provision of jobs in the rural area is vital to the maintenance of a healthy rural economy and is important if villages are to become more self-sustaining. The range of employment activities which can take place in the rural area is expanding with the development of farm diversification, rural tourism, rural sports and recreation and tele-working. Rural businesses are to be encouraged in their efficiency and competitiveness. As this happens however, the character of the countryside and villages must be protected as environmental quality provides an economic opportunity and contributes to wealth creation.

6.52   In villages the introduction of employment can bring jobs to areas which are in danger of becoming dormitory. Major development in locations not well served by public transport or readily accessible to a local residential workforce will not be permitted. Development for employment purposes within the SPAs will be encouraged but must conform to the criteria for development within SPAs. Acceptable development is likely to be small in scale and sensitive to village character. On-site expansion will be allowed subject to criteria in the following policies.

POLICY E17
The Borough Council will grant planning permission for business/employment uses within Settlement Policy Areas where:

i) development is sensitively related to existing development and does not have an adverse impact on the form and character of the village;

ii) important open spaces and gaps are safeguarded;

iii) development is related in scale, design and building materials to existing development in the village and contributes to the sense of local identity;

iv) there is no adverse impact on residential amenity in terms of noise, vibration, smell, safety and traffic generation;

v) satisfactory vehicular access and parking provision can be achieved; and,

vi) where a proposal involves the conversion of buildings, Policy E18 will apply.

6.53   Outside of the Settlement Policy Areas the development strategy of the plan is one of restraint. However, there may be opportunities for sensitive employment development outside the villages through the re-use of existing rural buildings. It is imperative that any such developments do not have an adverse impact on the surrounding environment, and are sympathetic to the rural character of the area, respecting local building styles and materials. Policy BE28 relating to agricultural buildings may also apply.

6.54   The conversion of buildings currently in industrial or commercial use to dwellings is likely to have an adverse impact on local economic activity and therefore would not be permitted unless the residential conversion is part of a scheme for business use. Conversion of a building previously used for industrial or commercial purposes (and indeed agricultural buildings) often involves extensive alteration, and/ or the creation of a residential curtilage, which can have a harmful effect on the character of the building and on the countryside and would not be allowed.

POLICY E18
Planning permission will be permitted for the re-use or adaptation of existing buildings in the rural area for commercial, industrial, tourism and recreational uses provided:

i) the building(s) can be satisfactorily adapted or converted without materially affecting their character and architectural integrity;

ii) the proposal does not require any substantial extensions or new buildings, which in themselves would increase the impact of the site/use in the surrounding countryside;

iii) the proposal would have no adverse impact on the surrounding countryside or local communities by virtue of noise and disturbance, air pollution or traffic generation and movements;

iv) the buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction; and,

v) the scale and design of the proposal is compatible with its location.

POLICY E19
The Borough Council will resist proposals which would lead to the loss of sites used for industrial/commercial or other employment generating uses in the countryside or rural settlements unless:

i) the site use impinges substantially on residential amenity, or

ii) the site use causes significant highway or traffic problems, or

iii) there are adverse environmental effects.

6.55 Within the Borough there are a number of areas where employment uses are established in the open countryside. On such sites where the principle of employment has been established it is possible for incremental intensification of uses on the site to take place providing that the ensuing impact has no adverse influence on the rural character of the area. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that the amenity and character of the surrounding areas are protected.

POLICY E20
The Borough Council will permit additional employment uses and the expansion of existing uses on employment sites in the countryside and in rural settlements, unless the cumulative impact of the development would be unacceptable to the amenity and character of the area having regard to the impact of additional noise, air pollutants, built form and traffic generation.

6.55a The role of the Wyboston Lakes complex as a regional centre for training and leisure based activities in a parkland setting adjacent to the A1 trunk road is recognised. The Borough Council will continue to provide support to this development consistent with criteria for the impact of development in Policy BE30.

FARM DIVERSIFICATION
6.56 As part of a move towards a more sustainable economy which supports the rural areas, some employment uses within the countryside will be encouraged. It is recognised that agriculture has to evolve with changing markets and technology. Therefore diversification of farm enterprises will be encouraged as a response to changing agricultural needs where they respect the rural character of the surroundings.

POLICY E21
The Borough Council will support the diversification of farm enterprises subject to the following criteria:

i) the primary use of the farmholding is and remains agricultural

ii) the proposal retains or provides additional employment;

iii) there is no detrimental effect on the landscape, wildlife, archaeology, amenity and character of the area;

iv) access and parking provision is adequate and acceptable; and,

v) there is no permanent loss of Grade 1, 2 or 3a land;

vi) the level and type of traffic generated is compatible with the rural location and the local road network.

HORSE AND EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITIES
6.57 Keeping and riding horses can help provide new opportunities for employment in rural areas. However high standards of design and construction of necessary buildings and the use of agricultural land are required to ensure no adverse impact on the countryside. A high standard of maintenance is also essential to prevent a harmful impact on the environment.

POLICY E22
Proposals for horse related non-residential development will be permitted provided that the proposal:

i) would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside;

ii) would not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbours properties;

iii) ensures a safe and acceptable form of access;

iv) is of a high standard of design and construction (including details of stabling, tack rooms, feedrooms, fencing, manure storage and disposal); and,

v) will not cause an adverse impact on the wildlife of the area.

TOURISM

6.58 The Council actively supports and encourages tourism within the Borough. The Borough sees strong links between its role in economic development and tourism. Through its Tourism and Business Tourism Strategy it is seeking to encourage activities which provide employment and generate income in the local economy.

6.59 Bedford's main assets as a tourist centre are its strong historical associations with John Bunyan, John Howard and Glenn Miller and its attractive river and embankment which form the location for the River Festival, a major visitor attraction which takes place on alternate years. The Borough also has unique connections with the airship industry at Cardington and many picturesque villages with historical associations.

6.60 The Local Plan aims to facilitate and encourage tourism development including the improvement of existing provision for tourists while providing a vehicle for managing the impact of tourism development.

6.61 The key issues which the Local Plan must address are:

1 Balancing economic development with the environmental protection necessary to maintain the tourism resource

2 Balancing the needs of visitors and local residents.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
6.62 In general terms the Local Plan as a whole seeks to create a framework for investment in tourism through the following:

– preserving and enhancing the historic nature of the town centre;

– supporting the provision of high-quality shopping in a compact retail core;

– supporting the development of art and entertainment venues in the Borough;

– improving interpretation of the Borough's environment and buildings;

– stimulating the use of the River Great Ouse for visitors throughout the Borough;

– seeking to make the traffic system in the town centre user friendly to visitors;

– preserving the character of the rural area;

– encouraging tourism development which comes forward through the Marston Vale Strategy and Forest Plan.

6.63   Future tourist attractions should make a positive contribution to both economy and environment. Key principles will be the need to ensure that development contributes to environmental quality, respects environmental resources and takes full account of the need for visitor management.

POLICY E23

Planning permission for development which broadens and develops the tourism industry will be granted where the proposal is of overall benefit to the Borough, except where the proposal would detract unacceptably from the quality of the built and natural environment, or where it would cause unacceptable loss of amenity in terms of noise or traffic generation, or conflict with the other policies and proposals of the plan.

VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

6.64   Visitor attractions need to be supported by the necessary visitor infrastructure. This includes elements such as signposting and transport infrastructure. Signage should be well designed and rationalised to reduce visual clutter and prevent interference to highway safety. The Borough will support improvements to signposting and visitor information including the display of historic plaques. In addition there is a need to provide a coach park in Bedford to improve access to the town centre for tourists (see Policy T19).

POLICY E24

The Borough Council will support the provision of signposts and tourist information in the town centre and at points of interest in the rural area subject to criteria of design and highway safety.

VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

6.65   The availability of a range of styles and prices of accommodation helps to broaden opportunities for tourism. In addition, it is important that the type of accommodation matches the type of tourist opportunities which are available. At present the Borough lacks budget-type hotels, camping and caravan facilities, as well as four and five star hotels. These types of facilities will be encouraged in order to support the opportunities which exist to develop business tourism and short breaks. In addition, the Borough also wishes to encourage the provision of conference facilities to enhance the development of business tourism in the town.

POLICY E25

In the urban area applications which broaden the range of tourist accommodation, especially for the business tourism and short break markets, will be permitted except where the proposals would have an adverse effect on the character and amenity of the town and residential areas or would create traffic or parking problems.

RURAL TOURISM

6.66   Rural tourism can make an important contribution to rural economic activity and supports the rural labour market, but its development should not destroy the asset on which its popularity depends. The Borough has several attractive small villages which may provide scope for holiday accommodation in the rural area. Any new build accommodation should take place in villages and in the context of Policy E17. In addition, in the open countryside rural buildings may be appropriately adapted for holiday accommodation. Any such proposals will be considered against Policy E18.

6.67   Caravan sites can also provide further tourist accommodation in the rural area. There are a number of small caravan club sites (for up to five pitches) in the Borough. Larger sites require planning permission and any new sites should be sensitively sited to avoid loss of amenity or rural character. It should be noted that the storage of unoccupied caravans during the winter months on seasonal touring sites requires planning permission.

POLICY E26

Planning permission for touring caravan sites will only be permitted where:

i) the site can be easily accessed from a major highway route;

ii) the site is not visually intrusive in the landscape;

iii) the site causes no loss of character or amenity to villages or rural buildings;

iv) the proposal is accompanied by a comprehensive landscape plan; and,

v) the scale of the site is appropriate to the location.

STATIC CARAVANS AND LEISURE CHALETS

6.68   Static caravans and leisure/recreational chalets are more permanent features of the countryside and are to be treated in the same way as residential property in the countryside, therefore the normal rural restraint policies will apply.

POLICY E27

Proposals for new static caravans and leisure/recreational chalets will only be permitted in the context of the rural settlement policies.

BEDFORD BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN
OCTOBER 2002

BEDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN – 2002

SHOPPING POLICIES

7 / SHOPPING

INTRODUCTION

7.1 Shopping in some form or other is an important feature in the lives of everyone but people choose to fulfil their shopping needs in various ways. To many people shopping has become a leisure activity in itself and therefore families are prepared to travel greater distances for the 'day out' experience of town centres and out of centre regional shopping centres or retail parks which may be some distance away.

7.2 Traditionally trips to stock up with convenience goods were made frequently and more often than not by foot. The increase in car ownership has brought about a dramatic change in this pattern for many people, with weekly or even monthly food shopping trips now more likely to be the norm.

7.3 Retailers have responded to this change in practice by building larger stores with vast areas of surface level parking for the convenience of their customers. Because of the size of site required, new stores have been built away from the traditional centre on greenfield sites with few physical restrictions. However, since the publication of the revised PPG6 in July 1996, retailers have shown some flexibility in their store requirements manifested in smaller sized stores, on more constrained sites but often with greater accessibility to existing town centres, thereby relying less on the use of the car.

7.4 Until fairly recently town centres also dominated the market for comparison goods shopping, but again personal mobility has encouraged retailers to look to locations other than the traditional centre to sites where larger single level stores can be accommodated more easily in terms of cost and land availability. In some respects these stores complement the town centre as bulky items can be stored and displayed with ease and large articulated transport vehicles are kept out of the town thus reducing congestion.

7.5 However, increasing pressure from retailers to broaden the range of goods being sold in out of town stores, to include amongst other things clothes, toys and electrical goods, poses a direct threat to the traditional retail base of the town centre. It is essential that the potential detrimental impact of out of town store proposals is fully appreciated, as retail expenditure is central to the continued vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. In this way, the established town centres face competition from retail warehouses outside of such centres, rather than the two types of retailing being complementary to each other.

7.6 In order to gain a clear and up to date assessment of how the town centre is performing, the Council commissioned a 'health check' of retailing in the Borough in 1994 that was subsequently updated in 1996 and again in 2000. On the basis of these studies the consultants report that:

– Bedford town centre is currently vital and viable.

– Bedford has scope to expand its retail provision in the primary shopping area through additional comparison goods floorspace, in the form of a prestigious new scheme, and to improve its attractiveness to shoppers in order to maintain its existing levels of trade retention.

– Existing and planned out of centre food store provision is sufficient to meet the catchment population's needs. Further out of centre development could lead to an adverse impact on the existing town centre stores.

– Adequate provision has been made for retail warehousing to provide shoppers with a comprehensive range and choice of facilities. Further out of town developments would divert trade from the town centre and may undermine the prospect of securing new town centre development as well as the viability of shopping facilities in other locations.

– Although the town centre environment has been improved this must continue if Bedford is to retain and expand its retail facilities.

– The quality of the retail stock needs to improve so as to provide more suitable accommodation.

– The town needs to foster and improve its role as a provider of accommodation for specialist and high quality retailers.

– The High Street remains an important but under utilised retail frontage and measures should be taken to prevent its further decline by focussing appropriate retail development in this area. Under the terms of the sequential test it offers retail redevelopment opportunities in the primary shopping area.

7.7 The study forms a basis for both the Shopping and Town Centre chapters of this plan.

7.8 Of prime relevance to the shopping policies of the Local Plan is the revised PPG6 Town Centres and Retail Developments. This states that in drawing up development plans local planning authorities should, after considering the need for new development, adopt a sequential approach to selecting sites for new retail development. In this context the Borough Council has adopted a preferential hierarchy to be applied when considering retail developments. The first preference will be for new retail development to be located within the primary shopping area of Bedford or district centre as defined in the Plan, followed by edge of centre sites where suitable town centre sites are not available. It is important when considering development proposals within the district centre that they should not be at the expense of the primary shopping area. Outside the primary shopping area, district centre and local centres, the need for new retail development will have to be proven, and the scale of any new development would

need to be compatible with its location. In assessing applications for new retail development their likely effect on future private sector investment within the primary shopping area, district or local centres will be a material consideration.

7.9 As well as having a bearing on the retail performance of the town centre, out of town stores have an impact on the quality of the local and global environment by virtue of the trips generated and therefore the release of CO_2 emissions from vehicle exhausts. Maintaining the vitality and viability of existing centres relies on retaining and developing a wide range of attractions and amenities. Facilities which are more accessible by foot and/or public transport will help to reduce emissions, and the use of park and ride schemes will alleviate the problem of slow moving traffic creating pollution in the town centre. Linked to the desire to reduce travel is the Council's aim to provide and maintain local shopping facilities, both in district and local centres and in villages. Smaller local shops and post offices provide an important social focus as well as supporting the everyday shopping needs of local communities.

7.10 The Borough Council must therefore address this range of issues and put in place a series of robust policies which allow the Borough to react positively to current and changing retail pressures, but maintains the focus of the strategy on the development and improvement of the primary shopping area over the longer term.

KEY ISSUES

7.11 The key shopping issues are:

1 The town centre's vitality and viability and particularly that of the primary shopping area, must be protected and/or enhanced.

2 Priority must be given to attracting new retail investment to sites within the primary shopping area, before considering edge of centre sites, so as to expand and improve Bedford's retail provision for comparison goods floorspace, thus maintaining and improving the town's position in the sub-region.

3 To maintain a wide range of shopping facilities in the Borough in terms of choice and accessible locations to meet the needs of residents in the area.

4 To promote sustainable locations for new retail development, which offer a choice of access, particularly for those without the use of a private car.

5 To safeguard and strengthen local convenience shopping and service functions, in district and local centres, to meet the day to day requirements of residents.

6 To address the environmental effects of retail outlets, particularly in residential areas.

7 Safeguard and strengthen local convenience shopping in the rural area and protect and encourage village shops.

THE SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXT

7.12 In this respect, Bedford fulfils a sub-regional role. Despite pressure for out of town facilities, the town centre is still the primary source of comparison goods shopping in the Borough and additionally has an important role in the provision of convenience goods, especially for those who do not have access to or choose not to shop by car.

7.13 The town centre is however, under continuing pressure from other higher order centres such as Milton Keynes, Cambridge and Northampton which can offer shoppers a wider range of shops and goods from which to choose. With the completion of the extension to the shopping centre in Central Milton Keynes, it is likely that scope for trade diversion will be even greater.

7.14 Experience nationally has shown that new regional shopping centres can have a substantial impact over a wide area. In most regions, there is unlikely to be scope for an additional regional shopping centre without adversely affecting the vitality and viability of existing centres; hence the Borough Council is concerned at the potential effect of any new regional shopping proposals whether in Bedford or a neighbouring authority. If such proposals are brought forward, they should be through the development plan preparation process.

7.15 Whilst the continued vitality and viability of the town centre is dependant on more than just the retail sector, it is this function which underpins its economic success. Therefore in order to protect Bedford's role as a sub-regional centre, and to ensure the town centre's continued vitality and viability the following policy should be implemented:

~~**POLICY SH1**~~

~~There is no identified deficiency in the range or choice of shopping opportunities in the Bedford area so as to warrant proposals for a regional or sub-regional shopping centre. Any proposals for new regional or sub-regional shopping centres should be brought forward through the development plan process and must demonstrate that:~~

~~i) there is a deficiency of higher-order shopping centres;~~

~~ii) continued public and/or private sector investment in nearby town centres will not be jeopardised;~~

~~iii) the cumulative impact of the proposed development, together with other recently developed and permitted developments will not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any nearby centre;~~

~~iv) there is no loss of Area of Special Restraint, or important open space, habitats or countryside, or the best and most versatile agricultural land;~~

~~v) public transport can adequately serve a wide population; and,~~

~~vi) the effect on the road network and on overall car use would be acceptable.~~

RETAIL HIERARCHY

7.16   The retail hierarchy in Bedford Borough comprises the following:

– the primary shopping area within Bedford town centre

– a district centre at Saxon Centre, Kempston

– local centres consisting of a small grouping of shops within the urban area (these are listed in paragraph 7.17)

– village centres and shops

In addition to the above hierarchy the Borough is well served by a range of superstores, retail parks and retail warehouses.

7.17   The local centres referred to are illustrated on the Proposals Map. They consist of the following:

Ampthill Road, Brickhill Drive, Chiltern Avenue, Gostwick Road, London Road, North Parade-Greyfriars, Roff Avenue, Queen's Drive, Avon Drive, Castle Road, Church Lane, Ford End Road, Iddesleigh Road, Harrowden Road, Midland Road (west), Putnoe Lane, St. Mary's Street, Tavistock Street, Wendover Drive. Also Williamson Road, Springfield Centre, Orchard Street, Bedford Road and High Street/St John's Street in Kempston.

BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

7.18   Bedford currently has a vital and viable town centre which consists of a mosaic of many different uses, but underpinned by retailing activity with the provision of additional comparison and convenience goods floorspace.

7.19   It is considered that the existing hierarchy, and range of retail developments, will continue to meet the requirements for shopping in the Borough throughout the plan period. However, emphasis should still be placed on encouraging new retail developments in the primary shopping area, thus improving the range and choice of shopping facilities in Bedford. This will strengthen its role in the sub-region and improve its attractiveness to investors and the public.

7.20   The Borough Council has committed considerable resources to improving, promoting and making safer the environment of the town. (see Bedford Town Centre chapter). This investment needs to be protected, nurtured and supported by a policy framework which clearly favours new retail development in the primary shopping area within the centre.

TOWN CENTRE SHOPPING DEVELOPMENT

7.21   One of Bedford town centre's greatest assets is its compact primary shopping area. The extent of this is shown on the Proposals Map and further retail development in the town centre should seek to maintain and enhance this feature.

7.22   In recent years the Borough Council has undertaken a number of successful environmental enhancement schemes in order to improve the town centre in terms of design and accessibility. The Borough Council intends to extend this programme but considers that in order to further enhance the vitality and viability of the town a new high quality shopping development is needed.

7.23   Whilst many major retailers are represented in the town, the quality of accommodation occupied is far from ideal. The Borough Council wishes to promote the redevelopment of existing units and new accommodation at Pilgrim Square, in the form of a high quality scheme which satisfies the modern day requirements of both niche and multiple retailers.

7.24   The Borough Council also wishes to encourage specialist shops and other uses which give the town a distinct identity.

7.25   The High Street provides an important opportunity within the primary shopping area as a preferred location for new retail investment. Once the main focus of the town it is now a secondary retailing location bisected by the busy A6 trunk road. The High Street still maintains a stock of larger buildings many of which could be adapted to attract new retailers to the town thus improving the overall vitality and viability of the town centre. The recent investment by Wilkinsons in the redevelopment of 29-41 High Street is a creditable example of what can be achieved without resorting to out of centre locations. The Borough Council will consider the use of appropriate powers within its remit to facilitate site assembly.

POLICY SH2

The primary shopping area within the town centre of Bedford will be the preferred location for new and upgraded shopping development, and planning permission will be granted where this:

i) enhances Bedford's role as a sub regional centre by adding to the quality or range of goods to be sold and/or adds to the quality and quantity of accommodation available;

ii) does not detract from the compact nature of the primary shopping area;

iii) is of a design appropriate with its location in the town centre and which is well related in design terms to neighbouring development; and

iv) is well related in scale and form to neighbouring development (see Policies BE29 and BE30).

PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE

7.26   The primary shopping frontage can be found within the primary shopping area. This is defined on the Proposals Map and is that area where class A1 uses predominate. It reflects the very heart of the town centre where footfall is the highest and where the majority of comparison shopping takes place. A recent trend has been the growth of service outlets within Class A2 of the Use Classes Order (financial and professional services). Whilst such uses are important to the town centre and support its retail function, the intense competition for prime frontage space can, if not effectively controlled by policy, push out other retail uses thereby diminishing the choice and attractiveness of the centre of the town. Therefore in order to protect and maintain its retail function:

POLICY SH3

~~Within the primary shopping frontage, changes of use from retail (Class A1) to A2, A3 and non-retail use at ground floor level will not be permitted. Redevelopment in such areas will be permitted only in those instances where retail uses (Class A1) are proposed at ground floor level.~~

7.27   See Town Centre Policy TC6 for changes of use outside the primary retail frontage.

PILGRIM SQUARE

7.28   Key opportunity sites exist in the town centre. These are shown on the Proposals Map and are described in more detail in Appendix D. The major retail development opportunity is Pilgrim Square whose potential needs to be carefully protected and nurtured through the local plan period so that its attractiveness is maximised and the necessary level of investment achieved. This opportunity will allow for the redevelopment of the Bus Station and adjacent property in a manner which contributes significantly to the overall vitality and viability of the town centre and would effectively integrate the development into the prime retail area of Midland Road/Silver Street/Harpur Street.

POLICY SH4

~~Permission will be given for proposals which realise the retail potential of the Pilgrim Square redevelopment site (as identified on the Proposals Map). Proposals should:~~

~~i) be effectively and imaginatively integrated with the retail core and where possible the primary retail frontage;~~

~~ii) respect established neighbouring development in terms of scale, character and external/internal design but provide a landmark building of high quality design;~~

~~iii) make adequate provision for a re-positioned bus interchange; and,~~

~~iv) satisfy the requirements of the highway authority in terms of access to and from the scheme for both shoppers and servicing vehicles.~~

~~The Borough Council will take any appropriate action it considers necessary to facilitate site assembly, including compulsory purchase.~~

MARKETS

7.30   Bedford also benefits from a thriving charter market (charter granted in 1166). This plays an important part in the complex interaction of town centre activities, generating a greater number of visitors to the town on market days. The Council will therefore safeguard and strengthen the charter market.

DISTRICT CENTRES

7.31   There is one district centre in the Bedford/Kempston urban area: Saxon Centre, Kempston. District centres consist of groups of shops separate from the town centre, usually containing at least one food supermarket or superstore, and non-retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants. They provide an important complementary retail function to the town centre that is underpinned by their convenience and the service they offer. Development proposals within district centres should not be at the expense of the primary shopping area.

POLICY SH5

~~Proposals for new retail facilities within the District Centre will be supported if:~~

~~i) new development will be of a scale and form which is appropriate to the convenience and service function of the District Centre;~~

~~ii) the applicant can demonstrate that the scale and form of the development proposed and its function could not be more appropriately accommodated within the town centre;~~

~~iii) the applicant can demonstrate that the proposals would not have an adverse impact on the town centre or on nearby local centres; and~~

~~iv) satisfactory servicing and car parking facilities can be provided to avoid on street congestion and to protect highway safety; and~~

~~v) the proposal will be accessible by a choice of means of transport other than the private car.~~

LOCAL CENTRES

7.32   Local centres comprise of a small grouping of shops within the urban area usually including a newsagent, a general store, a sub post office, a pharmacy and other small shops of a local nature. Local shops fulfil an important social as well as economic role, offering convenient service in local centres, particularly for those who are less mobile and do not have use of a car, for example the elderly, disabled and families with young children. Bedford has several well established local centres which the Council is eager to retain as an important part of the overall shopping provision in the town.

POLICY SH6

~~Proposals for new small shops within existing local centres or existing residential areas as identified on the Proposals Map will be supported if:~~

~~i) the proposal is of a scale appropriate to the role and function of the local centre and is intended to principally serve the needs of the local community;~~

~~ii) the proposal will attract trade primarily other than by the motor car;~~

~~iii) the proposal will not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, and is acceptable on highway and environmental grounds; and,~~

~~iv) satisfactory servicing, cycling and car parking facilities can be provided.~~

7.33   By their very nature, such small local shops will be located close to or actually in residential areas and therefore it may be necessary to control the types of retail use to prevent unnecessary disturbance to residents.

7.34   There will often be a need to provide new local retail facilities where and when new residential development is planned. The location and range of provision will depend to some extent on the scale of development proposed and the availability of existing facilities in the immediate locality. New retail development in new

residential areas should be planned carefully. The Borough Council will indicate the most appropriate location for new local centre development within the local plan and in development briefs so that it is most effectively integrated with new and existing housing.

POLICY SH7

Where new residential areas are proposed and it is considered that a local need will arise, the Council will identify in the Local Plan and in development briefs, sites for new local shopping facilities in those areas which are not adequately served by existing local shopping facilities.

CHANGE OF USE OF LOCAL SHOPS

7.35 Local convenience shops have significant economic as well as social functions. They offer a particularly important and convenient service for those who are less mobile, especially elderly and disabled people, families with small children and those without access to a car. For this reason the Council will promote their retention as an important part of the Borough's retail hierarchy.

7.36 Changes of use, whether in town, district or local centres can create new concentrations of single uses such as restaurants and take away food outlets where the cumulative effects can cause local problems. Such proposals should be assessed not only on their positive contribution to diversification but also on the cumulative effects on such matters as loss of retail outlets, traffic, parking and local residential amenity.

POLICY SH8

~~In district and local centres, changes of use of shop units will only be permitted where:~~

~~i) the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that the vitality and viability of the centre would not be adversely affected;~~

~~ii) the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that the proposed change of use will sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre offering an improved range of everyday community, shopping and employment opportunities;~~

~~iii) the change of use will not lead to a reduction in the diversity of uses whether individually or cumulatively with other recent or permitted developments;~~

~~iv) the change of use would not have a detrimental impact upon issues such as traffic, parking, and local residential amenity; and~~

~~v) the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that the proposal will be accessible by a choice of means of transport other than the private car.~~

VILLAGE CENTRES

7.37 Village shops similarly play a vital social, as well as economic role in rural areas as do post offices and public houses. The loss of the traditional village shop or public house can have a particularly severe impact on the community it serves. For this reason the Council is keen to support the retention of existing facilities and provision of new ones in villages where the opportunity arises. Innovation in the provision of facilities to serve

the rural areas is already being experienced, for example in Milton Ernest the post office is located in the garden centre. The Council is keen to see other such combined schemes, which give mutual support to village facilities, come to fruition.

POLICY SH9

~~In villages, the Council will only grant permission for the change of use of shops, post offices and public houses to other uses when:~~

~~i) alternative shops, post offices or public houses are available in that village, ie. the service currently provided (or in the case of vacant buildings the last use to be provided) is not lost to that community;~~

~~ii) the applicant can demonstrate that the current (or last) use is no longer viable;~~

~~iii) the property has been actively marketed at a realistic price; and~~

~~iv) the proposal fulfils the criteria of other policies in the plan.~~

POLICY SH10

~~Planning permission will be granted for small convenience shops, post offices and public houses serving local rural communities where:~~

~~i) the proposal is located within the village, or on the edge of the village, if no appropriate or available site exists within the village;~~

~~ii) the design, scale and siting of the proposal are in keeping with the local character (see Policy BE29);~~

~~iii) there will be no resulting adverse effect on residential or visual amenity;~~

~~iv) any retail function is restricted to convenience goods and/or food only, and is of a size compatible to the rural community it is intended to serve;~~

~~v) the proposal could provide the potential to reduce the need for, or distance travelled, by car;~~

~~vi) the proposal would not have an adverse impact on existing or nearby village shops or would provide a necessary qualitative improvement to the range of convenience shopping available.~~

FARM SHOPS

7.38 Farm shops can have an important role to play in providing for the needs of local communities. Farm shops that only sell produce from the farm or agricultural unit to which they relate do not require planning permission. Concern does arise when the range of goods sold from farm shops extends to goods not produced on the farm which then competes directly with village shops and undermines the viability of the village shop and the vitality of the village community. Farm shops which sell a wide range of goods and are located outside of a village can generate unnecessary vehicle trips which would be contrary to the principles of sustainability.

POLICY SH11

Planning permission will only be given for farm shops to sell produce not grown on the farm to which the shop relates, in the following circumstances:

i) the proposed shop is located within a village; or

ii) the scale and scope of retailing will not harm the viability of retail facilities in any nearby settlement; or

iii) the scale and design of the proposal is commensurate with the character of the immediate locality and the wider rural area and its function; and

iv) the road access and exit at the site will be safe, and the local road network can safely handle the extra traffic generated.

COMPARISON AND CONVENIENCE RETAILING

SCOPE FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT.

7.39   The guidance in PPG6 requires local authorities to consider the scope for new retail development and the consultant's reports commissioned by the Borough Council have informed the Council's strategy and policies in this respect.

7.40   The scope for new retail development can be evaluated under two broad headings: comparison retailing and convenience retailing.

COMPARISON RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

7.41   The quantitative analysis undertaken and review of current retailer demand suggests that it is realistic to continue to plan for a quality comparison development in the primary shopping area of up to about 15,000sq.m (see Policy SH4). Given the range of pre-conditions that will need to be met to achieve this policy objective, it is not considered that there will be any scope for further comparison retail development outside of the primary shopping area during the Local Plan period, despite the additional expenditure growth predicted in the period 2001-2006. In addition to the Pilgrim Square development it is anticipated that increases in expenditure growth will encourage re-investment in the High Street and by existing retailers in the primary shopping area.

7.42   There is therefore no need to identify additional comparison shopping floorspace outside of Bedford at this time. It would be unnecessary, imprudent and would undermine the achievement of fundamental policy objectives that underpin the Council's retail strategy.

7.43   The Borough Council will undertake to review the scope for further comparison retail development before the end of the plan period. It will then be better able to predict to what extent Bedford has maintained its market share; the longer term consequences of recent retail warehouse developments; the extent to which Pilgrim Square has progressed and the extent to which other primary shopping area or edge of centre opportunities have been identified.

POLICY SH12

Proposals for new comparison retail development outside the primary shopping area and district centre will not be permitted unless:

i) the applicant can demonstrate that there is a need for the type of development proposed which would not undermine the stated strategy and retail policies of the local planning authority;

ii) the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal could not be accommodated within the primary shopping area or district centre or, as a second preference, on the edge of the primary shopping area;

iii) the applicant can demonstrate that the cumulative impact of the proposed development, together with other committed and proposed developments, do not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town, district centre and local centres or have a negative impact on the Council's strategy to sustain and enhance these centres;

iv) the site is conveniently accessible by a choice of means of transport other than the motor car including public transport, cycle and by foot;

v) the proposal is in close proximity to the main road network and the means of accessing the site meet the requirements of the highway authority;

vi) sufficient parking and servicing facilities are proposed to cater for the retail uses on the site taking into account the extra length of stay created by those undertaking linked trips.

For the avoidance of doubt Policy SH12 relates to retail warehouses, retail parks, warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres and other new retail formats that might emerge during the plan period that include comparison goods. In relation to edge of centre proposals 200-300 metres should be taken as a guide to the distance shoppers are likely to be prepared to walk between the primary shopping area and new retail development.

7.44   Bedford is well served with a broad range of retail warehouse facilities outside the primary shopping area both within and on the edge of the urban area. These sites are listed in Table S1. Those that cater primarily for bulky durable goods are less readily accommodated in the town centre and the Council recognises that they may have different locational requirements. However, such proposals would need to be justified with reference to Policy SH12. Goods such as DIY goods (including garden centres), floor coverings, furniture, electrical, pets and pet foods, motor accessories, furnishings and fabrics are considered to be bulky durable goods. The Council's intention is to retain the provision of existing and permitted retail warehouses and retail parks as they contribute to the overall retail offer available in the Bedford area. However some of the existing sites in Table S1 are not well located and their redevelopment for alternative appropriate development could be considered if significant community or environmental benefit could be demonstrated and achieved as a result.

7.44a   Developers will be expected to present details as to the nature of the retailing use proposed out of centre so as to demonstrate that the requirements of the sequential

Table S1
Comparison Goods

	m²	ft²
Do It All (Ashburnham Road)	2,295	(24,700)
Magnet (Kingsway)	1,003	(10,800)
Jewsons (London Road)	1,108	(11,922)
Do It All (London Road)	3,716	(40,000)
Denver Discount (London Road)	2,323	(25,000)
Do It All (Rope Walk)	3,446	(37,100)
Halfords (Rope Walk)	1,533	(16,500)
Rope Walk (Phase II)	6,260	(67,380)
Hatters (Goldington Road)	5,096	(54,854)
MFI (Norse Road)	4,119	(44,340)
Lansbury Development (Phases I & II) (Riverfield Drive)	5,523	(59,445)
Homebase (Riverfield Drive)	3,454	(37,180)
Interchange Retail Park (Phases I & II)	16,125	(173,580)
Interchange Retail Park (Phase III)	5,110	(54,980)
Total	**61,111**	**(657,781)**

* all floorspaces are gross and in some instances are rounded up/down.

Table S2
Convenience Goods

Out of centre	m²	ft²
Sainsbury's (Clapham Rd)	7,544	(81,173)
Sainsbury's (Saxon Centre)	5,962	(64,183)
Tesco (Cardington Rd)	6,888	(74,140)
Tesco (Goldington Rd)	6,473	(69,680)
Total	**26,867**	**(289,176)**

In centre	m²	ft²
Marks & Spencer	790	(8,500)
Lidl	1,140	(12,226)
Iceland	409	(4,400)
Total	**2,339**	**(25,126)**

* all floorspaces are gross and in some instances are rounded up/down.

test are met. Out of centre retail development can change their composition over time. There is a need to ensure that a development that has satisfied the criteria of Policy SH12 does not subsequently change its character unacceptably in ways that would create a development that should have been refused on grounds of adverse impact on the vitality and viability of an existing centre.

POLICY SH13

Proposals for new comparison retail developments, permitted in accordance with Policy SH12, will where necessary be subject to conditions to ensure that the development does not subsequently change its character unacceptably. Such conditions may:

i) limit the type of goods to be sold; and

ii) prevent the development being sub-divided.

7.45 There is no identified deficiency in the range of retail warehouse shopping opportunities in the Bedford area so as to warrant the allocation of sites for new additional retail warehouse floorspace in this local plan.

CONVENIENCE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

7.46 Bedford has a well developed range of large modern foodstores occupying town, district centres and out of centre locations as Table S2 illustrates.

7.47 Despite the prospect of expenditure growth the existing provision is considered to be capable of meeting Bedford's current and anticipated food shopping needs without further single site provision being made. There is no identified deficiency in the range or choice of convenience shopping opportunities in the Bedford area to warrant proposals for additional convenience floorspace outside of the primary shopping area and district centre. The Borough Council will not therefore allocate further sites for convenience retail development in the local plan, except those identified as being necessary to serve new residential areas which will offset some of the anticipated expenditure growth.

7.48 The Borough Council recognises that out of centre locations offer benefits to retailers and customers and are an integral part of Bedford's sub-regional offer and the relevant sites identified in Table S2 will be protected from changes of use.

7.49 When considering edge of centre proposals the Borough Council considers that 200-300 metres is the maximum distance that shoppers will be prepared to walk to an edge of centre development from the primary shopping area.

7.49a   Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 6 advises that discount stores selling a limited range of goods can sometimes have a significant impact on town centre retailing. While the effects of such proposals on the primary shopping area are unlikely to be significant, even relatively small discount foodstores can have a significant effect on the convenience retailers which underpin the function of district centres and local centres. Evidence will be required from a prospective developer of any disproportionate impact which such an outlet might have on weaker centres.

POLICY SH16

The primary shopping area and district centre are the preferred locations for new convenience retail floorspace. Proposals for new convenience retail development outside of these centres will not be permitted unless:

i) the applicant can demonstrate that there is a need for the type of development proposed, which would not undermine the stated strategy and retail policies of the local planning authority;

ii) the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal could not be accommodated within the primary shopping area or district centre or, as a second preference, on the edge of the primary shopping area;

iii) the applicant can demonstrate that the cumulative impact of the proposed development, together with other committed and proposed developments, do not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town, district centre and local centres or have a negative impact on the Council's strategy to sustain and enhance these centres;

iv) the site is conveniently accessible by a choice of means of transport other than the motor car including public transport, cycle and by foot;

v) the proposal is in close proximity to the main road network and the means of accessing the site meet the requirements of the highway authority;

vi) sufficient parking and servicing facilities are proposed to cater for the retail uses on the site taking into account the extra length of stay created by those undertaking linked trips.

In relation to edge of centre proposals 200-300 metres should be taken as a guide to the distance shoppers are likely to be prepared to walk between the primary shopping area and new retail development.

7.50   The Borough Council recognises that smaller foodstore proposals serve an important local need and can perform a complementary role to the primary shopping area and district centres without eroding their vitality and viability. Policies SH6 and SH7 safeguard and strengthen such provision. However, convenience retailing often underpins district and local centres and the impact of stand alone foodstores and discount stores, in particular, on this element of Bedford's retail hierarchy will be carefully examined.

POLICY SH17

Proposals for new convenience retail development in existing residential areas will only be permitted where:

i) the applicant can demonstrate a need for the type of development proposed;

ii) the vitality and viability of existing centres will not be adversely affected either individually or cumulatively with other recent or proposed developments;

iii) the site is conveniently accessible by means of transport other than the motor car including public transport, cycle and by foot; and

iv) the proposal can provide operational parking and servicing facilities to meet the requirements of the highway authority.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

RESTAURANTS AND TAKE-AWAYS

7.52   The Borough Council is anxious to avoid any over concentration of unneighbourly facilities such as restaurants and hot food takeaways, especially close to residential areas. In order to maintain residential amenity, it may be necessary to restrict opening times of takeaways and restaurants. For the same reason the Council will expect details of extraction systems to be available at the application stage. The availability of on site or nearby car parking may also be a consideration especially in parts of the town centre where parking is restricted.

POLICY SH19

Planning permission for restaurants and hot food take-aways will only be permitted in village and local centres (see paragraph 7.17) and town centre areas where:

i) there would be no material disturbance to nearby residents through noise, smell, traffic noise and/or congestion or other side effects resulting from the proposed operation;

ii) the local environmental quality will not be adversely affected by the proposed operation or an existing environmental problem will not be exacerbated by the proposed operation; and

iii) in the town centre, the proposed use is not at ground floor level in the primary shopping frontage.

LOCATION OF AMUSEMENT ARCADES

7.53   Similarly amusement centres can greatly affect amenity. Because of this they will not be allowed close to housing, near schools, churches, hospitals and hotels. Such facilities may also be visually intrusive and would therefore, be out of place in a conservation area or other place of architectural or historic character. Conditions limiting opening hours may bring such a proposal within the bounds of acceptability.

POLICY SH20

Proposals for amusement centres will only be permitted where:

i) the proposal is not within the primary shopping frontage area as defined on the Proposals Map; and

ii) it would not result in loss of amenity, especially in terms of its appearance or the amount of noise likely to be generated, for nearby residents or to nearby schools, churches, hospitals or hotels.

7.54   It should be noted by those wishing to provide amusement facilities that a permit is also required from the local authority under the Gaming Act 1968 before they can operate. This is not connected to the granting of planning permission and must be obtained separately.

8

INTRODUCTION / BOROUGH STRATEGY / NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING / EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM / SHOPPING / BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE
TRANSPORT / LEISURE & RECREATION / UTILITIES & TELECOMS / IMPLEMENTATION
AIMS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL / OPPORTUNITY SITES / GLOSSARY / PROPOSALS MAPS

BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE POLICIES

Policy TC1   Protecting architectural and historic features

Policy TC2   Grant aid

Policy TC3   Environmental improvements

Policy TC4   Shopfronts and advertisements

Policy TC5   Riverside enhancements

Policy TC6   Secondary shopping frontages

Policy TC7   Living over the shop

Policy TC8   Town centre residential use

Policy TC9   Office use in Primary Shopping Area

Policy TC10   Town centre amenity

8 / BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

INTRODUCTION

8.1 Bedford Town Centre has many functions. For the residents of Bedford it is the main centre for shopping, financial and administrative services and culture. People also live and work in the town centre. For those living outside the Borough, these functions are also important and this is reflected in the town's sub-regional role. The town centre is in effect the 'hub of the wheel', providing a focus for both the local community and for visitors to the Borough. It is therefore appropriate that it is given special attention in the Local Plan.

8.2 The importance of the town centre cannot be over-estimated. Its buildings and spaces give the town centre its own unique identity and sense of place. The quality of these, along with the range of shopping service and cultural activities, is critical to its success. It is also a major determining factor in attracting external investors, either as individuals or financial institutions.

8.3 The town centre is also well placed to provide a range of goods and services which serve the whole community, particularly those who do not have access to private cars. Its multi-functional role enables one journey to serve several purposes. When combined with its high level of accessibility by public transport, this means that the town centre has a vital part to play in achieving more sustainable development. This in turn emphasises the importance of safeguarding and strengthening this role.

THE DEFINITION OF THE TOWN CENTRE

8.4 The extent of the town centre is shown on the Proposals Map and comprises the primary shopping area within which the primary shopping frontage has been identified (see Policy SH3). Beyond this lies a series of secondary shopping streets which play an important role in supporting the diversity of the town centre. These include part of Tavistock Street, The Broadway, Lime Street, St Loyes Street, the High Street, Greyfriars, part of Midland Road, Harpur Street and Mill Street.

8.5 The fringe of the town centre also includes pockets of housing, the largest of which lies between Midland Road and Commercial Road. Immediately beyond the town centre to the north, west and east, are extensive areas of high and medium density housing. These in turn contribute towards the vitality of the centre. To the south lies the River Great Ouse and the start of The Embankment.

KEY ISSUES

8.6 In devising corporate strategies to protect and enhance the role of Bedford Town Centre, the Borough Council has had to address the following key issues:

1 The development of a high quality, thriving town centre is vital if inward investment is to be attracted to the Borough.

2 The town centre will increasingly have to compete with both other forms of retailing, and with other centres. In order to survive, it needs to establish a more attractive and distinctive image based on:

– a high quality environment, particularly within the primary shopping area;

– a wide diversity of uses including shopping, service, employment, residential, cultural and leisure uses;

– better quality retail accommodation;

– a greater number of niche retailers;

– convenient access;

– high quality shopper car parking.

3 The town centre has several important assets which need to be enhanced and protected. These include the town's heritage of buildings and spaces, its riverside location and primary shopping area. Whilst these provide opportunities, they also limit the centre's capacity for change.

4 There is a need to encourage and support higher quality shopfronts and advertisements in the town centre.

5 There is a need to regenerate parts of the town centre which appear run down and under used.

6 The town centre needs to accommodate a greater diversity of uses to encourage different activities throughout the day and night. In this respect, residential use has a crucial part to play.

7 There is a need to reduce traffic congestion within the town centre whilst improving facilities for public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people and, in particular, to create a traffic free zone within the heart of the primary shopping area.

8.7 In order to improve the health of the town centre and promote its economic development, the Borough Council has adopted a number of strategies which have a bearing on the town centre. These include strategies for economic development, transportation, tourism, and housing. Clearly scope for action extends beyond the remit of the planning system and the Council recognises the need for co-ordinated efforts to ensure that the end result is greater than the sum of the parts.

8.8 The Borough Council has adopted the following Mission Statement for the Town Centre: 'To create a thriving and active town centre in Bedford which is attractive, interesting, enjoyable to visit, safe, accessible to all and free of congestion. The best elements which have been inherited should be regenerated and successfully balanced with additions of quality. To achieve a town centre which will be and remain a pleasant and prosperous focus of retail, service, employment and cultural activity and varied community life.'

8.9   The Council, in partnership with the private sector has a key role in working towards the achievement of this objective and ensuring that the vitality and viability of the town centre is retained and enhanced. This fully complies with one of the main objectives of Government Policy which recognises the benefits that town centres provide. To date, achievements include major environmental improvements, the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange, improved community safety measures, shopmobility, street entertainment, a programme of events, the introduction of public art and marketing initiatives. This reflects the breadth of the Borough Council's commitment to the town centre.

8.10   Within this context, the Local Plan's contribution to achieving the Borough Council's corporate strategies for the town centre focuses on five key elements. These are:

– Improving the physical framework and conserving the town's heritage of buildings and spaces.

– Protecting and enhancing the diversity of uses within the town centre in order to improve its vitality and viability.

– The management of the town centre to ensure that co-ordinated action creates an environment which is clean, safe and pleasant to use.

– The introduction of a series of measures to improve accessibility to the town centre whilst reducing congestion in the primary shopping area.

– The adoption of robust local plan policies in order to safeguard and strengthen the primary shopping area.

BEDFORD'S HERITAGE AND PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

8.11   The town centre represents the heart of a historic market and county town which has developed since Saxon times. Its earliest origins were focussed on the river crossing and Bedford Castle – itself a Scheduled Ancient Monument and one of the most prominent historic features in the modern townscape. The majority of the centre lies within the Bedford Conservation Area and is characterised by buildings which vary widely in terms of both style and period. A total of 41 of these are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest, and include St Paul's Church, the Shire Hall and the Harpur Suite. The centre also includes buildings of lesser quality dating mainly from the 1950's, 60's and 70's. In certain cases, these now appear dated and unappealing. However, it is this diversity of architectural style which, in itself, forms an integral part of Bedford's character. Furthermore, even buildings of lesser merit can make an important contribution if they are kept in good order.

8.12   A key feature of the town is the fact that the existing street pattern has remained unchanged since almost medieval times. Unlike many other towns, Bedford escaped the ravages of comprehensive redevelopment in the 1950's and 60's, with a result that much of the town's heritage still exists today. It is this heritage which gives the town much of the character and which provides the base line for the centre's image to be improved. Hand in hand with the encouragement of sensitively designed new development must be the improvement and conservation of the town's existing built fabric. In addition, environmental improvements within the town centre should respect the historical context of Bedford in terms of both design and the use of materials.

8.13   In some cases, existing buildings are in a poor state of repair arising from years of neglect. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many upper floors are either under used or disused. This is particularly the case in the secondary shopping streets such as the High Street, which ceased to form the main commercial focus for the town centre with the establishment of the Harpur and Howard shopping centres. The relocation of the market from St Paul's Square also served to hasten its decline.

8.14   Three key initiatives form an integral part of the Borough Council's strategy to address these issues and improve the town centre. These are:

a) The establishment of a Conservation Area Partnership in association with Bedfordshire County Council and English Heritage covering the central part of Bedford Conservation Area, and targeting resources towards the repair of selected buildings, and environmental enhancement schemes. This scheme has now been completed.

b) The Architectural Maintenance Grant Scheme which encourages facade improvements, including new shopfronts and signs which are more respectful of their context. Selected buildings within the central area of the town centre are eligible for this scheme, and to date several shopfronts and other improvements including cleaning have been carried out with grant assistance.

c) The Living over the Shop Scheme. This recognises that buildings are more likely to be maintained if they are fully utilised. It seeks to convert otherwise empty space to residential accommodation in conjunction with the Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association. A number of schemes have now progressed to completion. In recognition of the importance of this initiative and the desire to bring this space back into use, the Borough Council has relaxed its car parking policy within the primary shopping area defined on the Proposals Map. Any proposals for conversions outside this defined area would have to fully comply with the Council's adopted car parking standards.

POLICY TC1

The Borough Council will actively protect and enhance the architectural, archaeological and historic features of Bedford Town Centre including:

i) listed buildings and their settings;

ii) buildings which although not listed, form an integral part of the Bedford Conservation Area and its setting;

iii) the street pattern and historic property boundaries. (see Policy BE9)

POLICY TC2
~~The Borough Council will continue to support the repair and enhancement, and the re-use of selected buildings in and adjoining Bedford Town Centre through the provision of grant aid.~~

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

8.15 In recent years there has been a growing awareness of environmental factors, including the need for an improvement in levels of safety, comfort and accessibility for pedestrians in the town centre. This has led the Council to undertake a programme of environmental enhancement schemes combined with either full or partial pedestrianisation. To date several phases have been completed, including Silver Street, St. Paul's Square (North and East), Allhallows/ Church Square and Midland Road (West).

8.16 Policies BE43 and BE44 refer to the Council's desire to create high quality public spaces and introduce public art into the built environment. The streets and squares of the town centre form the most important parts of the 'public realm' in the Borough, and the Council has a key role in ensuring that this is well designed, readily accessible and maintained to a high standard.

8.17 The Borough Council intends to extend the programme of environmental improvements in the town centre, both individually and in partnership with other organisations. Public consultation will form an integral part of this process. Priorities for action include the following:

Midland Road (East)

8.18 The Borough Council has recognised the considerable potential to improve the pedestrian environment in Midland Road (East) in conjunction with Harpur Street (South) and Harpur Square. This section of Midland Road includes the predominant part of the primary shopping frontage and environmental enhancements to reinforce this role have recently been completed.

Harpur Street (South) and Harpur Square

8.19 Harpur Square is one of the main public spaces in the town centre and the western side is defined by the Blore facade of the former Bedford Modern School. Work has recently been completed on the resurfacing of the area to provide a major new civic square for Bedford. This provides a new focal point for the town centre and has been designed to support a wide range of activities including community use, entertainment, exhibitions and speciality markets. A contra-flow bus lane in River Street/Horne Lane allows buses a suitable alternative to the previous route through Midland Road (East) and Harpur Street (South) which are now pedestrianised.

The High Street

8.21 A key problem for Bedford Town Centre is its continued location on the A6. This enters the town centre at Tavistock Street to the north and continues southwards towards the Town Bridge. The combination of relatively narrow footways, heavy traffic flows and vehicle speed creates a poor quality pedestrian environment in the High Street. As a result, pedestrian flows are no longer sufficient to sustain a good range of shops. Many shops which once provided attractions are now charity shops

or have gone 'down market'. However, the recent redevelopment of Nos. 29-41 High Street represents a major new investment, and reflects the opportunities that exist for sensitive regeneration in this part of the town centre. The Shopping chapter highlights the need to focus appropriate retail development in the High Street in order to prevent its further decline. Concerted action is required to achieve significant improvements in the short and medium term. In the long term, once the highway improvements are in place, including the western element of the Bedford Bypass and the Bedford Transport Development Plan, a more comprehensive set of measures will be appropriate including partial pedestrianisation.

St Paul's Square (North and South-West)

8.24 St Paul's Square is currently dominated by vehicular traffic as it forms one of the main gyratory systems in the town centre. St Paul's Church and churchyard are located within a traffic island which detracts from the quality of this building and its associated public space. In the long term, once both the Bedford Bypass and the Bedford Transport Development Plan are operational, potential exists for the removal of vehicles from the northern side of the square. Any pedestrianisation scheme would also complement and extend the proposals for Harpur Street (South). There is also potential to undertake these works in conjunction with the remodelling of the northern side of St. Paul's churchyard to include new pedestrian routes and to support a wider range of activities.

8.25 The south-western corner of the Square is currently used for short-stay parking. Opportunity exists for the re-provision of this parking area in conjunction with associated environmental improvements to effectively form an extension of the forecourt of the Town Hall. This will also complement the proposed opportunity site on the southern side of the Square (see Borough Strategy chapter and Appendix D).

8.26 In designing these enhancement schemes, the Borough Council will seek to achieve a fully co-ordinated approach to street furniture, landscape and materials. Whenever possible, spaces will be designed to accommodate a wide range of activities from street theatre, mobile exhibitions, kiosks and street markets. Full consideration will also be given to the needs of disabled people including the partially sighted in the design of any scheme.

POLICY TC3
~~The Borough Council will make provision within its capital programme for a series of environmental improvements within the town centre in order to achieve high quality public spaces which are fully accessible, attractive, free of congestion and which support a wide range of activities.~~

SHOPFRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

8.27 Many shopfronts and advertisements in parts of the town centre are of poor quality either in terms of scale, materials or their relationship to the parent building. This gives the town an 'anywhere' image, and cumulatively, reduces its attractiveness.

8.28   Paragraphs 4.27 to 4.31 and Policies BE16 refer to the Borough Council's desire to improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements, especially within conservation areas. In recognition of this the Borough Council has prepared design guidance on this topic and will refer to this when considering applications for shopfronts and advertisements. The Borough Council will therefore actively seek to promote the highest standards of design in respect of both new shopfronts and advertisements, and the private sector will be encouraged, where appropriate by use of grant aid, to support the Council's initiative and invest in a quality image. Closely allied to this is the need to achieve more sympathetic shopfront security measures in order to prevent the creation of 'dead frontages'. See also Policy BE46 in the Built Environment chapter.

POLICY TC4
Within the town centre, the Borough Council will expect new shopfronts and advertisements to be designed to the highest standards in terms of:

i) their relationship to both the local context and the building of which they form a part;

ii) the quality and durability of materials used;

iii) the level and means of illumination.

THE RIVERSIDE

8.29   The River Great Ouse is one of Bedford's greatest assets, and forms the southern boundary of the town centre. The river and the land which adjoins it also falls within the River Protection Area (see Policy NE15). Whilst the river is only 200 metres from the primary retail frontage in Midland Road, there are very few direct routes towards the river and the riverside environment is not readily apparent. Consequently, visitors can spend some time in the town centre without being aware that the river exists.

8.30   The riverside is one of the main features which makes Bedford different from other town centres. It is important therefore that this asset is both exploited and made more accessible, particularly its role as a major promenade. This in turn will have the effect of strengthening the identity of the town centre as a whole. The key elements of the strategy to achieve this are:

– The redevelopment/refurbishment of important river frontage sites and the establishment of uses which will attract people towards the river and increase activity (see Appendix D). In particular, the riverside lends itself to outdoor eating and drinking and opportunities for this need to be fully explored. Given the importance of the riverside environment, any new development will need to be of the highest quality in terms of design and materials.

– The provision of a new footbridge for pedestrians and cyclists at Batts Ford, aligned with the main pedestrian route through the Howard Centre. This, and other improvements, will be the subject of a bid within the Council's capital programme. The potential for inclusion of a future bid in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) will also be explored.

– The retention and enhancement of public access to the riverside in any redevelopment of Riverside Square.

– The improvement of the existing Queen's Walk to form a quayside environment. Policy LR9 also refers to the provision of short stay moorings at St. Mary's Island to enable river craft to use the town centre.

– Improved signposting of the river within the town centre.

POLICY TC5
The Borough Council will seek to integrate the riverside environment with the function of the town centre through the use of high quality development on river frontage sites, the provision of environmental improvements and new pedestrian routes.

USES AND ACTIVITIES

8.31   Government Policy recognises that the vitality and viability of a centre is dependent on much more than retail use alone. The variety of uses and activities are critical to the success of town centres. They also give the town centre the edge over other forms of retailing and this needs to be exploited and enhanced. In addition, the concentration of a number of uses in one location reduces trip generation and is more sustainable. Therefore there is a need to encourage a wide diversity of uses within the town centre, and to ensure that the diversity that exists at the moment is not lost. The Borough Council recognises that uses which support the evening economy such as entertainment and leisure have an important role to play in the liveliness of the town centre. Detailed criteria against which proposals for entertainment and leisure use will be judged are set out in the Leisure and Recreation chapter.

8.32   Policy BE1 and the preamble in paragraphs 4.6 to 4.8 highlight the Borough Council's desire to achieve this through the promotion of mixed use developments. Appendix D also identifies a number of opportunity sites within the town centre where mixed use developments will be actively encouraged. These include:

– Land at Lime Street/Harpur Street.
– The former Granada cinema site at St. Peter's Street/Lurke Street. (now redeveloped)
– Pilgrim Square.
– The former Howard Congregational Church, Mill Street. (now redeveloped)
– Riverside Square.
– Properties on the south side of St. Paul's Square.
– Castle Lane.

These include sites which are vacant or under-utilised, and which provide the opportunity to enhance the built fabric of the town centre. In the case of Pilgrim Square, redevelopment of this site has a fundamental role in securing the vitality and viability of the town centre, and consequently, its implementation has greater priority. This is discussed further in the Shopping chapter.

8.33   The shopping policies provide a framework against which new retailing proposals will be assessed. In considering new retail proposals, the Borough Council will positively encourage their location within the primary shopping area, or as a second preference, on appropriate edge of centre sites and, having regard to the time period of the plan, will resist new retail development elsewhere so as not to undermine the strategic policy objective of securing the Pilgrim Square redevelopment.

8.34   Policy SH3 also identifies the primary shopping frontage within which changes of use from retail on the ground floor will not be permitted. This aims to support the town centre's retailing function and maintain a strong retail core. This does not of course prevent the upper floors of buildings being used for alternative uses eg. offices or residential. Outside the primary frontage, a wide diversity of uses can be accommodated provided they are compatible with each other, appropriate to a town centre location and do not result in the concentrations of such uses to the detriment of either environmental quality, amenity or the street's retailing function. An example of the latter would be restaurants and take-aways (see Policy SH19).

8.35   It is widely recognised that a variety of uses in a locality helps to keep the streets lively. In secondary shopping streets in particular, non retail uses, especially A2 uses can make a positive contribution to achieving this diversity. Furthermore, the retention and preservation of continuous pavement level streetscapes and the avoidance of 'blank frontages' and inward-looking development, can both retain pedestrian activity and prevent crime. It is vital therefore that such uses do not 'turn their back' on the street and that a window display is provided at all times, otherwise this will create a 'dead' frontage.

POLICY TC6

Within the secondary shopping frontages, changes of use from retail to non-retail will be considered on their merits subject to the proposal:

i) having no materially adverse effect on the character and amenity of the area;

ii) being compatible with adjoining uses and appropriate to a shopping street and a town centre location;

iii) providing, where appropriate, a suitable ground floor window display and avoiding the creation of a 'dead' frontage;

iv) avoiding the concentration of similar uses, whose cumulative impact would be to the detriment of either environmental quality, amenity, parking, or the street's retailing function;

v) making a positive contribution to the diversification of uses within the town centre; and

vi) being in conformity with the other policies set out in the Local Plan.

RESIDENTIAL

8.36   Planning policies have in the past actively encouraged changes of use from residential to commercial use within the town centre. As a result, few people now live within the primary shopping area and in 1991, the Census recorded a total of less than 40 people. This in turn has had serious implications for the vitality and security of the town centre.

8.37   Residential use brings life to the town centre especially after shopping hours and facilitates surveillance of the town's buildings and spaces. Within the town centre, the Borough Council is actively seeking to increase the supply of residential accommodation. Two opportunities exist for the introduction of additional housing in the town centre. These are:

– The re-use of vacant or under-used space above shops under the 'Living Over the Shop' scheme is important in repairing and retaining the existing built fabric. In recognition of this, recent changes to the General Development Order have, in certain circumstances, made such changes of use 'permitted development'. In some cases, the re-use of premises above A2 uses may be unsuitable on grounds of security. However, this needs to be balanced against the enhanced security that having more people living in the town centre brings. In addition, vacant office accommodation itself may provide opportunities for conversion to residential use.

– The inclusion, where appropriate, of an element of residential use in any mixed use redevelopment proposal.

8.38   In addition, where residential use currently exists, it is important for the vitality of the town centre that these remain and are not lost to alternative uses (see Policy BE1). It is accepted however that in certain cases, the loss of existing residential use has to be balanced against the benefits that a comprehensive regeneration scheme may bring to part of the town centre. Furthermore, environmental conditions may be such in terms of noise, smell or other disturbance that the continuation of single properties in residential use may not be desirable.

POLICY TC7

Within the town centre, planning permission will be granted for the conversion of vacant space above shops to residential use.

POLICY TC8

Within the town centre, redevelopment proposals for non-residential development will be required by the Borough Council to have fully considered the potential for the inclusion of an element of new residential accommodation. Changes of use from residential use will not be permitted. Within the primary shopping area, where such proposals would bring about substantial benefits in terms of economic regeneration and environmental enhancement, or where it would not be desirable to retain the existing residential use on environmental grounds, loss of residential use may be acceptable.

OFFICES

8.39   The existence of office accommodation is also important for the vitality of the town centre. Offices provide employment, are readily accessible in central locations and support the other uses and services which the town centre provides e.g. restaurants, retailing etc.

8.40   Within the primary shopping area, offices have an important role to play in utilising space above shops. However, in certain cases, where older buildings are involved, these cannot be satisfactorily converted to provide accommodation which meets the needs of modern office users. In such cases conversion to residential may be a more viable proposition. Offices can also form an important component in mixed use redevelopment schemes. Within the primary shopping area, offices uses will be restricted to space above ground floor level in order to safeguard the retailing function of this part of the town centre. Outside the primary shopping area, freestanding offices will be acceptable and should be within convenient walking distance of the main shopping area so as to maximise the benefit to the town centre as a whole.

POLICY TC9

Within the primary shopping area planning permission will be granted for office uses which form an integral part of mixed use developments provided:

i) no loss of existing residential use is involved;

ii) the proposal is predominantly above ground floor level; and,

iii) it does not prejudice major retail development.

Freestanding office developments will not be granted within the primary shopping area.

ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, LEISURE AND THE EVENING ECONOMY

8.41   This forms an essential part of the life of Bedford and the town centre has an important role in providing leisure facilities in a central location which is readily accessible by public transport. Existing facilities include the Corn Exchange, Civic Theatre, Harpur Suite and Bedford Central Library. The Borough Council also recognises the need to improve and upgrade these facilities and a substantial refurbishment of the Corn Exchange has been undertaken. In addition, and in the longer term, the Borough Council is actively looking at the feasibility of establishing a major performance venue in the town centre. Allied to this is the continuing support the Council gives to the performing arts. A recent example of this is the residency of the Philharmonia Orchestra.

8.42   Elsewhere, proposals for leisure and entertainment uses within the squares and meeting places of the town centre will be encouraged. In particular, opportunities to introduce artistic, cultural and community event entertainment will be fully explored. The proposed environmental improvement schemes will also be designed so as to accommodate and support these activities. In addition, the Council recognises the role that quality pubs and restaurants can play in enhancing the image of the town centre and generating 'street life'

in the form of street cafes, entertainment etc. Because of the cosmopolitan nature of Bedford's population, there is also considerable potential to create a distinct continental image in terms of eating and drinking places. When considering proposals for entertainment and leisure uses within the Borough, the Council will, where appropriate, encourage these to be located in town centre or on edge of centre sites. The potential to include such uses as part of mixed use developments within the opportunity sites needs to be fully explored.

8.43   In seeking to encourage uses which promote the 'evening economy', the Borough Council is aware that there is a potential conflict between uses which generate potentially large numbers of people late at night and the amenity of both residents and other users of the town centre. In order to support the 'evening economy' it is imperative that the town centre is perceived as being both safe and secure. The Council is committed to enhancing security and crime prevention measures in the town centre and has introduced a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system and the Bedford Retail Radio Link. The use of CCTV has been a significant success in deterring anti-social behaviour, and reducing autocrime. As a result, it will help to attract people back into the town centre after the main shopping hours. In order to reconcile potential conflict between uses such as nightclubs, public houses etc. and the amenity of residents and other town centre users, it may be appropriate to negotiate developer contributions towards the improvement and extension of the CCTV system.

POLICY TC10

Within the town centre, where uses are proposed which in the opinion of the Borough Council have the potential to affect the amenity of residents or other users by virtue of noise, security of premises or other disturbance, applicants will be expected to implement measures to mitigate adverse impacts. Such measures may include contributions towards the improvement or extension of the existing Closed Circuit Television System.

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

8.44   The Borough Council recognises that many of the factors which combine to create a quality town centre fall outside the scope of the planning system. The maintenance of streets, car parks and planting areas through to the organisation of events and activities are all part of the Council's corporate approach towards the town centre. Many of the Council's functions impinge on the town centre and there is a need to work in genuine partnership with both the private sector and the local community to achieve a high quality environment. This is being achieved through the establishment in 2000 of the Bedford Town Centre Company Ltd and by extensive public consultation. The Bedford Town Centre Company Ltd brings a sharper, commercial focus to promoting the town centre and making it more attractive. In 2001, the Borough Council undertook a survey of town centre users in conjunction with a major exhibition. This gave an insight into how the 'consumer' viewed the town centre environment and highlighted areas in need of improvement. Further research into shoppers'

expectations in order to obtain a realistic 'health check' for the town centre was undertaken in 2002 as part of a major initiative looking at options for the key town centre opportunity sites. This will also ensure that appropriate and sustainable development can be encouraged in partnership with the private sector.

8.45 In order to achieve this co-ordinated approach, the Borough Council supports the concept of town centre management. This is also important for the staging of events and activities which encourage life in the centre, both during and outside shopping hours. Street entertainment, specialised markets, exhibitions etc. all help to achieve this and complement the land use planning measures outlined in this plan.

ACCESS

8.46 Accessibility is one of four key elements which contribute towards the health of the town centre. In Bedford's case there is a need to improve access to the town centre whilst reducing congestion and achieving a balance between the needs of vehicles and pedestrians. In 1993, the Borough Council and Bedfordshire County Council adopted an Integrated Transportation Strategy for the Borough of Bedford. Many of the issues discussed in the document and the policies contained within it relate to the town centre. These are summarised below:

NEW HIGHWAYS

8.47 The Transport chapter highlights the need for additional highway capacity in the form of the Bedford Bypass and new distributor roads to enable environmental gains to be made. Of particular importance to the town centre is the construction of the Bedford Transport Development Plan which will have a significant impact on traffic flows. It will also bring benefits to public transport by enabling buses to be given greater priority, and to pedestrians by reducing congestion and establishing more extensive pedestrian priority areas.

TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY

8.48 Off-street parking demand will increase in the future and effective management is required. It is not intended to increase off-street parking capacity in the central area. Instead, existing space will be geared towards short-stay business and shopping users. Longer stay users will be encouraged to use the Park & Ride or other public transport facilities and this will assist in reducing peak period congestion in and around the town centre. A programme of positive measures to improve the attractiveness of existing car parks is underway and represents a major investment by the Borough Council. This includes improvements to their appearance, ease of use, accessibility and security. In certain cases, improved lighting and CCTV has been introduced into the town centre car parks and this has significantly reduced auto crime. This will be extended and upgraded further. A system of 'variable message ' car park information signs will also help visitors to find parking space and will optimise car park use.

8.49 The central area of Bedford has around 5000 spaces that could be satisfactorily used for on-street parking during the daytime without adversely impeding the flows of traffic. Conflict occurs where residents on the fringe of the town centre are unable to find parking space close to their home. In response to this, the Integrated Transportation Strategy proposes the establishment of controlled parking zones thus maximising the use of on-street parking space to meet the needs of both residents and short stay shoppers. In all cases, schemes will be introduced only after full consultation with residents, traders and other interested parties.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

8.50 On the issue of bus penetration of the primary shopping area, the main challenge is how to make access to public transport convenient to the main shopping area whilst removing buses from it and thereby removing pedestrian/vehicular conflict. The potential solution would be to restrict buses to the outer fringe of the primary shopping area. When this is carried out, stops placed around the town centre would ensure a maximum walking distance to the centre in the order of 170 metres. The provision of a contra-flow bus lane in River Street/Horne Lane has facilitated the removal of buses from the primary shopping area (see para.8.19). The Borough Council will also examine the potential to improve the link between the town centre and Bedford Midland rail station.

PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY AREAS

8.51 Further pedestrianisation schemes should be provided in the centre of Bedford to improve the shopping environment. Details of recent schemes have already been referred to in Policy TC3 including Midland Road (East) and Harpur Street (South). These have brought considerable benefits in terms of comfort, safety and convenience and are a key element in the Borough Council's strategy to improve the town centre. In addition to the Council's desire to remove buses from the main shopping streets, it is considered that given the reasonable proximity of the town centre car parks, access by car to the primary shopping area is both undesirable and unnecessary.

8.52 Elsewhere in the town centre, there is scope to improve pedestrian safety and convenience, particularly at main crossing points. Measures such as speed tables can provide at grade crossings and assist disabled people to cross the road. They can also indicate to the driver that he/she is entering an environment where vehicles do no predominate and where pedestrians have greater priority. Such measures can be used to reinforce the main gateways into the central core, along with the introduction of planting and public art, and when combined with the greater use of dropped kerbs will improve accessibility within the town centre. The Council's commitment to more accessible environments also extends to its support for the Shopmobility scheme.

CYCLISTS

8.53   The majority of Bedford's cycle routes converge on the town centre and there is a need to encourage this mode of transport, whilst avoiding potential conflict with pedestrians in particular. This can be done by improving the cycling environment, introducing measures to minimise the risk of accidents to cyclists and pedestrians and providing adequate cycle parking in secure locations. See also the cycling section in the Transport chapter.

BEDFORD BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN
OCTOBER 2002
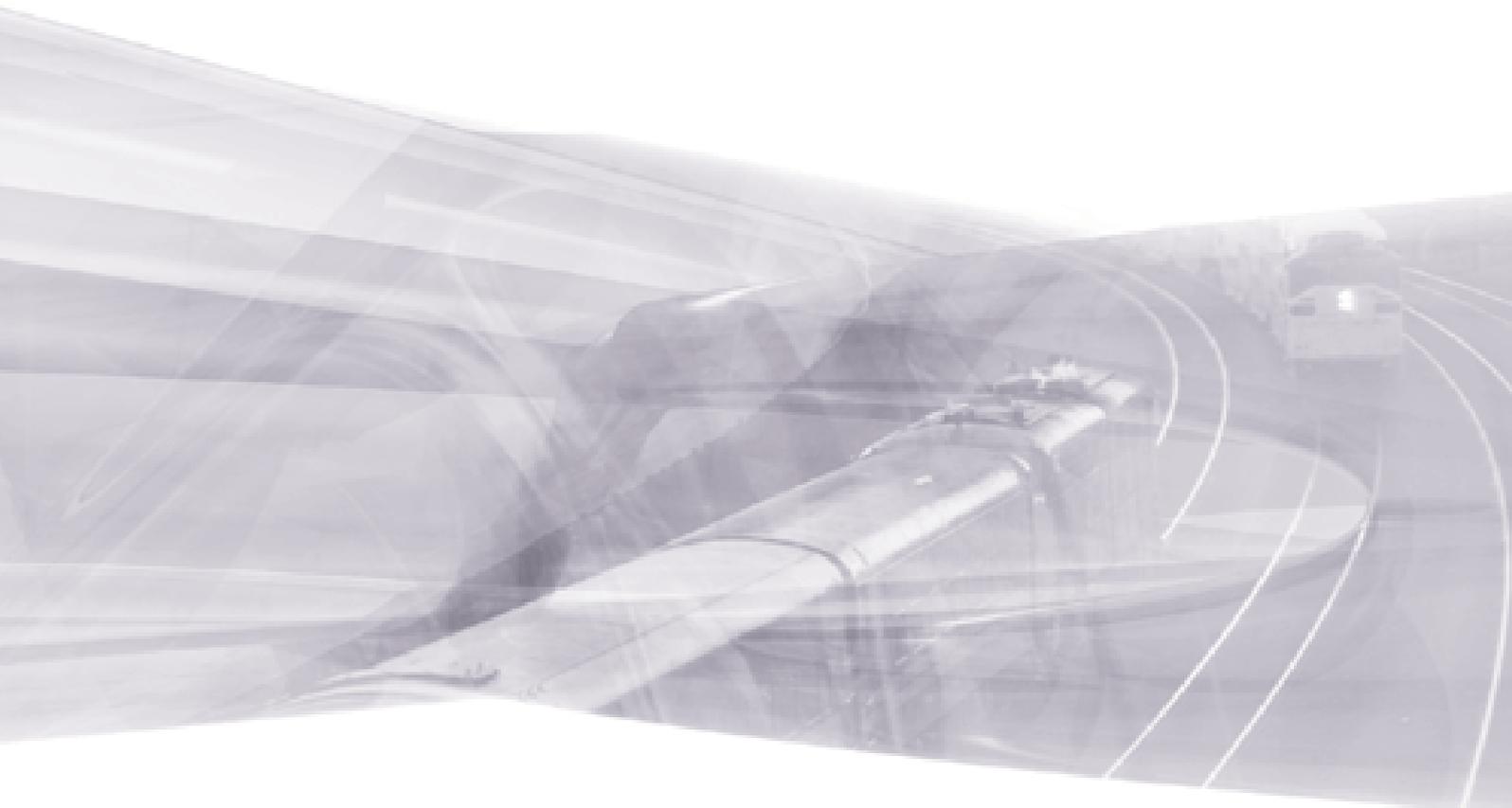
TRANSPORT POLICIES

Policy T1	Strategic road network
Policy T2	Local transportation network improvements
Policy T3	Strategic routes in the rural area
Policy T4	Reducing highway impact
Policy T5	Motorists' facilities
Policy T6	Public transport infrastructure
Policy T7	Developer contributions for public transport measures
Policy T8	Rail network
Policy T9	Rail services
Policy T10	Access to rail services and stations
Policy T11	Rail freight links
Policy T12	River boat services
Policy T13	Pedestrian Routes
Policy T14	Cycle routes
Policy T15	Parking
Policy T17	Park & Ride facilities and town centre parking
Policy T18	Commercial vehicle park
Policy T19	Coach parking
Policy T20	Safety and traffic calming
Policy T21	Accessibility for less mobile people

9 / TRANSPORT

INTRODUCTION

9.1 An effective transport system is vital both for the national and local economy. In Bedford a balanced transportation strategy is important to maintain and improve mobility within and through the Borough. The absence of a fully effective transport network contributes to Bedford's lack of competitive edge in attracting and retaining investment and detracts from the amenity of the Borough.

9.2 The location and nature of development affects the pattern, volume and modes of travel. Bedford's present road system is largely a product of its historic development pattern. By planning land use and transportation patterns in a more integrated approach, the need to travel can be reduced and a more effective transport system can be achieved compatible with the aims of sustainability. The Council aims to; obtain more efficient links with the national road network; reduce congestion within its urban areas; optimise accessibility to the town centre; reduce the need to travel; and, promote more efficient travel through the use of public transport, cycling and walking and more effective interchange between modes.

9.3 Responsibility for the road system is divided between:

– the Department for Transport which is responsible for trunk roads;

– the County Council which is responsible for all other roads and supporting public transport services. One of its responsibilities is to produce the Local Transport Plan (LTP) that sets out the overall policy framework for transport policy and forms the basis of bids for Central Government funds;

– the Borough Council is responsible for roads in Bedford, Kempston, and in the parishes of Biddenham, Clapham and Elstow where it acts as the agent for the County Council. It also has an advisory role in the maintenance of public transport services and has invested in Park and Ride and other services;

– A wide range of other organisations also have responsibility for transport in the area including the Strategic Rail Authority, Traffic Commissioner and others.

9.4 For the Bedford/Kempston urban area, the Borough Council has jointly produced with the County Council a package of transport proposals to meet the Borough's needs over the next 10 to 20 years. The Bedford Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) has been adopted to meet these needs by comprehensive and sustainable means. A review to roll forward and update this strategy was commenced early in 1998 and is ongoing.

9.5 Building roads to meet forecast levels of demand is no longer environmentally acceptable. More weight will be placed on policies that manage demand by encouraging land use patterns designed to reduce the number and length of journeys and promote more fuel-efficient modes. This is consistent with both the Government's White Paper 'A New Deal For Transport: Better For Everyone' July 1998 and the County Structure Plan 2011 which puts emphasis on new development within and adjoining the existing urban areas and in strategic corridors. A more effective road pattern will be developed to deliver traffic to its destinations efficiently with minimum delay and congestion. This will be achieved by addressing key issues in the Plan.

KEY ISSUES

9.6 This chapter addresses the following:

1 The provision of a sustainable transport network which encourages the minimal use of non-renewable resources and minimises impact on the environment.

2 The development of a strategic network linking Bedford effectively to the national road system.

3 The reduction in traffic movements and peak hour congestion to optimise accessibility.

4 The implementation of highway schemes to carry traffic efficiently through and about the Borough integrated with non-car modes of transport.

5 Appropriate levels of parking provision.

6 The location of development especially large traffic generators in areas highly accessible by means other than the private car.

7 The use of public transport including park and ride and bus priority schemes.

8 The improvement of rail services including Inter City, commuter and local services, and the provision of Parkway stations.

9 The implementation of traffic management schemes.

10 Access and mobility for cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people.

9.6a In 2001, after the Local Plan Inquiry closed, the Government re-issued PPG13: Transport. Broadly speaking the revised PPG seeks better integration between land use planning and transportation issues. It refers to the Transport Act 2000 which provides the statutory basis for a number of measures outlined in the 1998 White Paper and to the Government's publication 'Transport 2010: The 10 year plan'. The Government's aim is to achieve a modern integrated high quality transport system. The following policies aim to achieve the same by addressing the key issues above.

ROAD NETWORK

9.7 The road network in the Borough is fundamentally a radial one with seven major routes focusing on the town centre. Following the White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' (July 1998) the A428 has been detrunked and the A6 will be detrunked in due course. Responsibility for these will pass to the Local Highway Authorities. The A421 has been identified as part of the core network of trunk roads. The opening of the Southern Bypass trunk road scheme in September 1996 linked four of these routes to the south and east of the town helping to relieve some of the congestion caused by through traffic. With only three in-town crossing points, the River Ouse divides the town and creates a barrier to movement within Bedford and Kempston.

9.8 The main road network is outlined on Figure 19. There is a need for additional highways in terms of bypasses and distributor roads. These will provide greater opportunities for the further development of other modes of travel such as cycling, walking and public transport via for example dedicated bus lanes. Provision for horses will also be encouraged at appropriate locations to reduce the potential conflict between horse riders and other users on roads, bridleways and at crossing points. In order to reduce congestion and work towards sustainability it is essential to encourage a transfer from the car to other transport modes without generating new conflicts. Bedford's Adopted Integrated Transport Strategy embodies these aims.
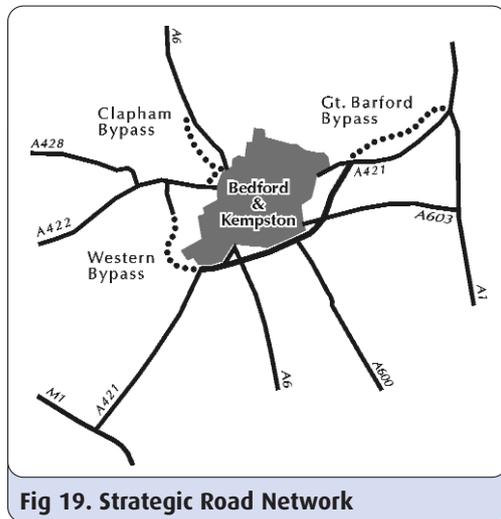
Fig 19. Strategic Road Network

BEDFORD BYPASSES

9.9 The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions in its publication 'A New Deal For Trunk Roads in England' published 31 July 1998 has reviewed the road programme against criteria of accessibility, safety, economy, integration and environment. The programme comprises 37 schemes throughout the country which will start within the next seven years, although no information on priority order or anticipated completion dates is given. Schemes within the Borough include:

– the A6 Clapham Bypass – 5km to dual carriageway standard costed at £31m, completed December 2002.

– the A421 Great Barford Bypass – 7.5km to dual carriageway standard costed at £25m. Draft Orders have been published. Public Inquiry held January/February 2003.

– The A6 Bedford Western Bypass A428/A421 link is included in the road programme as a development led project. As a first phase a single carriageway scheme is currently being promoted by a partnership of Bedfordshire County Council and the private sector. The scheme is an essential part of the Bedford Integrated Transport Strategy and is given a high local priority as it will reduce traffic congestion in the urban area and increase the benefit of the southern bypass. The A6/A428 link of the Western Bypass is considered an essential part of the Bedford Integrated Transport Strategy to increase the benefit of both the southern bypass and the A421/A428 link in assisting reducing congestion in the urban area. The former DoT chose an outer alignment for the Western Bypass in preference to an inner route which went through Queens Park, and progress has subsequently been made on developing a suitable route and a means of financing it.

9.10 The planned Norse Road Link which was proposed to join the Southern Bypass with the Norse Road/A428 Roundabout with the aim of reducing the amount of traffic in the town centre by taking traffic from the north and east onto the bypass has been removed from the Government's Trunk Road programme and there is now little likelihood of this scheme being progressed.

POLICY T1

~~The Borough Council will continue to press for improvements to the strategic road network within the Borough and jointly review the Bedford Integrated Transport Strategy. The Borough Council will protect safeguarded highway lines. Where necessary and appropriate it will seek developer contributions/planning obligations towards the provision of necessary highway infrastructure.~~

OTHER ROAD SCHEMES

9.13 The Borough and County Council have prepared the Bedford Transport Development Plan (BTDP). The main aim of this is to establish a more robust network in the urban areas reducing vehicle traffic flows and creating sufficient road space on existing roads to enable improvements to be made for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians. The Plan consists of two main schemes:

– the St John's Area Relief Scheme

– the Prebend Street Area Relief Scheme

9.14 However finance from both Government grants and developer contributions is extremely unlikely to be forthcoming and the BTDP as envisaged is unlikely to remain as policy. The route for both these phases is safeguarded until policy has been fully reviewed and further information on the east west rail link has been incorporated into the decision making process.

9.15 The Borough Council supports the following schemes:

– Dallas Road link: This would enable traffic from College Street Industrial Estate Kempston, to gain

direct access to Bedford Road so removing industrial traffic from Spring Road where there is a conflict between industrial and residential traffic and a sub-standard junction. The LTP seeks funding for the Phase 3 B531 Bedford – Kempston improvements which include a possible first phase of the Dallas Road – College Street Link.

– Ford End Road link: This would provide a link to Charles Wells Brewery in Queens Park, enhancing the local residential environment by re-routing industrial traffic. Private funding would be required for this scheme as it is not currently included in the LTP.

9.16 The Borough Council will seek developer contributions where appropriate towards the implementation of necessary road schemes.

POLICY T2

~~The Borough Council will seek improvements to the local transportation network as shown on the Proposals Map, and will work with the County Council for enhanced funding provisions for Bedford, and seek developer contributions/planning obligations to achieve improvements to the local network.~~

9.17 As Trunk Road schemes around Bedford are implemented and through traffic is diverted, it is important that the status of trunk roads within the urban area be reconsidered. The early detrunking of the A6 for example would remove an obstacle to further Town Centre improvements. The Government's 'New Deal For Trunk Roads' proposed the detrunking of the A6 between Luton and Leicester and the A428 between Bedford and Northampton. The A428 and the southern section of the A6 are now detrunked and the benefit is more effective management of the local road network.

ROAD SCHEMES IN THE RURAL AREA

9.20 Although not programmed by the DETR, the dualling of the A421 between Bedford and the borough boundary (a core trunk road) is a high priority since it facilitates development within the strategic corridor.

POLICY T3

The Borough Council will continue to press for increased priority and the early implementation of schemes for the improvement of the strategic road network in the rural areas and will protect safeguarded and identified road lines.

9.21 Since the National Road Review 1995, the A1(M) Improvement Scheme between Alconbury and Baldock has been dropped, apart from the more modest improvement of the A1 at Tempsford which remains in the current programme on safety criteria.

HIGHWAY IMPACT

9.22 In both urban and rural areas, new roads can have considerable visual impact and they can become a source of noise nuisance. Opportunities should be taken during the design stage to mitigate against these two problems. The provision of landscaping will not only improve the appearance of new roads but will also help to reduce the effects of traffic generated pollution in local and global terms. Efforts should be made to preserve existing trees. Policy BE42 refers to the impact

of light pollution which is an increasing cause of concern.

9.23 Where proposed roads are expected to generate high levels of noise it should be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects on sensitive developments such as residential areas, schools, hospitals, listed buildings, SSSIs and other sensitive rural areas. Reference should be made to the relevant Government guidance, including PPG24 Planning and Noise.

POLICY T4

The Borough Council will seek the provision of landscape screening appropriate to the scale of proposed roads and the preservation of existing trees, and will expect noise impact to be no higher than levels stipulated in Government guidance. Particular attention will be paid to sensitive areas or developments such as housing, schools, institutions and similar uses.

MOTORISTS' FACILITIES

9.24 The location of Bedford, on a major route linking the M1 to the west and the A1 to the east, provides an opportunity to provide a strategically located motorists' facility. In view of its central location and the physical characteristics of the area, an outline planning permission has been granted for a motorists' facility at a site in the south-west quadrant of the A6/A421 junction between the Bypass and the Elstow Landfill Site (see also Policy T18 concerning lorry parking at this site). A site at the junction of the Southern Bypass with the A603 may also provide a suitable location on the strategic road network for a motorists' facility, gaining benefit from provision in association with the proposed park and ride scheme.

9.25 Any proposals for the development of such a facility on this site or elsewhere will be judged against the following policy:

POLICY T5

~~The Borough Council will support the provision of a site for motorists' facilities on the Bedford Southern Bypass at its junction with the A603 in association with the proposed park & ride scheme and will determine any planning applications for the development of such facilities against the following criteria:~~

~~i) the safety and convenience of the proposed access arrangements;~~

~~ii) the effect of the proposals on the environment;~~

~~iii) the impact of the proposal on residential amenities;~~

~~iv) the degree of need;~~

~~v) the quality of the proposed design and landscaping; and,~~

~~vi) the availability and locational benefit of the identified sites.~~

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

BUSES

9.26 Public transport is an important element in the pursuit of sustainable development. By encouraging people away

from using private cars to using buses, congestion, fuel consumption and emissions are reduced.

9.27 The Borough and County Councils are committed to improving public transport facilities within the Borough. In terms of non-commercially operated bus services provision is determined by the available resources for subsidies set against a list of guidelines for rural and urban areas. Integration of different elements of public transport will be encouraged to increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of different modes.

9.28 An integral part of the development of Pilgrim Square will be the reprovision of a bus interchange catering for increased bus movements (see Policy SH4).

9.29 In order to secure the sustainable benefits of public transport and accessibility in the context of the Borough Council's wider highway and parking policies, consideration will be given to the amount of traffic that new development is likely to attract or generate. Where this is considerable, or where the benefits of securing the greater use of buses would be worthwhile, the Council will use planning conditions or seek legal agreements for the provision of public transport infrastructure, including dedicated facilities such as bus ways, traffic signal priority, and park & ride. Proposed developments that are well situated to take advantage of public transport will receive favourable consideration. The objective is to provide all significant new development with public transport services.

POLICY T6

The Borough Council will support the improvement and provision of public transport infrastructure. Where possible the Borough Council will seek to ensure that new developments, particularly housing and employment uses, have infrastructure suitable for public transport including dedicated facilities from an early stage of occupation, and that existing public transport corridors are safeguarded.

9.30 The 1985 Transport Act removed the obligation for operators to provide services for social needs which were not considered viable. The overall effect of the Act has been to accelerate the modal transfer from bus to car, particularly in rural areas. Bus services and facilities will therefore have to be enhanced to levels which will attract car users onto buses. This demands the best operating environment for buses.

9.31 Low cost priority measures can yield large benefits. Bus lanes, for example, give buses an advantage over other traffic thereby reducing journey times. These combined with park and ride facilities can create an attractive alternative to the car. Where appropriate, developer contributions/planning obligations will be sought for the implementation of such schemes. The Integrated Transport Strategy identifies the location of these public transport facilities. Where possible other opportunities will be taken to implement similar facilities elsewhere. The Borough Council will also seek contributions to the revenue support of public transport in order to assist the achievement of more sustainable development. All contributions sought will reflect current national advice on planning obligations which, at the time of adoption

of this plan, include the limitation of contributions to revenue support to the short term, and with a maximum cost.

POLICY T7

Where necessary and appropriate, the Borough Council will seek developer contributions/planning obligations for both the capital implementation costs of bus priority measures, busways, park and ride facilities and other similar measures, and the revenue costs of funding for public transport including the revenue support of services in order to assist the achievement of sustainable development.

RAIL

9.32 The provision of quick and frequent rail services to Bedford add to the town's attractiveness in economic and social terms. Further electrification is vital if stronger regional links are to be developed. This will increase opportunities for improving Inter-City and Thameslink Express services to and from Bedford.

9.33 The Thameslink 2000 proposals will improve journey times to London and to a wider range of through destinations south of the Thames. The Local Authorities will continue to promote this scheme via a joint public/private consortium as the proposals are regarded as being vital to the successful economic development of the town.

POLICY T8

The Borough Council will continue to promote Bedford as an important station on the national rail network by seeking the:

i) maintenance and enhancement of Inter-City services;

ii) maintenance and enhancement of Thameslink services;

iii) improvement of existing cross country services and development of new links; and,

iv) improvement of facilities at Bedford Midland Station.

9.34 In the context of the County Council's strategic corridors designated in the Structure Plan 2011, the Borough Council wishes to see further investment in infrastructure in both the Leicester to London and Marston Vale lines, particularly the electrification north of Bedford, the extension of services to Milton Keynes and an increased number of trains stopping at Bedford. The retention of services on the Marston Vale line is considered to be a priority by the Borough Council. Improved car parking facilities together with integration with bus and taxi services are seen as essential to the viability of services on both these lines. The continued commitment to rail borne land-fill waste stated in the Bedfordshire Adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan will help to safeguard the Marston Vale line for both freight and passenger purposes.

9.35 The Borough Council is a member of the consortium promoting the concept of an east-west rail route linking Felixstowe – Ipswich/Norwich – Cambridge – Letchworth – Bedford – Milton Keynes – Aylesbury – Oxford – Swindon and thence to west coast routes. The preliminary studies have indicated that such a route is viable and offers potential for both passenger and

freight traffic providing opportunities for more sustainable development with greater accessibility to public transport. The proposed route utilises primarily existing sections of track, however three possible alignments in the vicinity of Bedford are currently being appraised. Any land use allocations relating to an east west rail route are therefore considered premature prior to a decision on the route.

POLICY T9

The Borough Council will encourage improved rail services to and from Bedford, the improvement of the Marston Vale line including improved parking provision, and the electrification of the route north of Bedford.

9.36   Parkway stations could offer the potential to reduce peak hour traffic congestion in the town and ease parking near Midland station. This is recognised by the Bedford Integrated Transport Strategy, but in the absence of strong operator interest, such proposals must remain a longer term objective. The Borough Council has previously sought the provision of new stations both to the north and to the south of Bedford.

9.37   A parkway station to the north of Bedford could not be implemented within this Local Plan period as such a project would require disproportionate funding to extend Thameslink services, as well as large scale enabling development contrary to the Structure Plan 2011. For this reason the proposal shown in the 1993 Borough Local Plan has not been carried forward. However the proposal will retain the support of the Borough Council and remains a long term aim.

9.38   The site for the southern parkway station was identified in the Cow Bridge area by the 1993 Local Plan and the Land West of Elstow Bypass Development Brief. This proposal has also been reviewed in the context of the Structure Plan 2011 which indicates a strategic allocation of 4,500 dwellings focused on Elstow Storage Depot. A key principle of such a development at Elstow Storage Depot is the provision of a new station on the Bedford to London line (see Policy H14). Since two new stations south of Bedford are not feasible and the proposal at Elstow Storage Depot would be in association with large scale enabling development, the proposal for a parkway station in the Cow Bridge area has not been carried forward into this Local Plan. It should be noted that the other elements of the Land West of Elstow Bypass Development Brief are incorporated as key development principles (see Policy E3). Integration with any east-west rail route development is to be encouraged.

POLICY T10

The Borough Council will encourage improved access to rail services and support the construction of new stations where these are consistent with the other policies of this plan and contribute to the review of the Bedford Integrated Transport Strategy.

FREIGHT

9.39   Wherever possible, goods especially bulky materials, should be carried by rail rather than by road to reduce the number of heavy goods vehicles on the road as they have a significant adverse environmental impact

compared to rail. The Council will encourage more use of the railways where this is a viable alternative and developments using rail links will be encouraged. The use of the Bedford to Bletchley line for bulk waste transportation will be supported particularly in the context of landfill activities at L Field and Rookery South close to Stewartby.

POLICY T11

The Council will give favourable consideration to developments which will make use of direct links to the rail network for the movement of freight provided the proposals are not contrary to any other policies of this Plan.

RIVER TRANSPORT

9.40   The Great Ouse flowing through the centre of the Borough's urban area presents the opportunity to exploit a natural communications link. The Council will look favourably on proposals to provide and support river boat services to supplement road provision.

POLICY T12

The Borough Council will seek to encourage proposals that provide for river boat services.

PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

9.41   Progress has been made in the Borough towards the provision of facilities for both cyclists and pedestrians. Work so far has included riverside walkways, pedestrianised shopping streets, traffic calming measures and the creation of a network of cycleways. The pursuit of sustainability provides support for extending pedestrian and cycling facilities. To encourage greater use of walking and cycling as a means of travel, pleasant routes free of motor vehicles should be created allowing movements to take place efficiently and safely. Routes should be designed to limit crime by incorporating natural surveillance and by being open and well lit wherever possible.

9.42   In providing for both groups the Borough Council will consider the need for a range of facilities such as cycle parking stands, seating, lighting, safe and convenient crossings. They will seek to ensure there is adequate funding for maintenance. In some instances the Council may require the provision of such facilities to be funded from developments.

PEDESTRIANS

9.43   Efforts will be directed at making areas and developments safer and more attractive to pedestrians, with options including traffic calming, environmental improvements, improved lighting, provision of wider pavements/narrower carriageways, facilities for disabled people, and pedestrian friendly crossings which avoid long detours, delays or underpasses. In general, pedestrian routes should not be detached from the roadway or other activity area as such isolation can encourage crime. However in some cases, (such as along the river or the disused railway to Willington) this is not always possible.

9.44   The integration of all aspects of the transportation system means that measures such as the reduction of traffic speed, or vehicle restricted areas can further raise the profile of pedestrian activity as an alternative to the car for short journeys. In combination with other environmental enhancement measures, the urban area can be made both more attractive and pedestrian friendly.

9.45   The Council has for many years sought to extend public access to the riverside – both in town and in the rural area. Wherever possible there is a need to establish a series of circular routes and in this respect, it is important that a number of new river crossings is created for both pedestrian and cycle users. In appropriate cases, pedestrian routes and facilities which are accessible for all, will be required in association with new development by planning conditions or obligations.

POLICY T13

The Borough Council will require the protection, enhancement and promotion of pedestrian routes and facilities including those shown on the Proposals Map, and seek the provision of new pedestrian routes and facilities which are safe, convenient and attractive, particularly in association with major developments and transportation proposals, including new river crossings at Church End Kempston (in association with the new distributor road); at Honeyhills/ Hillgrounds; adjacent to Britannia Ironworks; at Batts Ford and in the vicinity of Fenlake Meadows/Priory Park.

CYCLISTS

9.46   While cycling plays an important part in the transport patterns of the town the levels of cycle usage is well below its potential. Since 1979 cycle routes have been steadily introduced and proposals which will lead to a more integrated network are already well developed. As mentioned in paragraph 9.45, routes along the Great Ouse are to be extended in the urban area.

9.47   An integrated network is essential in encouraging cycle use and reducing accident rates among cyclists. Factors such as safe crossing provision at junctions, good maintenance, good connections with destinations, secure parking and segregation from pedestrians and vehicles where conflict could arise, are all important considerations, particularly for new developments. The Borough and County Councils support the development of the SUSTRANS route through the Borough from Marston Moretaine through Kempston, along the Embankment towards Sandy as part of the National Cycling Network.

9.48   The emphasis should be on the improvement of the cycling environment to encourage greater use. There is a need for 'calmed' areas, with safe links to the town centre and other destinations. Safe and secure facilities should be provided for parking, particularly in large housing or employment developments, town centres, education related development, leisure facilities and at public transport interchanges. Planned routes will be protected from development.

Fig 20. Cycle Network – Existing & Proposed
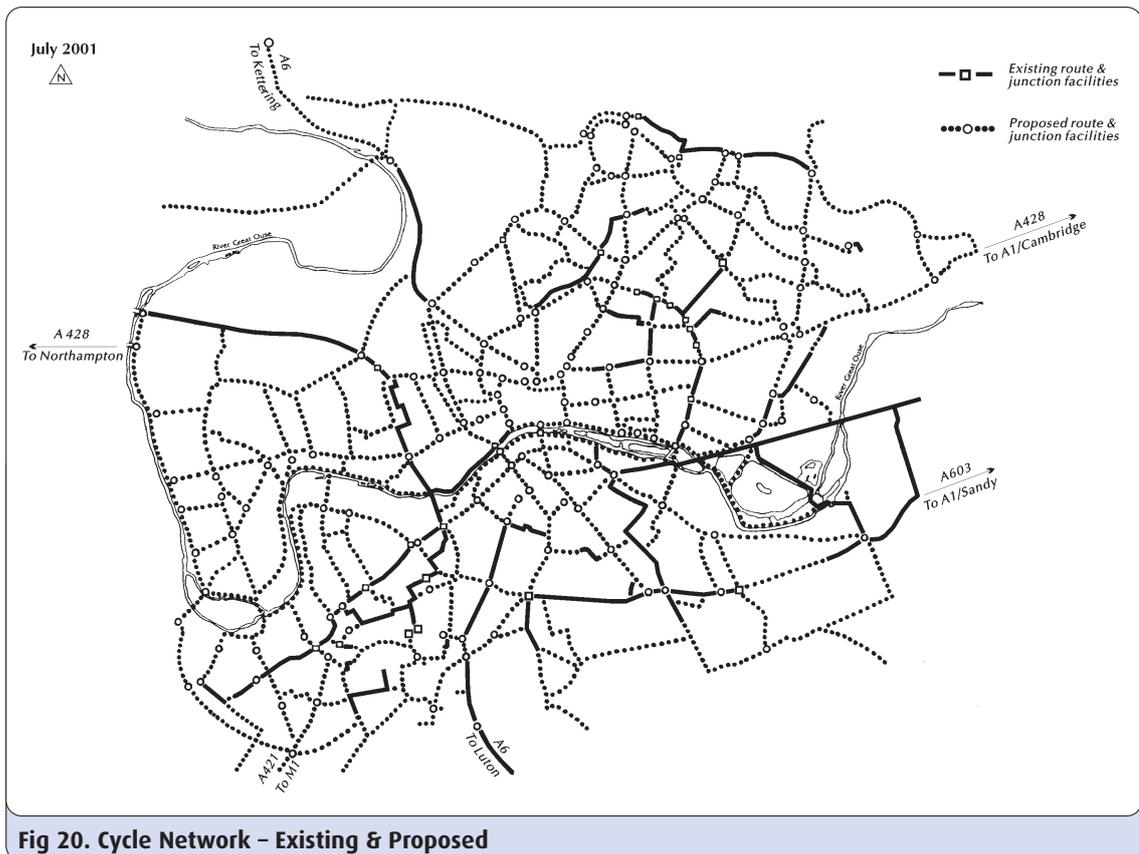
9.49   The routes shown on the Proposals Map show key proposals to encourage cycling. The wider context of the routes identified in the Borough's cycling strategy map is shown on the Figure 20. The aim is to create a series of radial routes converging on the town centre, linked by cross town routes, to create an effective local and longer distance network for cyclists. As with pedestrian provision, the issue of isolation requires consideration, as does the resolution of potential conflict with other users. In appropriate cases, routes and facilities for cyclists will be required in association with new development possibly as planning gain.

9.49a   A conflict has however arisen between pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre. In 1997 cycling was prohibited in certain streets with limited access only afforded to reach cycle stands. A study is underway to investigate ways of providing safe access for cyclists into the town centre and at the same time provide safe passage for pedestrians within the pedestrian area.

POLICY T14
The Borough Council will require the protection, enhancement and promotion of cycle routes and facilities including those shown on the Proposals Map, and seek the provision of new routes and facilities for cyclists which are safe, convenient and attractive, particularly in association with major development and transportation proposals. River crossings will include provision for cyclists where appropriate.

PARKING

9.49b   The revised PPG13 considers the role of car parking as a major factor in determining means of travel, particularly to work, and the control of parking is seen to be essential as part of a package of measures aimed at promoting sustainable travel choices. The importance of the regional context is identified, addressing the need to avoid wasteful competition between locations on the issue of parking availability and cost. This should be addressed in the first instance in a Regional Transport Plan. Similarly well conceived park and ride schemes are supported in principle. The following local plan policies are broadly in line with the thrust of new guidance, though the detail of PPG13 will be a material consideration when determining planning applications.

9.50   Parking policies are important in terms of securing more sustainable forms of development, encouraging the use and provision of public transport, and supporting vitality and viability of town centres. Parked cars can also dominate townspace and raise urban design issues. The Local Plan considers parking in the context of government guidance, the Bedford Integrated Transport Strategy and other initiatives. It is concerned both with parking that is provided in association with proposed development (which is subject to land use planning controls) and to some extent with parking that is regarded to be a public amenity for example on-street and in the Council's car parks (which is subject to management policies).

PRIVATE OFF-STREET PARKING

9.51   The Borough Council's adopted car parking standards for new development seek to balance the need to discourage reliance on cars for commuting and other journeys where there are effective alternatives, with the need to selectively restrict on-street parking and prevent congestion. The Borough's adopted parking standards relate generally to a maximum level of parking provision. Each case will be determined on its own merits and the advice in PPG6 and PPG13 on operational minimum amounts of parking will be taken into account. Examples of where such operational minimum amounts of parking could be considered are with residential provision in the town centre, for student accommodation and for Housing Association developments where lower levels of car usage can be demonstrated.

9.52   In certain instances it may not be possible or desirable to provide a high level of on-site parking. Increasing parking places ad infinitum will lead to greater traffic congestion and would be contrary to the principles of sustainability. In addition there are circumstances where a particular scale of car parking provision would be inconsistent with the 'local' nature of proposed uses. In areas where public transport is available or could be made available consideration will be given to the payment of 'commuted sums' for the supply of off-site parking. Alternatively, contributions may be sought for measures to assist walking, cycling or public transport provision.

POLICY T15
In considering development proposals, the Borough Council will have regard to the Supplementary Planning Guidance on parking standards and seek to negotiate where appropriate commuted payments for off-site provision, eg. infrastructure provision for park and ride services, other public transport provision, pedestrian and cycling facilities.

PUBLIC ON AND OFF-STREET PARKING

9.53   Within the urban area and in the town centre in particular, the scope for an integrated approach to transport is increased through the ability to manage the availability and price of on-street and public off-street car parking. In the town centre, the policy is to ensure ample high quality short stay car parking for shoppers and others visiting the centre, rather than catering for the long stay parking of commuters and employees. In addition there are operational needs such as space for deliveries and picking up and setting down of passengers.

9.54   The Borough and the County Councils are in agreement on implementing both a Special Parking Area (SPA) covering the Bedford/Kempston urban area and a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) covering central Bedford. The CPZ was introduced in Autumn 2000 and already the effect is better management of on-street parking spaces. The CPZ is still in its early stages and 'fine tuning' will be an on-going process in response to changing circumstances.

9.55 Extending the provision of town centre parking spaces, particularly for long stay users is not an option in terms of cost and environmental disbenefits. Current long stay facilities in the central area will be insufficient to cater for the future needs of commuters as pressures increase. To prevent long stay parking intruding into residential areas, future needs will increasingly be met by the provision of park & ride facilities and improved public transport together with management of on-street parking.

PARK & RIDE

9.56 Key peripheral locations for park & ride will therefore be developed to encourage the change of mode from car to bus, particularly for car journeys from beyond the urban area. The Bedford Integrated Transport Strategy identifies the general location of proposed park & ride facilities and provision was made in the 1999/2000 TPP bid for funding park and ride provision at Cardington Cross and a supporting bus lane scheme on Cardington Road. The proposal map identifies this and three other sites for proposed park and ride facilities at Clapham, Biddenham and Elstow.

9.57 Park & ride car parks will be developed to a high standard of design, including security measures, to make them attractive to potential users. In appropriate cases, the Borough Council will seek developer contributions to provide park & ride facilities and services and may consider the introduction of commercial facilities.

POLICY T17

The Council will seek the provision of high quality car parking facilities

i) in the town centre for shoppers and other short stay users, and

ii) at park and ride sites indicated on the Proposals Map for long term users. Where possible the provision of such facilities will be in association with public transport priority measures and busways. In appropriate cases, developer funding will be sought for the cost of park and ride facilities and services.

PARKING FOR COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

9.58 In recent years there has been a general increase in heavy goods vehicle traffic in Bedfordshire, concentrated on motorways and trunk routes. Bedford's strategic location between the A1 and M1 makes commercial vehicle parking in Bedford an important issue.

9.59 Within the industry the trend is towards bigger vehicles and for haulage routes to become longer as 'just in time' deliveries become more common place. While provision must be made for such vehicles to access residential/commercial and retail centres, the size, weight and noise of such vehicles is incompatible with many roads. Consideration will therefore be given to width and/or height restrictions, HGV routing and controls on loading and unloading.

9.60 Such vehicles require overnight stopping facilities. Companies require a safe, secure stopping place, preferably with food and washing facilities. The shortage of suitable places gives rise to many complaints from residents about overnight parking of commercial vehicles.

9.61 Currently, provision is made at Melbourne Street for lorry parking, and while the standard of the park is high, there are limited facilities for drivers. It may also represent a sub-optimal use of the site (see also Policy S2 and Appendix D Opportunity Site 10). Following the opening of the Southern Bypass the impact of lorries travelling from the main trunk road to use the existing site will become more apparent. The Borough Council will therefore give full consideration to finding an alternative location for the lorry parking. The Council will require provision of facilities for lorries in association with the development of the proposed motorists' facility discussed above in Policy T5 as advised in PPG13.

POLICY T18

Development of facilities for commercial vehicle parking will be required in conjunction with Policy T5 for a motorists facility on the Bedford Southern Bypass at its junctions with the A6 and the A603. Elsewhere, the Borough Council will determine any planning applications for the development of such facilities against all of the following criteria:

i) the impact of the proposal on residential amenity;

ii) the safety and convenience of the proposed access arrangement;

iii) the effect of the proposals on the environment;

iv) the quality of the proposed design and landscaping, and level of facilities provided;

v) the degree of need; and,

vi) a location in close proximity to the strategic network.

COACH PARKING

9.62 Visitors coming to Bedford by coach are using a form of transport that is both sustainable and efficient in its use of road space. Tourists and other coach users provide Bedford with a valued source of income. Coaches are generally parked on wide roads with little through traffic (for example, De Parys Avenue and The Embankment). Two parking areas have been provided by the Council in Bushmead Avenue and Castle Lane. Further sites and direction signs will be required to encourage a greater number of visitors to use coaches when visiting Bedford.

POLICY T19

The Borough Council will seek the provision of coach parking facilities and identify safe and convenient locations for the collecting and dropping-off passengers. Where necessary and appropriate developer contributions may be sought toward such provision.

SAFETY AND TRAFFIC CALMING

9.63   Many existing roads are capable of being 'calmed' but the treatment must be appropriate to the position of the road within the highway hierarchy. The objective of traffic calming in residential areas is to discourage through traffic and reduce traffic speeds and volumes. Whenever highway improvement or development schemes are undertaken the opportunity of introducing traffic calming measures should be considered. Minor traffic management schemes will improve both safety and traffic flow and a programme of minor road improvements has been identified. Relevant policies relate to on-street parking, pedestrian and cycle facilities and the use of bus priority measures.

9.64   Traffic calming measures have the potential for merely transferring traffic to adjacent streets. Priority of schemes has been set which will be implemented as resources permit. In many cases, traffic calming can be carried out in conjunction with environmental enhancement schemes such as landscaping. This will improve the quality of the environment and encourage walking and cycling as a means of transport. Good schemes will also reduce community severance and improve driver behaviour.

9.65   The Borough and County Councils have identified areas where traffic calming is considered a priority. These areas appear in the ITS and are incorporated into works programmes as resources permit. Further areas will be identified during the Plan period. Priority will be given to high accident areas, areas near shopping streets and schools, and in areas where pedestrian movement is greatest, or where there is high incidence of other vulnerable groups.

9.66   Road safety can be designed into all new projects and the Borough Council has adopted supplementary planning guidance on Traffic Calming. Planning proposals will be expected to accord with this guidance.

9.67   Where measures are required, developers will be required to carry out an analysis of safety features necessary and submit this with their planning application. Developer funding will be required for proposals where necessary although the detailed standards and safety audit of proposals are matters for agreement with the Highway Authority in each case.

POLICY T20
Development will only be permitted where the Borough Council is satisfied that the proposal takes full account of the Borough Council's supplementary planning guidance on Traffic Calming and covers all necessary safety considerations. Where necessary and appropriate developer funding will be sought for the capital implementation costs of safety features.

ACCESS

9.68   Wherever possible, opportunities will be pursued for improving travel opportunities for people who are less mobile. When people's mobility is reduced it is likely to have a serious impact on the quality of life of individuals. The Borough Council's supplementary planning guidance: Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts gives advice on providing infrastructure within the layout of new residential layouts to facilitate improved accessibility for less mobile people.

9.69   The Borough Council will consider the issues surrounding access for disabled persons in a number of ways including design matters and public transport. Design measures may incorporate the use of suitable parking, appropriate setting down and collection points for buses and taxis, the layout and type of footpaths (including textured surfaces), crossings, pedestrianised areas and street furniture, signing, dropped kerbs, lighting, and wheelchair accessible toilet facilities. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 enables the government to make regulations, known as accessibility regulations, to require that all new public transport vehicles – buses, coaches, trains and trams – are accessible. The government will also be able to make accessibility regulations covering all newly licensed taxis. The Borough Council will seek the design and provision of infrastructure to integrate with these vehicles.

POLICY T21
The Borough Council will, where appropriate, require all new development to make provision for or contribute to improving accessibility on public transport, footpaths, roads and other public areas for disabled persons.

LEISURE & RECREATION POLICIES

10 / LEISURE & RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

10.1 Recreation and leisure is one of the Borough's greatest strengths in terms of facilities, and opportunities for participation across a wide spectrum of sporting and cultural activities. In recent years the Council has invested substantial sums resulting in Bedford now being recognised as a regional centre of excellence.

10.2 The Borough Council will continue to improve and expand the provision and promotion of leisure opportunities and has adopted strategies for sports, recreation and art. These strategies were prepared following a survey of participation in leisure activities and a survey of facilities in the Borough and they aim to promote a greater awareness of existing opportunities and enable all sections of the community to take part in the leisure activities of their choice.

10.3 The role of the local plan is to ensure that where new facilities are required appropriate sites can be brought forward while at the same time protecting existing facilities and open spaces, especially where there are competing claims for land uses which may lead to the loss of land with recreational value or potential. Additionally the local plan also sets standards for the provision of open space in association with new development.

KEY ISSUES

10.4 This chapter addresses the following key issues:

1 The need to make provision for leisure facilities in the context of continually evolving needs for a range of leisure activities.

2 The safeguarding of existing facilities and open space.

3 The need to provide open space and community facilities in association with new development.

FORMAL LEISURE PROVISION

10.5 Recent years have seen a broadening of formal leisure provision in the Borough, notably through the development of Aspects Leisure Centre, the Oasis Leisure Pool and Bedford Athletics Stadium which together form a significant area of leisure development in the Barkers Lane area alongside Priory Country Park. Bedford Town Football Club has also been re-established on a site at Meadow Lane. These facilities add to the golf, swimming, canoe, hockey, marina and country park facilities already available.

10.6 Most facilities serve Borough needs but the rugby and football clubs, the athletics stadium and Santa Pod Race Track attract spectators and participants from further afield. The river also provides the setting for annual rowing regattas and the Bedford River Festival.

10.7 The agenda for future provision will be set in the context of emerging requirements and market trends. In its strategy 'Sport in the East' published in 1994, the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation (now Sport England) highlight facility deficiencies in the region. The Borough Council is seen as having priority needs for a permanent gymnastics centre, County volleyball centre, County netball centre and improvements to Cardington canoe course.

10.8 The further success of local clubs, for example the Bedford Town FC, and Bedford RUFC may also generate a requirement for enhanced provision of sports grounds and this will need to be assessed when appropriate.

10.9 In the area of specialised provision the Borough Leisure strategy highlights the fact that the Borough has found it difficult to cater for those seeking excellence and requiring indoor facilities in both sports and the arts. In this respect the Council supports De Montfort University in maintaining its reputation as a centre of excellence in sports science and physical education and will continue to be involved in discussions aimed at enhancing the University's current facilities. In addition there is a wealth of facilities available in schools, colleges, churches and village halls which have potential for community use but remain largely untapped.

10.10 The diverse and multi-cultural community of Bedford could create demand for a range of facilities. Generally speaking, proposals which meet identified needs or demand for specialised or community facilities will be encouraged subject to planning policy. However, the location of the facilities is also of key importance. Any new facilities should relate well to existing provision and to the community they will serve and incorporate measures to secure safety and crime reduction wherever possible (see Policy BE45). Facility development has largely taken place in the urban area and this will most often be the best location for facilities which serve the whole Borough.

10.11 However, recreation and leisure uses cover a wide variety of types of development with different locational requirements. This means that some recreation and leisure facilities are best suited to town centre locations, while it will be more appropriate for others to be located elsewhere. Not withstanding this, the principles of sustainability in terms of re-using derelict sites and property; concentrating development in urban areas; locating major trip generating activity at transport nodes; ensuring access by public transport and so on are still fundamental, along with normal development control criteria.

10.12 For this reason, depending on the nature of development proposed, the first preference should be for town centre locations, where appropriate sites or buildings for conversion are available, followed by edge

of centre sites, local centres and finally (where accessible by public transport) out of centre sites. The diverse nature of activities covered by leisure and recreation does, however require a degree of flexibility in approach, but the normal principles of sustainable development will be applied, along with other policy considerations.

10.13   In some cases, planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure necessary and appropriate developer contributions at the planning application stage. In the case of major trip generating uses which cannot be accommodated in, or on the edge of existing centres, this may include measures to improve public transport accessibility.

POLICY LR1

Planning permission will be granted for new sports/leisure facilities where:

i) the facility meets a deficiency in existing provision for specialist or community need;

ii) the proposed site is well related to existing settlements and accords with the locational principles of sustainable development;

iii) provision is made for access for users travelling by foot, cycle and public transport;

iv) there is no adverse effect on the highway network or amenity of local residents;

v) the facility is of a high design standard and the layout incorporates adequate car parking and landscaping and includes measures to create a safe leisure environment; and

vi) appropriate provision is made to secure access by all.

LEISURE AND THE EVENING ECONOMY

10.14   The Borough Council are keen to secure a range of activities in the town centre, in order to secure diversity and vitality. This has been discussed in the Town Centre chapter and includes activities that operate outside normal working hours, such as appropriate leisure activities (see para 8.41 – 8.43). In some cases, these activities can create problems such as noise, litter and parking problems. The Borough Council has introduced CCTV to the town centre and opportunities for the further extension of this will be considered in order to improve security and act as a deterrent to un-neighbourly behaviour (see Policy TC10). In order to ensure that the benefits of encouraging a range of activities are not reduced by potential problems, the Borough Council will ensure that a range of factors are considered before granting planning permission.

POLICY LR2

Where a proposal is likely to generate disturbance and/or activity out of normal working hours, planning permission will only be granted where there is no adverse impact on:

i) the amenity of nearby residents and surrounding users;

ii) conservation areas and buildings of historical/architectural interest; and,

iii) traffic flows and parking.

Consideration will be given to the cumulative impact of the

proposal in relation to other facilities and proposals in the vicinity. Where planning permission is granted, the Borough Council will consider the use of conditions to minimise or avoid the adverse effects of development.

GOLF

10.15   Golf is a popular leisure activity in the Borough. There are established Clubs at Mowsbury Park, Biddenham and Clapham, and clubs in the rural area at Colmworth, Pavenham and Wyboston. Planning permission has also been granted for additional courses in the Borough. The allocation of land to the north of Bromham Road, Biddenham has necessitated the cessation of operations at the Bedfordshire Golf Club, Biddenham though this club has now relocated to a new golf course at Brookmead Farm, Stagsden.

10.16   Golf courses constitute significant areas of development and can have an important influence on the character of fringe and countryside areas.

10.17   Sport England has published standards for the provision of golf courses in the region. The guideline for Championship Courses has been met as has the former ECSR's minimum requirement for golf course provision. Further provision is not therefore considered to be a priority. The Borough and Sport England have encouraged the provision of a balance of pay and play and private members' courses and the need for pay and play facilities has also been met. However there is still a need for specialist facilities particularly for new participants in golf.

10.18   The development of a new golf course can raise important questions of public access and impact on the countryside.

10.19   The appropriateness of a particular type of golf development depends on the nature of the facility and the character of the proposed site. Golf development may make a positive contribution to the landscape where it is used to help restore a degraded area; such opportunities may arise in the Marston Vale. Elsewhere in areas where the landscape is of high visual quality for example in the Area of Great Landscape Value and areas with recognised wildlife significance, golf development should only take place where it is sensitively integrated into the landscape.

10.20   A necessary part of any golf development is its clubhouse and ancillary development such as a professionals shop and a green keepers store. It may also be appropriate to provide a limited amount of other sports facilities to be used by golfers but they should only be provided on a small scale and be located adjacent to the other facilities. All facilities should be designed on a domestic scale and be capable of contributing positively to the landscape. Where there are existing buildings on the site, opportunities for their re-use to house course facilities should be taken in preference to new build.

10.21   Golf course proposals should not include development which does not relate directly to the running of the golf facility. This includes restaurant facilities over and above

those required by players and staff, residential accommodation, major sports facilities for squash or other sports, hotel and conference facilities and housing. Additional built development unrelated to golf use would consolidate built development in the open countryside and should be resisted to protect the countryside for its own sake.

POLICY LR3

Where there is a justified need (in accordance with guidelines prepared by the former ECSR and to be updated by Sport England) for further golf provision permission will be granted where:

i) the proposal is well related to existing settlement areas and has good access to the strategic road network;

ii) rights of way through the course are maintained and public access to the countryside improved;

iii) development of the site has no adverse impact on the character of the Area of Great Landscape Value and the countryside in general and would not lead to the loss of features of visual, natural, archaeological or historical importance;

iv) the siting and design of the club house is appropriate in character and scale for its function and location and includes provision of adequate car parking;

v) the proposal does not include additional sport and leisure facilities over and above that reasonably required by golf users; and,

vi) the proposal does not include residential accommodation for players or non players.

10.22 In order that the full impact of a proposal can be assessed all applications must be submitted in full and contain details of the site and of the impact of development.

10.23 Site details should include such information as geology and soil type (including agricultural grade); the location and details of existing trees, woodland, hedges and so on; the location of all natural and man-made features such as ponds and ditches; areas of conservation/ wildlife interest and archaeological/earth science features. In addition current land uses and land contours should be shown. A 1:1250 scale map should be used.

10.24 The assessment of the environmental impact of the proposal should include consideration of a range of factors concerning landscape quality; appropriate habitat survey and identification of opportunities for improvement; preliminary archaeological evaluation; traffic survey; impact on the existing Rights of Way network and possible improvements; and where appropriate, opportunities for increased planting and access opportunities associated with the Forest of Marston Vale.

WATERSPORTS

10.25 The Borough has provision for watersports at Priory Country Park, Priory Marina and the Wyboston Lakes Complex and at a number of locations in the Marston Vale. The watersports which take place include sailing, angling, powered boating, canoeing, windsurfing, rowing and water skiing.

10.26 In the ECSR report on the supply and demand for watersports on enclosed water bodies within the Eastern Region, the main additional need identified is for a 1000m rowing course on enclosed water. The report suggests a location linked to the restoration of the proposed workings at Willington and it has been shown that a 2000 metre course could be physically accommodated there, subject to satisfactory resolution of other issues. The principle of locating a course in the Marston Vale or elsewhere in an appropriate location up to 2000m is generally supported subject to resolution of related issues. Such a proposal may provide new opportunities for related improvement or enhancement schemes. At the time of publication no single proposal has been agreed.

POLICY LR4

The Borough Council will support the development of a rowing course, up to 2000 metres in the Marston Vale or on land West of Willington, or elsewhere, provided that:

i) the course is located so as to be capable of serving the needs of existing users;

ii) there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity;

iii) there would be no adverse impact on the character of the proposed site in terms of landscape and visual qualities; wildlife or habitat assets; or historic or archaeological value;

iv) the proposal includes appropriate measures to ensure no adverse impact on related water bodies, the floodplain;

v) satisfactory access could be achieved from the main highway network; and

vi) where a proposal will lead to the loss of grades 1,2 or 3a agricultural land, the applicant can demonstrate an overriding need for the use and that no alternative site is available.

The development of non-essential ancillary built facilities will not be permitted. Detailed proposals will also be assessed against the following criteria:

– measures to enhance landscape features;
– measures for the creation and enhancement of habitats;
– opportunities for increased access.

10.27 North West of Bedford lies an area known as Radwell Lakes. The area comprises mainly agricultural land and has been the subject of extensive mineral working in the past. It lies in the Area of Great Landscape Value and within the River Protection Area and includes areas of natural and wildlife value.

10.28 Angling now takes place but the area has some potential for creating a more diverse recreational resource subject to appropriate policy considerations. Any proposal must respect the location of the site in the river valley and safeguard and enhance the landscape, while protecting assets such as the wildlife and conservation interests, or those relating to historical/archaeological features. Any development should therefore act as a positive force for both environmental protection and enhancement while being suitable for the context and setting in which it occurs.

10.29   In order to ensure that development in this area is low key, responds sensitively to the local environment and to ensure that visitor management problems are minimised, conditions or obligations may be applied to any such proposal. These may cover aspects such as scale, access, design, landscaping, hours of operation and other requirements as appropriate. Part of this process will include the preparation of a management plan. This should be prepared in partnership with the Borough Council and is to be agreed at planning application stage.

POLICY LR5

The Borough Council will support the development of sport and recreation activity at the Radwell Lakes area (shown on the Proposals Map) provided that:

i) there is no adverse impact on the River Protection Area or Area of Great Landscape Value;

ii) there is no adverse impact on nature conservation/wildlife factors or sites of historic or archaeological value;

iii) traffic generation can be accommodated within the existing highway infrastructure or that acceptable improvement works can be agreed;

iv) the proposal will not have an adverse impact on local amenity;

v) the proposal is in accordance with a management plan to be agreed with the Borough Council.

The development of non-essential built facilities will not be permitted. Detailed proposals will also be assessed against the following criteria:

– measures to protect/enhance landscape features;
– opportunities for increasing access through the creation of a network of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways;
– potential impact on water resource quality;
– restricting hours of operation.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

10.30   The town benefits from a range of facilities for art and cultural activity, including the Corn Exchange, the Bowen West Theatre and the Civic Theatre. These venues have traditionally provided for local amateur and touring professional drama companies and entertainers, including the Kadam South Asian Dance Company who are based in Bedford. In addition the town boasts the Bedford Museum, Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, BCA Gallery and John Bunyan Museum. The Corn Exchange has been refurbished and the Philharmonia Orchestra has taken up residency. In addition, a wide range of venues are available for music, dance and drama outside the Borough.

10.31   The Borough Council is, however, keen to improve the overall provision of facilities for art and cultural activity and is examining the feasibility of providing a performance venue for arts and entertainment events. Such a venue would provide an opportunity to bring together many of the Borough's multi-cultural activities.

POLICY LR6

Proposals for development for the performing arts, or cultural activity, including the provision of a multi-use performing arts venue in the town centre will be encouraged, where the proposal would cause no harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

INFORMAL RECREATION

RIVER GREAT OUSE

10.32   The river is a major asset for the Borough and its landscaped banks and floodplain provide a green wedge through the urban area The river is a visual, historic, natural, amenity and recreational asset for the Borough and serves many different users. Any demand for recreational use for the river must therefore be in balance with the need to protect other assets and meet the needs of other users.

10.33   The Borough Council has sought to promote recreational activities appropriate to each section of the river. This means concentrating intensive recreation in the urban area and elsewhere placing emphasis on more passive uses. The Borough has supported the development of Priory Marina. Moorings have been provided on the lower river whilst use of the upper river is discouraged to give preference to other uses notably rowing.

10.34   Access is the key to providing for informal recreation and many of the proposals in the river plan for enabling better access to the river have been achieved. It has been the objective of the Council to establish a Riverside Walk along both banks of the River through the urban area. This has largely been achieved with the exception of the stretch between County Bridge and Queen's Bridge on the south side of the River. The allocation of two sites for housing in the vicinity – Britannia Iron Works and Austin Canons offers the opportunity to complete this link. The Borough Council will expect the development of these sites to contribute to the achievement of this objective (see Policies H2 and H3).

10.35   Beyond the urban area, the Borough Council will seek to create long distance footpaths along the river. Where opportunities arise means of access will be explored (see also Policies T13 and T14).

POLICY LR7

The Borough Council will continue to support proposals which enhance the recreational use of the river where:

i) there would be no adverse impact on other river assets;

ii) the proposal would lead to increased access along the river, particularly where this would contribute to the creation of a long-distance riverside route in the Borough;

iii) there would be no conflict with other policies in this plan.

10.36   In addition the Borough will seek improvement of land lying between Riverside Close and the railway line as public open space for the eastern end of Kempston. The site was formally used as allotment gardens but has been unused for some years. Appropriate fencing would be required adjacent to the railway line and the existing drainage channel, but the site would be suitable for

amenity space. In view of the limited parking facilities in the area, car parking spaces would be provided within the site with access from Riverside Close. This will then link with proposals at Biddenham Loop.

POLICY LR8

The Borough Council will lay out approximately 2.2ha of land bounded by the river, Riverside Close and the railway line as amenity space. A small car park will be provided within the site.

MOORINGS

10.37   The restoration of navigation to Bedford in 1978, combined with the opening of Priory Marina has made the river more attractive to pleasure boating. To minimise conflict, the largest number of moorings have been located on the Lower River, with those on the Upper River restricted to essential short term facilities. The Upper River should be protected from such development as the area is sensitive and should only be used for more passive forms of activity.

10.38   Consideration will be given to the potential for creating a limited number of short stay moorings along the river between the Town Centre and Kempston. Such facilities should not create an adverse impact on the river environment and should be of a low key nature with no ancillary provision.

POLICY LR9

The development of additional permanent moorings on the Upper River will not be allowed. The development of up to 6 short stay moorings is acceptable in principle at St. Mary's Island, and consideration will be given to the creation of a limited number of short-stay moorings along the river between the Town Centre and Kempston Mill. In both cases:

i) the proposed development should be of a limited and appropriate scale;

ii) there should be no adverse impact on river flow, river character and landscape; and,

iii) the proposal should not include extra facilities.

ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

10.39   The Borough has a varied countryside offering a range of opportunities for informal recreation including activities such as walking, cycling, riding and picnicking. It is estimated that 80% of the population visits the countryside at least once a year for informal recreation. The key to the provision of such opportunities is access. The rights of way network is vital in this respect and where development proposals affect the network the Borough will seek to ensure that it is safeguarded.

10.40   Further opportunities may arise for leisure and recreation through the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale (see para 3.51 etc and Policy NE21).

10.41   In addition, in appropriate locations, the Borough Council are keen to secure additional river crossings as part of improvements to the network of footpaths and cycleways. Such crossings include those at Kempston Church End (in association with the new distributor road), Honeyhills/ Hillgrounds, adj. Britannia Ironworks, Batts Ford and in the vicinity of Fenlake Meadows/Priory Park.

POLICY LR10

In determining planning applications the Borough Council will:

i) safeguard existing footpath/bridleway links and ensure they are successfully incorporated into new development or diverted as appropriate;

ii) seek opportunities to enhance existing footpath, bridleway and cycle networks in conjunction with new development in particular from the urban area into the countryside and where appropriate, the Forest of Marston Vale;

iii) seek opportunities where appropriate for additional river crossings as part of the overall improvements to the network; and,

iv) wherever possible, ensure that new footpaths/bridleways are suitable for disabled people.

LEISURE AND RECREATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

10.42   A number of leisure activities such as clay pigeon shooting, motor sports, model aircraft flying and war games can cause unacceptable disturbance in the countryside. This disturbance can take the form of noise, dust creation, erosion, damage to habitats as well as other conflicts. Sensitive areas, for example ancient woodlands and other designated wildlife habitats, should be protected from such activities. Additionally, activities likely to cause a disturbance should be located away from housing areas. The provision of suitable sites may divert damaging uses away from inappropriate locations.

10.43   Criteria for the selection of sites for regular use must, however, still include consideration of the impacts both on site and for adjacent areas. It may therefore be a requirement that the developer carries out a assessment of likely impact. Where planning permission is granted, the Borough Council may use conditions to minimise conflict.

POLICY LR11

The likelihood of leisure and recreation development generating noise; its effect on sensitive locations; and uses in the locality will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Proposals will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the applicant can demonstrate that the development will cause no harm to interests of acknowledged importance. Where proposed development in the open countryside appears likely to generate noise, planning applications will be determined taking into account the effect on sensitive locations and uses. Such proposals will only be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that the development would cause no material harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

SANTA POD RACEWAY

10.44   This sporting facility which is of national significance is within an Area of Great Landscape Value and on occasions causes considerable disturbance to adjoining communities by virtue of noise and traffic generation. The venue has recently come under new ownership and proposals for its development and improvement will no doubt come forward during the plan period. The Borough Council will encourage and support the upgrading of this facility in balance with the amenity of local communities and the capacity of the local highway network.

POLICY LR12

Any proposals for development at Santa Pod Raceway will be permitted provided that:

i) there will be no adverse impact on the Area of Great Landscape Value;

ii) the applicant can demonstrate that the transmission of noise generated by permitted activities on the site would be reduced to the maximum practicable extent, through physical works such as landscaping as well as other organisational means;

iii) the applicant can demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on the water environment or air quality;

iv) the applicant can demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on the local transportation network; and

v) the applicant can demonstrate that the cumulative impact of the development proposed, together with other commitments, do not adversely impact on Santa Pod Raceway or the local area.

The Borough Council expects applicants to produce the necessary technical data in support of their application. This should be presented in a manner appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposal.

LOSS OF LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

10.45   Safeguarding existing facilities is important so as to ensure that recreational land and facilities are not lost in the face of pressures from other uses. Furthermore, it is important that facilities which serve a particular community and locality are maintained, preserving the opportunity to use local facilities.

10.46   Playing fields, especially those in the urban area make a valuable contribution not only in providing recreational facilities but also by providing green space with important amenity value in otherwise built up areas. Playing fields, along with other green spaces in the urban area should be protected for their own sake and have therefore been identified on the Proposals Map as urban open spaces to be protected in accordance with Policy NE17.

10.46a Sport England is a statutory consultee on proposals for developments which affect playing fields and has produced a policy statement 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' (1997). The Borough Council supports Sport England's approach which opposes the granting of planning permission for development leading to the loss of all or part of a playing field except under certain identified circumstances.

10.47   Allotments also have a dual function being of recreational and amenity value and are included on the Proposals Map as urban open spaces.

POLICY LR13

Permission will not be granted for development which results in the loss of an existing open space facility unless it can be reprovided on a comparable site in the locality and where replacement provision is appropriate in terms of size, form, layout, design and accessibility.

POLICY LR14

The re-development of playing fields and allotments for other purposes will not be permitted unless:

i) the development forms part of a positive local plan allocation;

ii) facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;

iii) there is no loss of community benefit;

iv) there is an identified surplus of the use in the area, taking into account both amenity and recreation factors; and,

v) there is no adverse impact on the relationship with other open space provision, including wildlife corridors, across the urban area.

NEW OPEN SPACE

10.48   Open space is a general term which can be used to cover many types of uses such as playing fields, children's play areas, parks and woodlands as well as other types of informal open space provision for outdoor sport and children's play in new development.

10.49   The National Playing Fields Association has set standards for two of the components which make up the overall provision of open space; outdoor sport and children's playing space. The standard, known as the six acre standard recommends that as a minimum, six acres of playing space be provided per 1000 population.

10.50   The standard is divided into parts as follows:

Outdoor Sport:
1.6 – 1.8 hectares (4 – 4.5 acres) for pitches, greens, courts and athletics tracks. Included within the broad standard is a specific allocation of 1.2 hectares (3.0 acres) per 1000 population for pitch sports.

Children's Playing:
0.6 – 0.8 hectares (1.5 – 2 acres) for outdoor equipped space: playgrounds for children of whatever age, adventure playgrounds and casual informal playing space.

10.51   The NPFA defines outdoor playing space as: 'space which is available for sport, active recreation or children's play, which is of suitable size and nature for its intended purpose, and safely accessible and available to the general public'. The standard does not include

educational facilities which are not available for dual use, facilities which are not available for public use, golf facilities or water used for recreation.

10.52   In planning for the future provision of open space the Borough Council intends to adopt the NPFA standard for all new housing development for outdoor sport and children's playing space and set local standards for the provision of amenity space.

10.53   With a few minor exceptions, for example, those that do not create demand for such provision, (such as nursing homes), this will ensure that all new housing development makes appropriate provision for outdoor sport and play space based on local standards.

OUTDOOR SPORT

10.54   The standards contained in this plan are based on the NPFA standards. The Council is aware however, of the need to look specifically at the nature of provision in the Borough particularly the urban area where there may be deficiencies of facilities both in relation to the available facilities and their distribution. The standards will be applied to all residential developments which may create a demand for the specified open space. Negotiations through the development control process will therefore be used to secure provision of playing pitches and essential associated facilities such as changing rooms as well as to secure future management and maintenance in accordance with the policy.

POLICY LR15

~~The Borough Council will require new housing development to provide outdoor playing space for sport where the development contains 100 units or more of housing of a type likely to create a demand for outdoor sporting facilities. Provision should ideally be made within or adjacent to the site.~~

~~Where required, outdoor playing space for sport will be provided on the basis of 0.4-0.45ha (1-1.25acres) per 100 dwellings.~~

~~Where necessary and appropriate, the Borough Council will seek the use of planning obligations:~~

~~i) to facilitate the upgrading of outdoor playing space for sport in the locality where fewer than 100 dwellings are proposed or to make a pro rata contribution to future new facilities~~

~~ii) to secure a contribution towards the cost of future management and maintenance.~~

CHILDREN'S PLAY

10.55   In the provision of children's play space, it is important to ensure that a range of play areas appropriate for different age groups is provided. Younger children need facilities close to home whilst older children are likely to require more extensive facilities which will be situated on a larger site further from the home.

10.56   To ensure that this range of facilities is provided the NPFA have produced recommendations for three types of play space. A full description is given in the NPFA's document 'The Six Acre Standard: Minimum Standards

for Outdoor Playing Space' (1992). The main features are summarised below:

10.57   Local Area for Play (LAP) to serve very young children:

– Located within 1 minute's walking time of home (60 metres straight line distance),
– Suitable for 4-6 year olds,
– Appropriate for low key games,
– Has an activity zone of 100m^2 and a 5 metre buffer zone.

10.58   Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) to provide an unsupervised play area equipped for children of early school age:

– Within 5 minutes walking time of home,
– Contains about five types of play equipment and seating for adults,
– Activity zone of 400m^2 and a buffer zone of 20 metres to limit disturbance.

10.59   Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) designed to service a substantial residential area and equipped for older children:

– Within 15 minutes walking time of home,
– Variety of equipment including a kick-about area,
– 1000m^2 activity area with 30 metre buffer.

10.60   The need to include each of these facilities will depend on the size of the development and the nature of the development itself. Development in excess of 15 dwellings will generally require the provision of LAP's, although it will be necessary to consider the nature and configuration of the site. In some smaller developments, however, there may opportunities through careful design, to integrate small areas suitable for low key play into schemes using a variety of measures. These may include traffic calming where road space is used (in which case space is given back to pedestrians); the appropriate use of materials and suitable landscaping. The advantages of such an approach could include savings on the amount of land used and the play area being overlooked by dwellings. The ability of a scheme to incorporate such measures will be a material consideration.

10.61   Developments in excess of 50 units will require LEAPs. NEAPs should form a part of comprehensive development schemes. The standard assumes a maximum of 13 children per acre. There will be instances where the standard may need to be adjusted to take account of higher numbers of children per acre. Elsewhere, in cases where the amount of proposed development falls below these parameters, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate appropriate provision in accordance with the standards set out in this plan, taking into account a range of factors such as existing provision in the vicinity.

10.62   Wherever possible play facilities should be provided on site. Where, exceptionally, on site provision is not feasible, the Council will consider the use of planning obligations to secure provision on an adjacent site or alternatively to secure the improvement of existing

nearby play areas. Such improvements may include enlarging the area available for play and/or extending the range of equipment available. Provision should also be made for future management and maintenance. All contributions sought will reflect current national advice on planning obligations which, at the time of adoption of this plan, look favourably on commuted maintenance sums only where the facility provided is principally of benefit to the development itself, rather than to the wider public.

10.62a   A borough wide audit will establish the existing coverage of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs and will inform a programme of new provision. Where fewer than 15 or 50 dwellings are proposed (for LAPs and LEAPs respectively), or where the proposal does not generate the need for a NEAP (because of the size of the proposal) the Borough Council will, where necessary and appropriate, seek the use of planning obligations to secure a pro-rata contribution to the provision of these facilities.

10.62b   It is not the Council's intention that the application of this policy should require new developers to make up for any existing deficiencies of pitch (Policy LR15)/play (Policy LR16) space. Any development that generates a measurable demand for space should make a contribution fairly related to its size, but only if the space provided or augmented would be easily accessible from the new development.

POLICY LR16
The Borough Council will require new housing development to provide children's playing space where the housing is of a type likely to create a demand for such facilities. Overall the following provision will be expected in line with NPFA standards:

Outdoor equipped space – 0.05 – 0.075 ha per 100 dwellings
Informal play space – 0.1 – 0.125 ha per 100 dwellings

This will comprise:

i) LAPs (local areas for play). These will be required on sites where 15 dwellings or more are proposed. Generally speaking one LAP will be required per 15 dwellings;

ii) LEAPs (local equipped areas for play). In addition LEAPs will be required where 50 dwellings or more are proposed; one LEAP will be required per 50 dwellings;

iii) NEAPs (neighbourhood equipped areas for play). NEAPs will form part of comprehensive development schemes and the requirement will normally be identified in development briefs.

The precise number of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs will be determined not only by the number of dwellings but also by walking time and distances to the facilities as described in the supporting text. Where necessary and appropriate, the Borough Council will seek the use of planning obligations:

i) to facilitate the improvement of existing near-by facilities or to make a pro-rata contribution towards the provision of identified new facilities (where fewer than 15 or 50 dwellings are proposed for LAPs and LEAPs respectively);

ii) to facilitate the improvement of existing nearby facilities or to make a pro-rata contribution towards the provision of identified new NEAPs where a proposal is too small to require the provision of a NEAP; and

iii) to secure a contribution towards the cost of future management and maintenance.

AMENITY OPEN SPACE

10.63   Where the provision of a separate area of public amenity space on a site is impractical, it may be acceptable for the pro-rata public amenity space requirement to be added to that for private open space. Normally this additional private open space should be planned to the front of properties where its contribution to the quality of the residential environment as a whole can be maximised. This approach may be particularly appropriate where fewer than 15 units are proposed and thus the pro-rata requirement for a single amenity area would be of limited value because of its size.

POLICY LR17
The Borough Council will require all residential developments of 15 units or more to provide a separate area of at least 0.1 ha (0.25 acres) pro rata of general amenity open space for every 50 dwellings. A contribution towards the cost of future management and maintenance will be a requirement where necessary and appropriate. Where it is impractical for a separate public amenity area to be provided on site, consideration will be given to allowing the pro-rata requirement for public amenity space to be added to the private open space requirement and provided to the front of buildings. Proposals for fewer than 15 units will normally be expected to contribute to general amenity in this manner.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

10.64   The diverse nature of the Borough's community creates a demand for a range of community facilities. The level of provision varies but the Borough Council considers that residents should enjoy as many opportunities as possible for access to appropriate community or recreation facilities. Consequently, the loss of existing facilities must be avoided.

POLICY LR18
Development which would result in the loss of a recreational or community use will only be permitted if

i) that use or facility is to be replaced by an equivalent or better standard facility of equal convenience to existing users, or

ii) no clear need or deficiency can be identified, to justify such a replacement.

10.65   The Borough has a network of community facilities within its area. These act as meeting places (including places of worship) for a range of local groups and provide accommodation for social and sporting activities. Where extensive new development takes place there will be a need for new facilities. However, such new facilities need not always be purpose built where existing buildings are available or suitable for adaptation or dual use. If a community hall or village hall is already in the vicinity of new development then it may be more appropriate to seek the upgrading of the hall to enable better use to be made of the facility.

10.66   Opportunities may also exist for other premises such as school buildings or existing village halls to be used for other community purposes. In rural areas, such an approach may help to reduce the need to travel by enabling provision to be locally made, but adaptation and dual use is equally applicable in towns where sites for new facilities will often be difficult to find in relation to established communities.

10.67   Where conversion or adaptation takes place it will be necessary to guard against loss of amenity through increased traffic and parking requirements and noise. Where possible, therefore, consideration should be given to the use of the existing school and community buildings in the area in preference to conversion of dwellings.

POLICY LR19

Any need which is directly created for the provision of a new community hall or facility, the upgrading of existing community facilities or the adaptation of suitable premises will be a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications for new housing development. The level of provision required and the type of provision needed will depend on:

i) the extent and type of new housing development;

ii) the availability of buildings in the vicinity which would be suitable for conversion or adaptation to community use;

iii) the usage of existing community facilities in the vicinity;

iv) the potential for extension to existing facilities and the need for upgrading.

Applications for such facilities will be permitted where:

i) the proposal has satisfactory access to the main road network and public transport;

ii) adequate off street parking can be provided;

iii) there is no adverse impact on residential amenity.

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UTILITIES & TELECOMMS POLICIES

Policy U2   **Floodplain**

Policy U3   **Waste water management**

Policy U4   **Satellite dishes etc**

Policy U5   **Telecommunication equipment**

11 / UTILITIES & TELECOMS

INTRODUCTION

11.1   The Borough Council seeks to ensure that supporting infrastructure has the capacity to make adequate provision for all types of development proposals likely to be granted planning permission, that where necessary proposals include adequate additional provision, and that such proposals have the minimum impact on local communities including visual amenity. Provision should also be made for the reasonable land requirements of the utility companies.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

11.2   The current development proposals contained in this plan have been subjected to an initial assessment as to the carrying capacity of the necessary supporting infrastructure in the context of the operational and programming expectations of the utility companies. However, the adequacy or otherwise of infrastructure can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (see Policy BE30). In consultation with utility companies, the Borough Council may encourage developers to enter into legal agreements to ensure additional provision in order to bring forward otherwise acceptable developments.

FLOODING & SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE

11.4   Key areas of the Borough comprise natural flood plains which need to be protected from development or changes of use that would reduce the capacity and capability of such areas to attenuate periodic flood conditions either on site or elsewhere. Due in part to the nature of the sub-strata, the Borough is prone to significant surface water drainage problems. These continue to be tackled by the Environment Agency, Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and the Borough Council. In this respect the Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board is actively pursuing strategic solutions for the disposal of surface water drainage. Initially the Board is concentrating on the Forest of Marston Vale area and is promoting the matter through the Marston Vale Working Group. Further details are given in paragraph 3.53a. Ultimately this comprehensive approach to surface water drainage may extend to cover the whole of the IDB's area of responsibility.

11.4a   'Land liable to flood' is included on the Proposals Map. The boundaries reflect those published by the Environment Agency on its Indicative Floodplain Maps (2002) and show the natural river floodplains in the Borough. A floodplain is the natural 'overspill' area when a river rises above its banks. The maps show the extent of the highest recorded flood, or the estimated extent of a flood with a 1% annual probability of occurrence, whichever is higher. The Maps indicate where flooding from rivers or other significant watercourses is possible. It is important to emphasise that they do not take account of flood defences and always take a

conservative approach where detailed information is not readily available. Flood defences do not completely remove the risk of flooding, but they do reduce the risk. They are built to withstand a flood of a certain magnitude but can be overtopped or fail in extreme weather conditions.

11.4b   Any development proposal within the area liable to flooding will be assessed against the sequential approach outlined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25. The Environment Agency will provide any information that is available (eg. on flood defences or historical flood levels) on a site by site basis. If there are potential flood risk issues, the Council will require a flood risk assessment to be carried out in line with guidance in PPG25. This assessment should cover the site itself and also assess the potential impact elsewhere. The Environment Agency can be contacted on 01480 414581.

POLICY U2

The Borough Council will not permit development that compromises the capacity of the floodplain, balancing ponds, drainage pipes, channels and other flood defences and works to alleviate flooding, or would be at risk of being flooded, or would unacceptably increase the risk of flooding or pollution through seepage or run off.

11.5   The Borough Council will consult with the Environment Agency and the Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board.

WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT

POLICY U3

The ability of development proposals to effect satisfactory means for the disposal of waste water shall be a material consideration.

11.7   The Borough Council will consult Anglian Water Services Ltd and the Environment Agency.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

11.8   Whilst the Borough Council accepts the need to ensure that people have a choice as to the telecommunication services they may use, and thus the need for operators to erect masts and aerials, there is the concern that the proliferation of equipment should not have an adverse effect on visual amenity or the character and appearance of areas and indeed individual buildings. Experience would suggest that a technical solution can be found that will reduce such impacts. NTL has been active in installing a cable services network within the Borough and further works are programmed. In all cases the Borough Council is keen to limit inconvenience to residents and will seek to ensure that the proper reinstatement of pavements is carried out at all times.

11.8a   In 2001 the Government published revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 8: Telecommunications in which it set out details of changes to the planning system to deal with telecommunications development. Following consultation on the suggestions made in the Stewart Report on Mobile Phones and Health in May 2000, the Government has confirmed in PPG8 and in revisions to the General Permitted Development Order requirements which:

–   strengthen public consultation requirements on mast proposals of 15 metres and below so that they are dealt with in a similar way to applications for planning permission;

–   increase the time for authorities to deal with prior approval applications to 56 days (eight weeks);

–   require authorities to consult school governors on all proposals for new masts on or near a school or college;

–   increase fees to enable authorities to carry out full public consultation;

–   maintain in full an authority's ability to reject applications on amenity grounds.

The Stewart Report concluded that the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of the guidelines. It recommended a precautionary approach to the use of mobile phone technologies, comprising a series of specific measures, until more research findings become available, and this is endorsed in PPG8. In line with this precautionary approach, the Council will expect all mobile phone base stations to meet the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) for limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields.

POLICY U4

Where planning permission is necessary, the Borough Council will require satellite dishes and associated physical equipment to be erected in positions that minimise their visual impact, and where there would be appreciable visual benefit it will seek the provision of communal facilities for larger developments and multi-occupied premises (generally defined as 10 or more units) and require the removal of redundant equipment.

POLICY U5

Where planning permission is necessary, the Borough Council will grant planning permission for telecommunication masts and aerials provided that:

i) there is no existing mast, structure or building that can be satisfactorily used for the purpose;

ii) the proposal will replace existing masts or structures, or will facilitate future network development by reducing the need for additional masts or structures;

iii) if the site is located in the Area of Great Landscape Value, a conservation area or within the setting of a listed building, there is no suitable alternative site outside such areas;

iv) any reasonable fear of a health risk to members of the public has been addressed by the applicant confirming that the apparatus complies fully with the ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) guidelines for limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields; and

v) the proposal is designed, landscaped and screened to minimise any adverse impact on the appearance and amenity of its surroundings.

11.9   Particular regard will be paid to the impact of proposals upon the visual amenity, character and appearance of Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and within the Areas of Great Landscape Value.

12

INTRODUCTION / BOROUGH STRATEGY / NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING / EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM / SHOPPING / BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE
TRANSPORT / LEISURE & RECREATION / UTILITIES & TELECOMS / IMPLEMENTATION
AIMS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL / OPPORTUNITY SITES / GLOSSARY / PROPOSALS MAPS
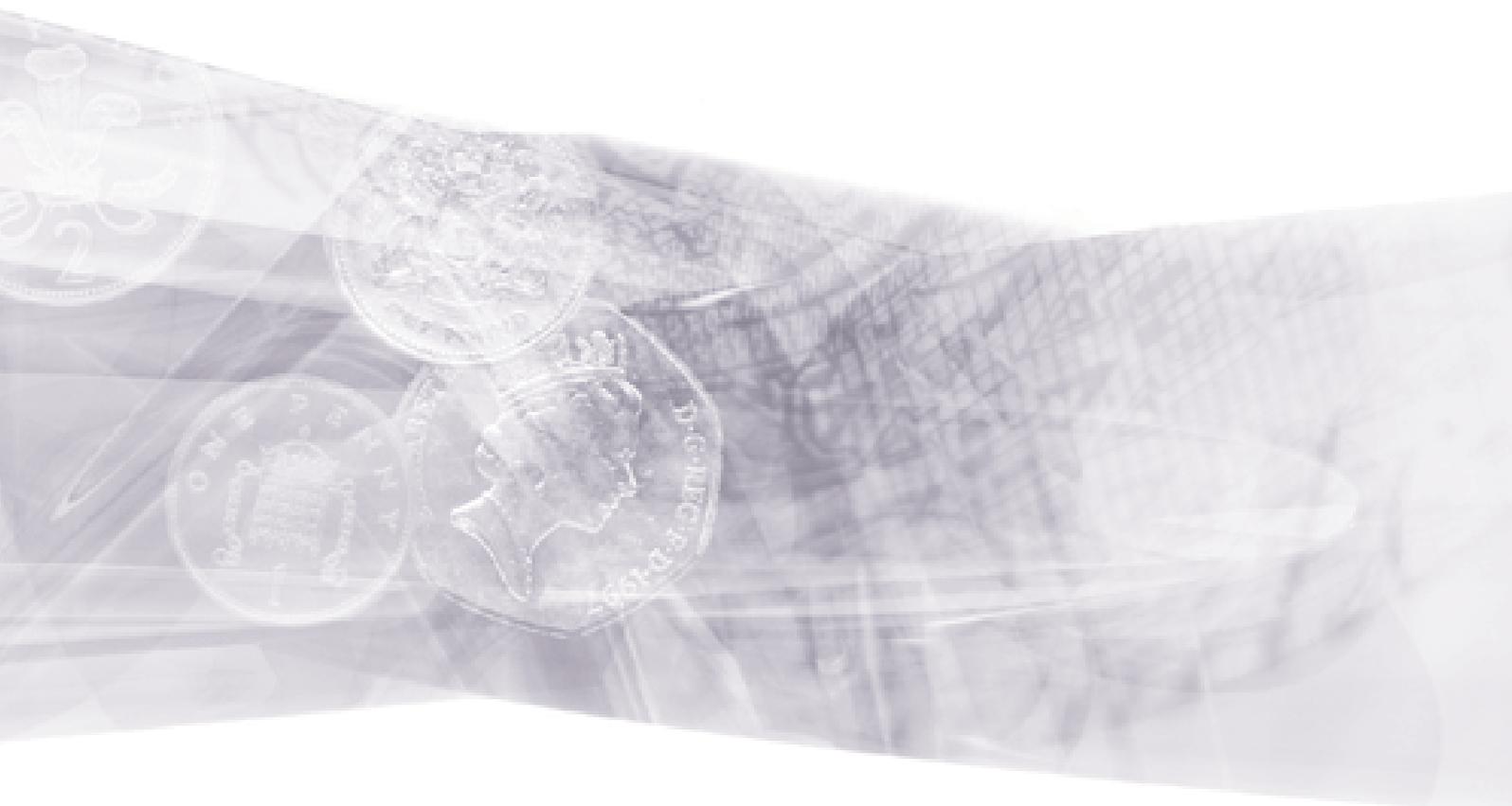
12 / IMPLEMENTATION

12.1   The implementation of the plan is dependent on the effectiveness of its policies and the extent to which it is able to guide development and influence investment. The private sector will be the prime mover in bringing development forward which will look to the Local Plan for guidance. Besides local government, central government agencies and other public bodies such as housing associations will work in partnership with the private sector to work towards the objectives of the Plan.

12.2   In seeking to ensure that this is achieved the plan must be set within a framework that enables monitoring and evaluation to take place. Policies have to be clearly related to the aims and objectives of the plan and measures should be devised to assess the performance of each policy thus facilitating the process of monitoring and review.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

12.3   The overall aims of this Local Plan are set out in paragraph 2.18. The nine aims summarise the key concerns of the plan. From each aim comes a set of more detailed objectives (listed in Appendix A) from which the plan policies were developed. The relationship of the policies to the objectives is also shown in Appendix A. As the policies are monitored it will therefore be possible to relate their impact back to the objectives and assess how far the aims of the plan are being achieved.

MONITORING

12.4   Local planning authorities are required to keep all those matters under review that are expected to affect the development or land use planning of their area. The key matters which are already monitored are housing and employment land uses where annual surveys take place.

12.5   The housing monitoring survey assesses the number of dwelling completions and the number of outstanding consents. Together this information is used to monitor the progress towards meeting the Borough's Structure Plan allocation.

12.6   The employment survey monitors the take up of employment land in the context of the Structure Plan and the Borough's Economic Strategy.

12.7   In the past the Borough Council has carried out regular shopping surveys in conjunction with the County Council. In 1995, 1997 and 2000 consultants commissioned by the Council provided updated 'health checks' of retailing in the Borough. Similar measures will be used in the future as the need arises.

POLICY EVALUATION
AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

12.8   In addition to the general monitoring described above a more detailed evaluation of particular policies will be required. This will serve two purposes: it will:

i) enable the effectiveness of the policies themselves to be assessed;

ii) provide a basis to demonstrate what progress is being made towards meeting the aims and objectives of the plan, its strategy and more sustainable development. This will also provide a link between the monitoring process and continuing process of environmental appraisal.

12.9   In order to do this, performance indicators have been devised for each policy. These are shown in Appendix B and will be used in subsequent reviews.

12.10   The utility of many performance indicators depends upon the Borough Council's Development Control Computer System, mapping the extent to which planning decisions are consistent with the Local Plan.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

12.11   The Borough Council from time to time prepares supplementary planning guidance to expand upon policy and give further detailed advice about development issues. PPG12 Development Plans states that supplementary planning guidance may be taken into account as a material consideration and will be given substantial weight provided that it is consistent with the development plan and has been prepared in consultation with the general public, businesses and other interested parties. Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance at the time of the publication of this Local Plan are:

- Landscape Design Guide: January 1983
- Shopfronts & Advertisements – Design Guide: January 1984
- Farm Buildings: June 1986
- Bedford High Street – Street Facades, Shopfronts & Advertisements – Design Guide: June 1991
- Stewartby Development Brief: June 1992
- Biddenham Loop Development Brief: July 1994 (since withdrawn)
- Thurleigh Airfield Development Brief: January 1996
- Bromham Hospital Development Brief: October 1996
- Traffic Calming: November 1996
- Car Parking Standards: November 1997
- Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts: September 1997
- Wootton Development Brief: July 1999
- Elstow New Settlement Planning and Development Brief: September 1999
- Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments: January 2000
- Water Conservation and Waste Management: February 2001

12.12   The above Supplementary Planning Guidance is re-endorsed by this Local Plan (see Policy S8). Other Guidance is being progressed in tandem with the Local Plan as follows:

- Land West of Kempston Development Brief (since adopted, January 2003)
- Land North of Bromham Road Development Brief (since adopted, January 2003)
- Accessible Housing (since renamed Mobility Housing and adopted, September 2002)
- Queen's Park East Development Brief (since adopted, July 2002)

12.13   Other Supplementary Planning Guidance shall remain in force until superseded by this plan and revised briefs/guidance as appropriate. These are:

- Land West of Elstow Bypass Development Brief
- Shortstown Development Brief (since superseded)

12.14   In accordance with the provisions of this Local Plan it is proposed to prepare and consult upon supplementary planning guidance as follows:

- Land at Shortstown Development Brief (since adopted, January 2003)
- Biddenham Loop Revised Development Brief (since adopted, January 2003)
- Urban Design/Local Distinctiveness Guidance
- Energy Efficient Layouts Guidance.

A

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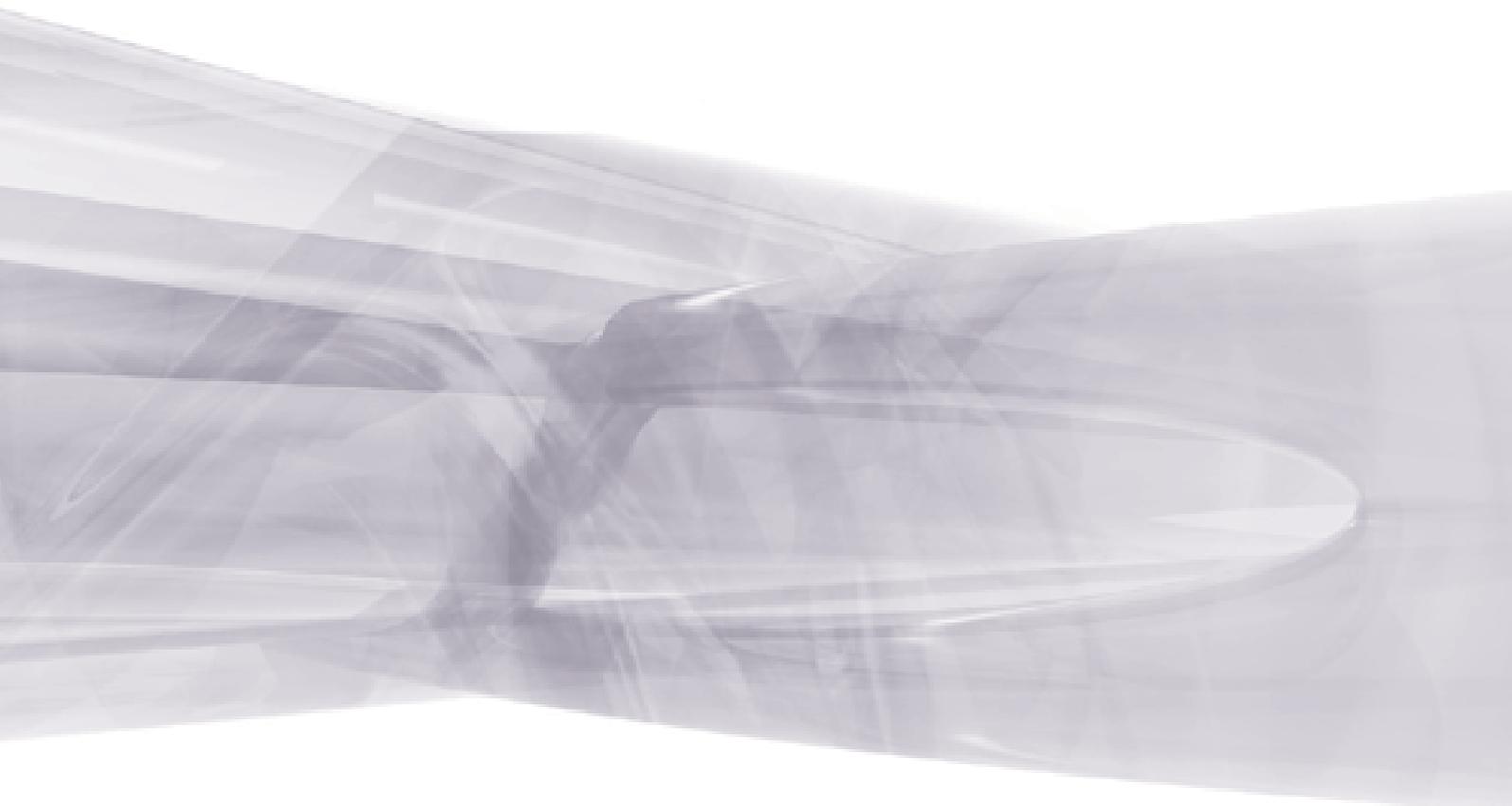
A / AIMS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

THIS APPENDIX SHOWS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES THAT THE BOROUGH COUNCIL SET FOR THE REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN AND THE POLICIES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS A RESULT.

AIM 1	To move towards more sustainable forms of development.	POLICIES
1a	Concentrating development on existing centres, and on the strategic corridor south west of Bedford, avoiding the encouragement of ribbon and scattered development.	S1, S2, S4, S6, S7, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H10a, H10b, H11, H12, H13, H14, E2, E3, E4, E5, SH2, SH4, SH5, SH6, SH8, SH9, SH10, SH11, T11, LR6,
1b	Encouraging mixed use development.	S2, BE1, BE2, BE3, BE4, H6, H7, H8, H9, H11, H12, H14, H21, H15, H17, E14, E15, SH2, SH7, SH8, SH9, TC6, TC7, TC8, TC9
1c	Reducing distances between housing areas and employment, retail, open space and community facilities in order to discourage vehicle trip generation.	S1, S2, BE1, BE2, BE3, BE4, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, H11, H12, H13, H14, E14, E15, E17, SH2, SH5, SH6, SH7, SH8, SH9, SH10, TC7, TC8, LR6, LR13, LR15, LR16, LR17
1d	Re-using vacant or derelict sites before greenfield sites.	S1, S2, H2, H9, H14, H16, E9, E10, E11,
1e	Giving greater emphasis to public transport, walking and cycling in new developments.	BE3, BE30, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, H10a, H10b, H11, H12, H13, H14, H15, H19, H20, H22, E2, E3, E4, E5, E9, E10, E15, SH1, SH4, SH7, SH10, T10, T13, T14, T15, LR10
1f	Encouraging greater energy efficiency in development and the use of renewable energy sources.	BE6, BE7, BE8
AIM 2	To protect and enhance the existing built and natural environment and the landscape.	POLICIES
2a	Giving greater emphasis to the conservation and protection of the Borough's buildings, spaces, ancient monuments and areas of archaeological interest.	NE8, BE9, BE10, BE11, BE12, BE13, BE14, BE15, BE16, BE17, BE18, BE19, BE20, BE21, BE22, BE23, BE24, BE25, BE26, BE27, BE34a, H2, H9, H16, E23, TC1, TC2, LR2, LR13, LR14
2b	Highlighting and taking action over buildings identified as being 'at risk'.	BE17
2c	Preventing the coalescence of settlements.	S3, S6, BE5, H26
2d	Identifying village envelopes, outside which, development will be resisted.	S6, H26, E27
2e	Securing major environmental improvements through the implementation of the Marston Vale Strategy.	S5, H7, H11, H12, H13, H14, E3, E4, E5, E7
2f	Seeking developer contributions towards the Forest of Marston Vale	NE21, H7, H11, H12, H13, H14, E4, E7
2g	Protecting open spaces and allotments from development.	S3, S6, NE17, H24, H25, LR8, LR10, LR13, LR14,
2h	Protecting and enhancing areas of landscape quality within the Borough.	S3, S6, NE4, NE5, NE6, NE7, NE8, NE12, NE13, NE14, NE15, NE17, NE18, NE20, NE24, E23, E25, SH1, T4, LR5, LR12
2i	Protecting and enhancing the river valley, its ecology and landscape.	LR9, NE16, NE23, NE24
2j	Safeguarding and promotion of areas of natural/wildlife importance.	NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4, NE5, NE6, NE7, NE8, NE9, NE10, NE18, NE24, NE27, BE30, H9, H16, H19, H26, H35, H36, E7, E23, E25, LR5, LR11

2k	Protecting high grade agricultural land as a major resource.	S6, NE26, H26, H27,
2l	Safeguarding non-renewable and natural resources including aquifers, soil, air etc.	S1, S2, S3, S6, NE24, NE25, NE26, NE28, LR12
AIM 3	**To meet the needs of the Borough's residents.**	**POLICIES**
3a	Meeting the targets for housing and employment land as set out in the County Structure Plan 2011.	H1 to H23, H39, E1, E7, E8
3b	Providing a range of housing sites and tenures.	S1, S2, H1 to H24, H30, H31,H32, E2, E14
3c	Providing a range of employment sites which will encourage investment and create jobs.	S1, S2, E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E7, E9, E10, E11, E12, E15, E16, E17, E18, E19, E20, E21
3d	Creating greater integration between residential and employment uses.	S1, S2, BE3, BE4, H6, H7, H8, H9, H11, H12, H14, E6, E14, E15, E17
3e	Seeking developer contributions towards the provision of education, community, leisure, open space and other facilities in tandem with new development.	S9, BE3, BE30, LR10, LR15, LR16, LR17, LR19
3f	Providing a range of housing to meet the needs of as many client groups as possible including those with disabilities, the homeless, ethnic groups, low income groups etc.	BE3, H6, H7 , H30, H31, H33, H35, H36, H37
3g	Ensuring that additional open space is provided to meet the needs of all the client groups within the Borough.	BE3, E6, LR1, LR15, LR16, LR17
AIM 4	**To maintain and enhance the economic and social well being of the Borough.**	**POLICIES**
4a	Creating the physical framework to attract inward investment in new homes, jobs and infrastructure.	S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, E1, SH2, SH3, TC1, TC2, TC3
4b	Attracting significant levels of investment in highway improvements, improvements in public transport, park and ride etc., in order to significantly reduce congestion in and around the urban area.	H6, H7, H8, H9, H11, H12, H13, H14, E2, E3, E4, E5, E7, T1, T2, T13, T14, T15, T17
4c	Marketing and exploiting the area's potential for tourism related activity.	E18, E23, E24, E25, E26, LR7, LR9
4d	Encouraging rural communities to become more self-sustaining through the encouragement of a wider range of employment uses.	E1, E17, E18, E19, E21
4e	Regenerating parts of the town centre which appear run-down and derelict, whilst ensuring full integration with the existing built fabric.	S1, S2, SH2, SH4,TC1, TC2, TC7
4f	Safeguarding the resource of Thurleigh Airfield against piecemeal development and for maximum community benefit.	E11
4g	Taking steps to prevent the loss of community facilities in the rural area, and promoting new facilities where opportunities arise.	LR14, LR15, LR16, LR17, LR18, LR19, SH7, SH8, SH9, SH10, SH11, LR2, LR5
AIM 5	**To protect and enhance Bedford's role within the sub-region.**	**POLICIES**
5a	Devising a marketing strategy to improve the image of Bedford Town Centre.	E23
5b	Improving the range of shopping in both quantative and qualitative terms.	SH2, SH3, SH4, SH6, SH7, SH8, SH10, SH11
5c	Maintaining and enhancing a compact primary shopping core in Bedford town centre.	SH2, SH3, SH4
5d	Encouraging a greater diversity of uses in the town centre, particularly those which generate activity outside shopping hours.	S1, S2, BE1, BE2, E23, TC6, TC7, TC8, LR2, LR6
5e	Giving greater emphasis to the creation of high quality public spaces which support a wide range of activities.	BE30, BE43, BE44, TC3
5f	Conserving and enhancing the town's architectural heritage and open spaces.	BE9, BE11, BE12, BE13, BE14, BE16, BE17, BE18, BE19, BE20, BE21, BE22, TC1, TC2, LR2, LR13, LR14,

5g	Fully exploiting the riverside environment created by the River Great Ouse.	NE23, NE24, H2, H3, TC5, T12, LR7, LR9, LR10
5h	Exercising more control and promoting higher quality advertisements and shop fronts in the town centre.	BE16, BE41, SH2, TC4

AIM 6	To improve the quality of life for the Borough's residents.	POLICIES
6a	Preventing the creation of pollution whether it involves, air, water, soil, noise etc.	NE24, NE25, NE26, NE28, BE30, BE42 BE47, SH6, SH8, SH10, SH19, SH20, TC10, LR2, LR11, LR12, U3
6b	Providing for a wide range of both active and passive leisure and recreational opportunities.	NE11, NE24, H6, H8, H10a, E22, E23, E24, E25, LR1, LR3, LR4, LR5, LR6, LR9, LR10, LR11, LR12, LR14, LR15, LR16, LR17, LR18, LR19
6c	Creating environments which are fully accessible by all members of the community.	NE11, BE30, BE43, BE48, BE49, H34, T13, T14, T15, T19, T21, LR10
6d	Improving access to the countryside for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.	T13, T14, LR5, LR10
6e	Achieving a more equitable balance between the needs of pedestrians and the motor vehicle.	BE43, H20, T13, T15, T20
6f	Creating more lively, safer environments through more mixed use development.	S1, S2, BE1, BE2, BE3, BE4, H6, H7, H8, H9, H11, H12, H14, E14, E15, TC7, TC8
6g	Reducing congestion.	SH6, SH8, SH7, SH9, SH10, T1, T2, T13, T14, T15, T17

AIM 7	To improve the quality of new development within the Borough.	POLICIES
7a	Striving for noticeably higher standards of design and finish in all developments and in the sensitivity of their setting.	S8, BE11, BE12, BE16, BE28, BE29, BE30, BE31, BE32, BE33, BE34, BE35, BE36, BE37, BE40, BE46, H29, H38, E4, E5, SH2, SH4, SH20, TC4, U4, U5,
7b	Ensuring that new developments are designed within a structural landscape framework, in addition to having extensive landscaping within the development.	NE4, NE6, BE30, BE38, BE39, BE40, H2, H6, H7, H9, H10a, H10b, H11, H12, H13, H14, H15, H16, H18, H20, H21,H22, E2, E3, E4, E5, E7, E9, E10, E11
7c	Ensuring that new development contains adequate space about buildings to provide amenity space, to accommodate vehicles and maximise both privacy and usage, the setting of buildings to avoid cramping and cramming etc.	BE30, BE35, BE36, BE37, SH2, SH4, T15, LR17
7d	Promoting new development based on the 'secured by design' principles.	BE35, BE45, T15
7e	Improving the quality of public spaces created by new development.	BE30, BE43
7f	To improve the quality of new development particularly on the periphery of the urban area and along main transport corridors.	BE32, BE33, BE34, T4

AIM 8	To improve communications and movement in and out of the Borough.	POLICIES
8a	Achieving significant improvements to the trunk road network.	H6, H7, H8, H9, H11, H12, H13, H14, E7, LR12, T1, T3
8b	Achieving significant improvements to the internal highway network in the urban area.	T1, T2
8c	Expanding and improving the park and ride facilities on the fringe of the urban area.	H6, H8, E3, T15, T17
8d	Extending provision for cyclists in all new development.	BE30, E2, E3, E4, E5, E7, T14, T15, LR10
8e	Wherever possible, giving priority to public transport.	BE30, E2, E3, E4, E5, T6, T7, T8
8f	Actively promoting the provision of railway stations.	H14

8g	Making provision for improved motorists facilities on the main trunk road network.	T5
8h	Making provision for commercial vehicle parking.	T18
8i	Seeking a major improvement of rail services especially the Marston Vale line and its possible diversion on to the main London Bedford Line.	T9
8j	Making provision for new telecommunications.	U5
AIM 9	**To promote equal opportunities**	**POLICIES**
9a	Ensuring that access to opportunities is not dependant upon culture, literacy or mobility.	BE45, BE48, BE49, H33, H34, T21, LR10

B

BEDFORD BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN
OCTOBER 2002
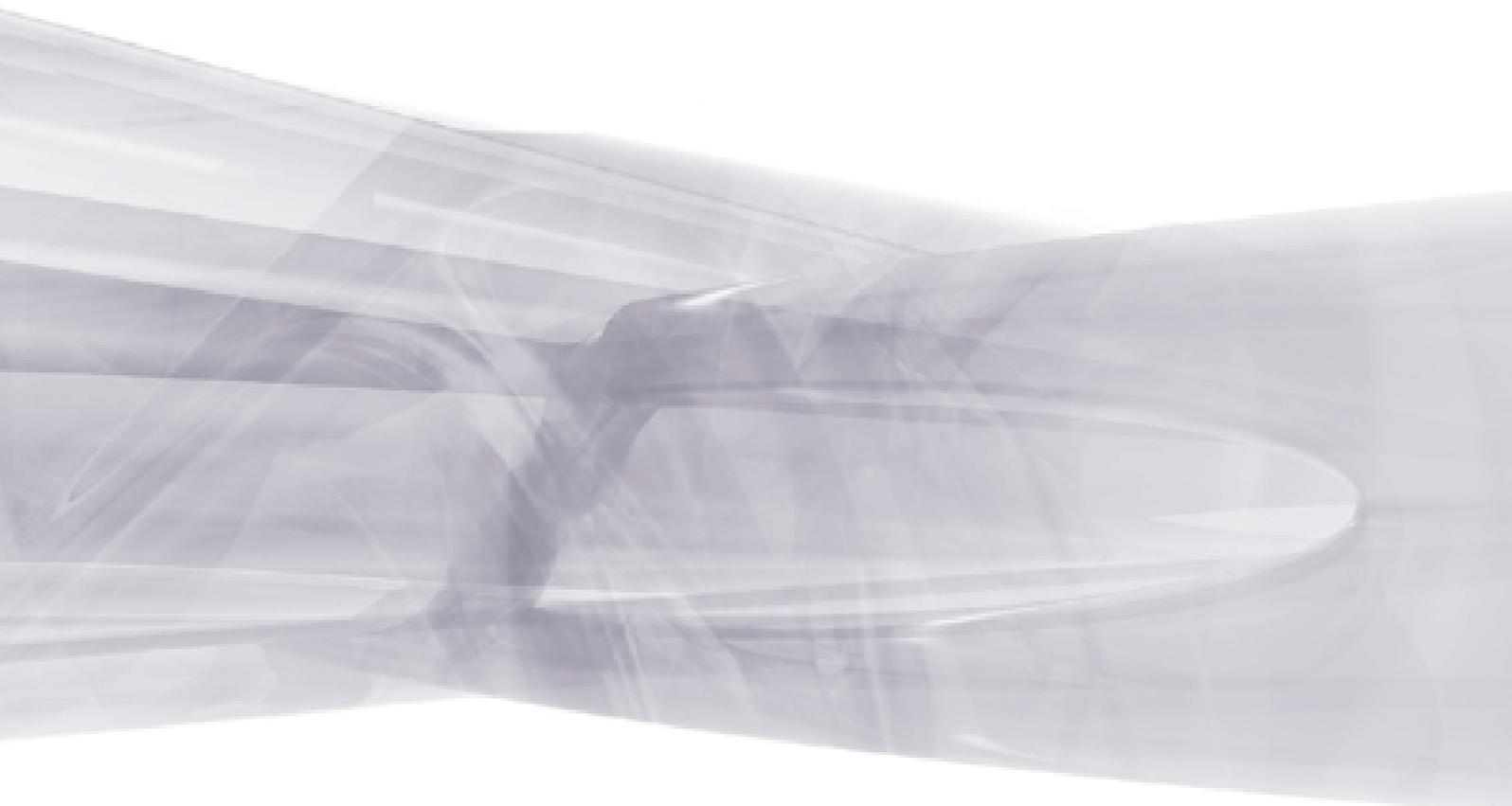
B / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

CHAPTER - BOROUGH STRATEGY

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
S1/S2	Urban priority and opportunity sites	Take up of vacant and under used sites. Number of opportunity sites which have come forward for redevelopment
S3	Urban area boundary	Distribution of development: permissions for development in the Area of Special Restraint refused/dismissed on appeal
S4	South West Bedford Strategic Corridor	Distribution of development
S5	Marston Vale	Agreed programme of environmental and other improvement works.
S6	SPAs	Distribution of development
S7	Rural Settlement hierarchy	Distribution of development
S8	Supplementary Planning Guidance	Volume of SPG produced and its successful use at appeal.
S9	Facilities in tandem with development	Nature and scale of facilities provided and contributions made in tandem with development

CHAPTER - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
NE1	Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Numbers of SSSIs lost or adversely affected by planning decisions, or land area lost/gained.
NE2	Species protected by law	Losses of protected species through the granting of planning permissions.
NE3	Sites of Local Importance	Number of local nature reserves, county wildlife sites and regionally important geological or geomorphological sites adversely affected by planning decisions.
NE4	Trees/Hedges	Number of trees/hedges protected and new trees planted.
NE5	Tree Preservation Orders	Number of trees successfully protected by use of TPOs.
NE6	Woodland	Amount of woodland protected and new woodland created through new development.
NE7	Wildlife Corridors	Protection of wildlife corridors and enhancement achieved through new development.
NE8	Replacement provision	Amount of replacement provision secured to compensate for the loss of natural history sites.
NE9	Conservation management	Number of successful management agreements negotiated and level of protection secured as a result.
NE10	Contributions to nature conservation	Numbers of schemes with Bedford Borough Council participating.
NE11	Access to the countryside, interpretation facilities	Numbers of access schemes. Numbers of additional interpretation facilities.
NE12	Landscaping in association with development	Numbers of structural landscaping schemes implemented.
NE13	Landscape management and protection	Numbers of schemes achieved.
NE14	Area of Great Landscape Value	Number of enhancement schemes agreed. Loss of landscape elements - hedges, ponds etc. in AGLV, change in visual character.
NE15	River Protection Area	Number of enhancement schemes agreed. Loss of environmental elements, change in visual character.
NE16	Flooding	Loss of flood plain area, cubic capacity, obstruction to flow. & loss of habitats
NE17	Open spaces	Area of open space, Numbers of open spaces. Length of viable Wildlife Corridors gained, lost or broken by planning decisions.
NE18	Character of built areas	Numbers of open spaces/habitat gained or lost through planning decisions.
NE19	Wyboston Land Settlement Association	Loss of special character of Land Settlement Association area.

NE20	Landscape and environmental improvement	Gains in landscape structural planting, and environmental benefits.
NE21	Forest of Marston Vale	Progress towards meeting the aims of the Forest of Marston Vale project.
NE22	Bedford Linear Park	Improved access/biodiversity to the north of Bedford as a result of planning decisions
NE23	Bedford River Valley Park	Provision of woodland planting, water features, leisure facilities and public access in this area as result of planning decisions.
NE24	Protection and enhancement of water resources	Maintain/enhance quality and quantity of water resources. Number of schemes using sustainable drainage systems.
NE25	Pollution	Reduction in number of polluting uses allowed. Reducing conflict between polluting and other uses.
NE26	Agricultural land quality	Amount of Grades 1, 2 and 3a Agricultural Land lost.
NE27	Wildlife habitats -v- agricultural land	Loss of wildlife habitats on non agricultural land. Refer Policies SSSI, CWS, NRs other sites.
NE28	Land contamination	Reducing incidence of ground contamination. Number of contaminated sites 'cleaned'.
NE29	Uncertain consequences of proposals	Number of approvals with adverse impact based on applications with inadequate or insufficient information.

CHAPTER - BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
BE1	Mixed Uses	Diversity of uses within Town Centre, District and Local Centres.
BE2	Mixed uses in Opportunity Sites	Mixture of uses and dwelling types granted planning permission on opportunity sites.
BE3	Uses and infrastructure to promote self-sustaining communities	Mixture of uses in residential areas and the provision of transport links for other than private vehicles, open space, community and leisure facilities.
BE4	Mixed uses in residential areas	Uses having an adverse impact on residential amenity and character and on traffic capacity
BE5	Area of Special Restraint	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal within ASR
BE6	Renewable Energy	The number of schemes implemented
BE7	Renewable energy - criteria	Successful integration of schemes into the environment
BE8	Energy Efficient layouts	Number of new developments which feature energy conservation principles in design, layout and landscaping.
BE9	Protecting the Character of the Conservation Areas	Number of applications refused for failing to protect character of conservation areas. Number of enhancement schemes.
BE10	Review of Conservation Areas	Number of areas reviewed and changes made.
BE11	Setting of Conservation Areas	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for failing to meet criteria set out in the policy.
BE12	Plans, drawings and cross sections	Quality of applications submitted in terms of information.
BE13	Demolition in Conservation Areas	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal involving demolition within Conservation Areas.
BE14	Premature Demolition	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for failing to submit redevelopment proposals/contract details.
BE15	Protecting views and open spaces	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for loss of views/open space.
BE16	New Adverts/Shopfronts in Conservation Areas	Number of improved shopfronts/signs following negotiation with applicants.
BE17	Retaining Listed Buildings	Number of Listed Buildings refused consent for demolition and repaired.
BE18	Demolition of Listed Buildings	Number of Listed Buildings saved from demolition.
BE19	Alterations to Listed Buildings	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal which would have an adverse impact on listed building.
BE20	Change of Use of Listed Buildings	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal the change of use of which would have a detrimental impact on the listed building.

BE21	Setting of Listed Buildings	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal which would have a detrimental impact on setting.
BE22	Recording of Listed Buildings	Frequency of use of condition requiring adequate recording.
BE23	Archaeology	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal with adverse impact on scheduled ancient monuments.
BE24	Archaeology	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for failing to take archaeology into account and the number of applications submitted with sufficient information on archaeology.
BE25	Archaeology	Number of applications submitting details of measures to protect archaeological remains.
BE26	Historic Parks and Gardens	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for adverse impact on Historic Park/Garden.
BE27	Barn Conversions	Number of barns satisfactorily converted.
BE28	New agricultural buildings	Number of new farm buildings complying with Design Guide.
BE29	High standard of design	a) Publication of Design Guidance b) Design competitions c) General quality of design.
BE30	Material considerations in the control of new development	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for failure to comply with criteria.
BE31	Statement of design principles	Statements presented
BE32	Development on the edge of urban areas and villages	Improved quality of peripheral development in terms of design and landscaping.
BE33	Gateways	Improved quality of development/landscaping at defined gateways.
BE34	Development adjoining main road and rail routes	Improved quality of development/landscaping along road and rail corridors.
BE34a	Protected views	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for loss of views and impact on setting.
BE35	Achieving Quality in Residential Layouts	Schemes conforming to requirements.
BE36	Space about buildings	Approvals that include the removal of permitted development rights
BE37	Overdevelopment	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for failure to meet criteria.
BE38	Landscaping	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for inadequate landscaping.
BE39	Landscaping	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for failure to submit adequate landscaping scheme.
BE40	Landscaping	Level of tree cover included in planning applications.
BE41	Control of Advertisements	Number of applications refused/dismissed on appeal for failure to comply with criteria.
BE42	Lighting	Number of development proposals where lighting has been taken into account and improvements made.
BE43	Public spaces	Number of new spaces created/existing spaces improved.
BE44	Public Art	Number of commissions arising from new development.
BE45	Community safety and crime prevention	Number of developments where security principles have been incorporated following negotiation.
BE46	Security Shutters	Number of applications refused/ dismissed on appeal for failure to meet criteria.
BE47	Overhead power lines and electro-magnetic fields	Number of applications which have been modified to reduce visual intrusion, nuisance and loss of amenity.
BE48	Accessible environments	Number of cases where access arrangements have been significantly improved/created to full appropriate standard.
BE49	Accessible environments	Number of cases where access arrangements have been significantly improved/created to full appropriate standard.

CHAPTER - HOUSING

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
H1	Provision of housing land	Progress towards providing 6,349 new dwellings.
H2-22	Housing Development Sites	Development of sites for housing in accordance with development principles
H23	Housing in Second Order Villages	Level of development on identified village sites.

H24	Residential Development in SPA villages	Location and scale of development in SPAs.
H25	Important Open Spaces	Appeals allowed for developments on Important Open Spaces.
H26	Housing in the open countryside	Distribution of development in the countryside, appeals allowed contrary to policy.
H27	Agricultural workers' dwellings	Number of agricultural workers' dwellings permitted/ numbers of applications refused contrary to criteria.
H28	Replacement dwellings in the open countryside	Number of replacement dwellings permitted/ numbers of applications refused contrary to criteria.
H29	Extensions to dwellings in the open countryside	Appeals allowed contrary to the criteria of the policy.
H30	Local needs housing in rural areas	Number of dwellings provided for local need.
H31	The provision of affordable housing	Number of affordable houses provided. Progress towards housing need target.
H32	The mix and range of housing type and size	Number of developments achieving a mixed range of house types reflecting community need.
H34	Mobility housing	Number of houses provided to mobility standards.
H35	Gypsy Sites	Provision of Gypsy caravan sites in accordance with criteria.
H36	Winter quarters for travelling show people	Provision of sites for travelling show people in relation to need.
H37	Mobile Homes	Location of mobile home parks
H38	Changes to existing dwellings and the development of garden land	Number of permissions for sub-division, change to flats, special needs housing.
H39	Loss of Residential Stock	Appeals allowed

CHAPTER - EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
E1	Provision of employment land	Progress towards meeting 85 ha. net target by 2006.
E2-5, E7	Site Development Principles	Development of sites for employment use.
E9	Coronation Brickworks	Progress towards the objectives of the development brief
E10	Elstow Brickworks	Progress towards the objectives of the development brief
E11	Thurleigh Airfield	Redevelopment of site in accordance with development brief.
E12	Loss of employment land	Amount of employment land lost to other uses without specific community and environmental benefits.
E13	Redevelopment of employment sites	Quality of redevelopment schemes.
E14	Working from home	Levels of provision for home working in new residential developments.
E15	Business uses in residential areas	Successful co-location of residential and business uses.
E16	Premises for small businesses	Number of affordable units/floorspace built.
E17	Business uses within SPAs	Distribution of business uses in the rural area. Percentage achieved within SPAs.
E18	Re-use of rural buildings	Number of change of use applications on existing rural buildings. Quality of re-use schemes.
E19	Loss of employment sites in the countryside/rural settlements	Number of rural employment units/sites/jobs lost or gained
E20	Intensification on existing employment sites	Retention of environmental quality where expansion permitted.
E21	Farm Diversification	Number of successful diversification schemes allowed.
E22	Equestrian Development	Number of equestrian developments allowed meeting the identified criteria to maintain environmental quality.
E23	Encouraging tourism	Number/quality of new tourist facilities developed and broadening of the range of attractions.
E24	Provision of signposting	Number and quality of additional signposts
E25	Tourist accommodation	Planning Permissions for tourist accommodation
E26	Touring Caravans	Number of touring caravan sites given permission in accordance with criteria.
E27	Static Caravans/Chalets	Appeals dismissed/allowed

CHAPTER - SHOPPING

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
SH1	Regional Shopping Centres	Resistance to regional shopping centres
SH2	Shopping development in the town centre	Change in quality and range of floorspace in the town centre. Location of new floorspace in the compact core.
SH3	Primary shopping frontage	Change in numbers of A1 uses at ground floor level in primary shopping frontage.
SH4	Pilgrim Square	Preparation of revised brief and suitable planning application.
SH5	District Centre	Number of applications refused due to adverse effect on vitality and viability of Saxon Centre
SH6	Local centres	Provision of suitable convenience shopping facilities in established local centres.
SH7	New local shopping facilities	Provision of shopping facilities in new residential areas.
SH8	Change of use of local shops	Change in the percentage of retail units in the town centre, district and local centres.
SH9/10	Retention/provision of village facilities	Losses and gains in number of shops, post offices and public houses in the rural area
SH11	Farm Shops	Location of farm shops.
SH12	Comparison retail outside primary and district centre areas.	Number of permissions outside the primary shopping area and district centre
SH13	Comparison retail - type of goods and sub-division	Imposition of conditions to limit goods sold or subdivision of premises.
SH16	New convenience retail development	Number of permissions outside the primary shopping area and district centre.
SH17	New convenience retail development	Foodstores falling outside allocation sites
SH19	Restaurants and take-aways	Number of applications refused on grounds of disturbance or harm to environmental quality.
SH20	Amusement Centres	Location of amusement centres.

CHAPTER - BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
TC1	Protecting Architectural and Historic features	Number of buildings protected from alteration/demolition and enhanced.
TC2	Grant Aid	Number of buildings repaired and enhanced using this resource
TC3	Environmental Improvements	Programme of Environmental Enhancements completed.
TC4	Shopfronts and advertisments	Number of improved shopfronts/adverts following negotiation with applicants.
TC5	Riverside enhancements	Number of redevelopment opportunities achieved. Number of environmental improvements achieved.
TC6	Secondary Shopping Frontages	Composition of uses within secondary shopping frontages.
TC7	Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	Number of residential units created above shops.
TC8	Town centre residential use	Gains/losses of residential units
TC9	Office use in Primary Shopping Area	Gains/losses of office floorspace/units
TC10	Town Centre Amenity	Extension of CCTV system

CHAPTER - TRANSPORT

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
T1	Strategic road network	New roads completed, distance, numbers.
T2	Local transportation network improvements	Roads completed, distance, numbers, phases.
T3	Strategic routes in the rural area	Higher placings of Local Plan roads in DoT Roads Review.
T4	Reducing highway impact	- Landscape schemes approved/implemented. - TPO/Trees lost. - Houses protected/unprotected by attenuation measures. - New roads affecting relevant uses.
T5	Motorists' facilities	Completion of works on site. Successful use of criteria on other applications.
T6	Public Transport Infrastructure	Infrastructure elements provided, elements agreed, Numbers planning agreements.

T7	Developer contributions for public transport measures.	Schemes agreed/implemented. Money contributed.
T8	Rail network	Frequency and quality of train services operating from Bedford.
T9	Rail Services	Change in Marston Vale Line service. Electrification north of Bedford.
T10	Access to rail services and stations	Number of facilities implemented to improve access
T11	Rail Freight links	Number of links made by new development
T12	River boat services	Implementation and maintenance of long term service.
T13	Pedestrian routes	Number/length of new routes Implementation of bridges.
T14	Cycle routes	Loss of cycle routes, provision of new cycle routes. Monitor crime on cycle routes.
T15	Parking	Provision of parking spaces as per standards. Number/amount of commuted sums. Provision of alternative to parking.
T17	Park & Ride facilities and town centre parking	Numbers, quality and size of sites, public transport priority schemes, busways associated with planning decisions
T18	Commercial vehicle park	Implementation of scheme.
T19	Coach Parking	Number of coach parking places & signs
T20	Safety and traffic calming	Number of schemes. Number of accidents.
T21	Accessibility for less mobile people	Provision in new planning approvals

CHAPTER - LEISURE & RECREATION

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
LR1	New sports and leisure facilities	Growth in range of leisure facilities available in the Borough
LR2	Adverse effects of development	Permissions gained outside of the policy criteria.
LR3	Golf	Number of golf courses in relation to ECSR/Sport England standard
LR4	Rowing course	Provision of rowing courses.
LR5	Radwell Lakes	Achievement of objectives of Management Plan
LR6	Arts venue	Provision of the venue
LR7	Use of River Great Ouse	Additional proposals for recreational use, implementation of Riverside Walk.
LR8	Riverside Close amentiy space	Provision of open space and car parking.
LR9	Moorings	Number of moorings created
LR10	Access to countryside	Gains and losses in footpath, bridleway and cycle networks
LR11	Noise generation	Number of noisy developments allowed adjacent to sensitive uses
LR12	Santa Pod Raceway	Impacts over agreed levels, implementation of the access to the primary road network.
LR13	Loss of leisure facilities	Number of changes in use of leisure sites.
LR14	Playing Fields and Allotments	Playing fields and allotments lost contrary to criteria.
LR15	Provision of outdoor playing space for sport	Progress towards 6 acre standard.
LR16	Provision of children's play space	Progress towards 6 acre standard.
LR17	Provision of general amenity open space	Progress towards meeting Borough standard.
LR18	Recreation/Community Uses	Net loss of facilities.
LR19	Provision of new community facilities	Progress towards meeting deficiencies in community provision.

CHAPTER - UTILITIES & TELECOMS

Policy Number and Title		Policy Performance Indicator
U2 U3	Floodplain Waste water management	Number and scale of planning permissions gained against advice of utility companies and other agencies.
U4 U5	Satellite dishes etc Telecommunications equipment	Number of consents issued contrary to policy.

C

INTRODUCTION / BOROUGH STRATEGY / NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING / EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM / SHOPPING / BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE
TRANSPORT / LEISURE & RECREATION / UTILITIES & TELECOMS / IMPLEMENTATION
AIMS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES / PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL / OPPORTUNITY SITES / GLOSSARY / PROPOSALS MAPS
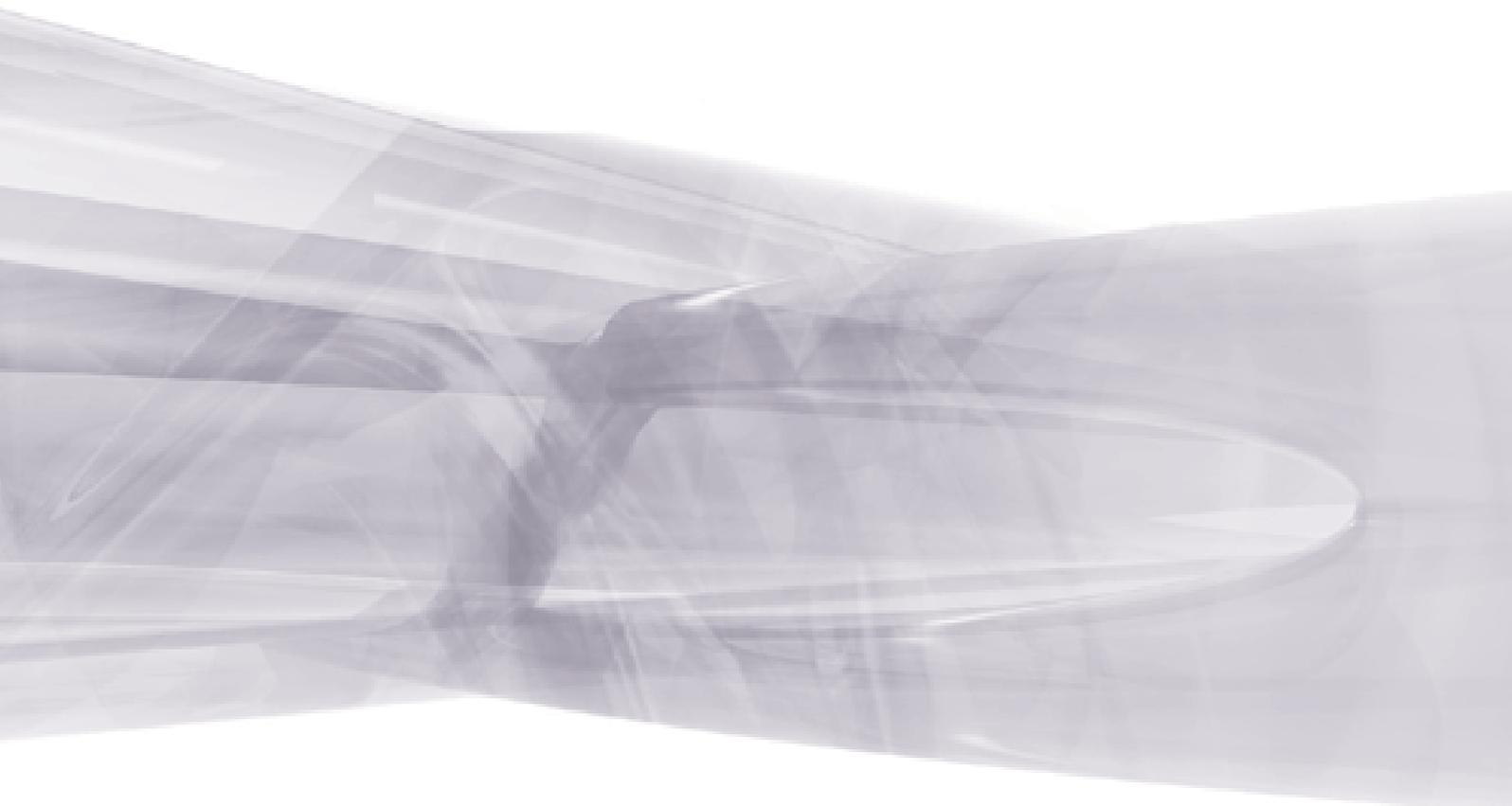
C / ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

INTRODUCTION

C.1 Since its inception the planning system has weighed the benefits of economic development against its impact on amenity. From the 1947 Planning Act onwards planning legislation has been extended and strengthened increasing its effectiveness with the emphasis on control of development in the local environment. In more recent times closer attention has turned to the longer-term implications of continuing development and expansion. There has been a recognition that this cannot continue ad infinitum without catastrophic consequences.

C.2 Arising from the Planning & Land Compensation Act of 1991, there is now a formal obligation for environmental considerations to be taken into account in the preparation of development plans. This was recently followed by the need to take into account the conservation of wildlife resources and the landscape. Concerns now embrace wider environmental issues such as global warming, bio-diversity and depletion of natural resources.

C.3 International concerns about the environment found their expression in 1987 with the World Commission on Environment and Development (Bruntland Commission), which promoted the concept of sustainable development. The Commission provided the most commonly accepted definition of sustainable development:

'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

C.4 This seeks to avoid the exhaustion and pollution of the world's resources by careful management and wherever possible by the use of renewable resources.

C.5 The Government's commitment to the principle of sustainable development was declared in its white paper of 1990 'This Common Inheritance'. In 1992 the United Nation's Conference on the Environment and Development (The Earth Summit) at Rio de Janeiro adopted a declaration to make future development sustainable. A number of agreements were reached on the following:

• sustainability, published as Agenda 21;
• climatic change to combat global warming;
• biodiversity to protect species and habitats; and,
• the management of woodlands and forests.

C.6 Agenda 21 called on governments to prepare national strategies for sustainable development. The UK Government's strategy is intended to provide for the nation's needs for food, mineral extraction, the provision of new homes and other buildings while pursuing environmental objectives.

C.7 In Britain, the planning system is seen as a key instrument in the pursuit of sustainable development. It is to fulfil this role by delivering land use and development objectives that are compatible with the principles of sustainability. Environmental appraisal helps to ensure that the local plan process achieves this end.

C.8 The appraisal is a means of identifying, quantifying, weighing up and reporting on environmental costs and benefits. The purpose of the appraisal is not to examine the plan in any detail but to show that environmental considerations have been incorporated into the plan. The appraisal should demonstrate how the policies of the plan affect specific elements of the environment.

C.9 It is virtually impossible to carry out development without there being some adverse effects on the environment. Accordingly the appraisal will inevitably show some adverse impacts. Undertaking the appraisal exercise will bring a heightened awareness of these and provides a means of making a judgement on the best way of reducing effects on the environment.

C.10 This Local Plan has been drawn up according to the principles of sustainable development and environmental conservation. The Council's aim has been to produce a plan which gives the emphasis to environmental considerations to protect both the local interests and to take global issues into account.

THE APPRAISAL

C.11 The application of environmental appraisal to local plans is a new science with no tried and tested precedents. Under these conditions scope exists for undertaking the appraisal exercise in a variety of ways. However, the methodology chosen has to be simple and clear. It was decided to appraise this plan chapter by chapter presenting the results in a matrix for each, showing the effect of each policy against 15 environmental criteria.

C.12 These are found across the top of the tables and are defined in the table at the end of the appendix. The symbols indicating the types of impact, beneficial, adverse etc. are allocated on a balanced consideration of each policy's effect. Many are straightforward but a number are complicated. For example, development in a rural location could bring about a loss of some trees or landscaping, but this could be more than compensated by extensive new tree planting resulting in a net benefit. There has been no weighting of impacts; both small and large impacts are shown the same way in the matrices.

C.13 While considering the impact of policies it should be remembered that their implementation will be influenced by other policies, eg. housing proposals also being subject to policies on the environment and other subject areas. Accordingly the adverse effects of some policies shown individually on the matrices may not be

as negative as first indicated, or even may not materialise when implemented. Because of the innumerable variations that could occur these possibilities are not reflected in the matrices.

C.14 Environmental appraisal has proven a valuable tool in the preparation of the Local Plan. The principle of sustainability underlies the plan and this has had a beneficial effect on its appraisal. The plan provides for the housing, employment and other needs for the Borough between the years 1996 and 2001. Meeting these needs will inevitably have some adverse effects on the environment and these are reflected in matrices dealing with development proposals.

C.15 As can be expected, policies promoting the preservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment and those encouraging more sustainable transport and land use patterns indicate positive impacts. The relatively high positive profile achieved overall reflects the adoption of the principle of sustainability while drawing up the plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA – DEFINITIONS

Global Sustainability
1 & 2 Transport, trip and mode
Number and length of vehicle trips and mode, eg. car, bus, train, cycle, walking. Greatest efficiency is achieved by public modes, cycling and walking.

3 Energy efficiency, built environment
Energy used by buildings, both in construction and day to day use. Energy can be saved by recycling materials, reusing buildings, avoiding frost pockets, windy sites, using shelter belts and maximising solar gain.

4 Renewable energy
The use of natural sources of energy, eg. wind, water, biofuel.

5 CO_2 Fixing
The use of trees, especially broadleaves, to lock up carbon dioxide, achieved by using every opportunity to increase tree cover.

6 Habitat
The protection, enhancement and increase in the number of habitats increase the opportunities to preserve and increase the number of plant and animal species.

Natural Resources
7 Air
The main pollution sources are traffic, industry and power stations. Patterns of land use can influence its generation and impact.

8 Water
Land uses and detailed controls can influence the quality of water resources.

9 Land and soil
Development patterns influence the conservation of the best quality agricultural land and the reclamation of polluted or derelict land.

10 Minerals
Conservation of resources through recycling of materials and buildings and keeping reserves free of development.

Local Environment
11 Landscape
Minimise developments affecting the countryside and valued landscapes. Implement improvements through reclamation and community forests.

12 Urban Environment
The quality of life in towns and villages influenced by promoting secure environments, quiet suburbs and villages and vital town centres.

13 Cultural Heritage
The protection and enhancement of historic buildings and places, archaeological and geological sites.

14 Open space
The conservation of open spaces and countryside for public access.

15 Building Quality
High levels of building maintenance, renewal and occupancy.

Chapter 2
Borough Strategy

CRITERIA

POLICIES	Global sustainability					Natural resources					Local environmental quality				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
S1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	?	?	0
S2	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
S3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
S4	8	3	3	3	8	8	8	U	?	8	3	8	8	3	3
S5	0	3	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	?	0
S6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0
S7	8	8	0	0	0	8	8	0	8	?	8	?	0	3	0
S8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S9	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0

STRATEGY SUMMARY

Given imposed development requirements the Strategy seeks a spatial distribution of development consistent with sustainability ideals.

3 Beneficial impact
8 Adverse impact
U Unpredictable impact
0 No relationship
? Uncertain

Chapter 3
Natural Environment

CRITERIA

POLICIES	Global sustainability					Natural resources					Local environmental quality				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
NE1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
NE2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
NE3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
NE4	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	?	0	?	0
NE5	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
NE6	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
NE7	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	?	0
NE8	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	?	3	0	3	0	0	?	0
NE9	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	?	0
NE10	0	0	0	0	0	3	?	0	0	0	3	?	0	?	0
NE11	?	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	0
NE12	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
NE13	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
NE14	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	?	0	3	0	?	0	0
NE15	0	0	0	0	?	3	0	?	?	0	3	?	0	?	0
NE16	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	?	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
NE17	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
NE18	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	?	3	0	3	0
NE19	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	?
NE20	0	0	0	0	?	?	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	?	0

NE21	0	0	3	3	3	0	3	?	3	3	?	?	?	?
NE22	0	0	3	3	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	0	0
NE23	0	0	?	3	3	?	3	0	3	3	0	3	0	0
NE24	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	?	0	0	3	0	0
NE25	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
NE26	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NE27	0	0	3	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NE28	0	0	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	?	3	0	0	0
NE29	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SUMMARY

This Chapter sets out to protect the Borough's natural environment with policies on the preservation of irreplaceable and valued habitats, woodlands and other landscape features to sustain biodiversity. Policies giving encouragement to new landscaping and the improvement of land left derelict are included.

Protection is sought for the best of the rural landscape and the best agricultural land. The quality of important natural resources is protected with policies aimed at the control of pollution of land, water and air.

3   Beneficial impact

8   Adverse impact

U   Unpredictable impact

0   No relationship

?   Uncertain

Chapter 4
Built Environment

POLICIES	CRITERIA														
	Global sustainability						Natural resources				Local environmental quality				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
BE1	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
BE2	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
BE3	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	3
BE4	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
BE5	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0
BE6	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	U	0	0	0	0
BE7	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0
BE8	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0
BE10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0
BE12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0
BE15	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0
BE16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
BE17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0
BE22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
BE26	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0
BE27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
BE28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
BE29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	0	3
BE30	0	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	3

BE31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	0
BE32	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE33	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE34	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
BE34a	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0	3	3	0
BE35	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	3	0	3	0
BE36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE37	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
BE38	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
BE39	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
BE40	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
BE41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
BE42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
BE43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0	3	3
BE44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
BE45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
BE46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE48	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUMMARY

This Chapter promotes a mixed and sustainable land use pattern, and energy efficiency in buildings. Policies cover the protection of the Borough's heritage, including valued buildings and public spaces, rural settlement character and landscape. Allied to these are policies that encourage improved development standards, community safety and access for all members of the community in the built environment.

3 Beneficial impact
8 Adverse impact
⊃ Unpredictable impact
0 No relationship
? Uncertain

**Chapter 5
Housing**

CRITERIA

POLICIES	Global sustainability						Natural resources				Local environmental quality				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
H1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
H2	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	?	3	0
H3	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
H4	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
H5	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
H6	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H7	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H8	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H9	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3
H10a	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H10b	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H11	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H12	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H13	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H14	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	0
H15	8	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H16	8	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	3	3	3	3
H17	8	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	?	3	0	3	0
H18	8	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	8	0	3	3	0	3	0
H19	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
H20	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H21	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H22	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
H23	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
H24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
H25	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0

Policy																
H26	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0
H27	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H30	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
H34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
H35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
H39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

HOUSING SUMMARY

The key positive impacts are on trip efficiency, mode efficiency, CO_2 fixing, habitats, the urban enviroment and public access to open space. The effect on energy efficiency is difficult to predict. This depends on the implementation of the development principles. Similarly the effect on air quality is difficult to assess.

3 Beneficial impact

8 Adverse impact

U Unpredictable impact

0 No relationship

? Uncertain

Chapter 6
Employment & Tourism

POLICIES	Global sustainability					Natural resources					Local environmental quality				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
E1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8	3	0	0	0
E2	3	3	0	0	3	0	?	0	0	0	8	3	?	0	0
E3	3	3	0	0	0	3	?	0	0	0	8	3	0	0	0
E4	3	3	0	0	3	0	?	0	0	0	8	3	0	0	0
E5	3	3	0	0	3	0	?	0	0	0	8	3	0	0	0
E7	8	8	8	0	3	3	8	0	8	0	8	0	0	3	0
E9	3	3	0	0	3	?	8	0	3	0	3	U	0	3	3
E10	3	3	0	0	3	?	8	0	3	0	3	U	0	3	3
E11	8	8	3	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
E12	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
E13	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
E14	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
E15	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
E16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E17	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E18	8	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
E19	3	8	3	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
E20	?	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CRITERIA

E21	8	0	?	?	0	8	0	3	0	3	0	0	?	3
E22	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
E23	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
E24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
E25	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		8	0	0	0	0
E26	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
E27	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM SUMMARY

The site development policies generally impact positively on trip and mode efficiency, CO_2 fixing and landscape. Policy E11, Thurleigh, may have a negative impact for trip and mode efficiency but a positive impact on the reuse of previously developed land.

3 Beneficial impact
8 Adverse impact
∪ Unpredictable impact
0 No relationship
? Uncertain impact

Chapter 7
Shopping

CRITERIA

POLICIES	Global sustainability						Natural resources				Local environmental quality				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
SH1	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	0
SH2	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
SH4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH5	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
SH6	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH7	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH8	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH9	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH10	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH11	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SH12	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	3
SH13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH16	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	3
SH17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SH19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
SH20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0

SHOPPING SUMMARY

A vital and vibrant town centre with a full and successful retail function helps reduce car trips, encourages the use of public transport and makes the best use of existing investment.

3   Beneficial impact
8   Adverse impact
U   Unpredictable impact
0   No relationship
?   Uncertain

Chapter 8
Town Centre

CRITERIA

| POLICIES | Global sustainability | | | | | | Natural resources | | | | Local environmental quality | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
TC1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
TC2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	3
TC3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
TC4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3
TC5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0
TC6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
TC7	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	3
TC8	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
TC9	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
TC10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0

TOWN CENTRE SUMMARY

TC1 to TC5 – policies aiming to protect and enhance the cultural heritage of the town centre, in order to increase its attractiveness, viability and vitality.

TC6 to TC10 – policies aiming to encourage a greater diversity of uses within the town centre, thereby enhancing its vitality.

3   Beneficial impact

8   Adverse impact

U   Unpredictable impact

0   No relationship

?   Uncertain

Chapter 9
Transport

CRITERIA

POLICIES	Global sustainability					Natural resources						Local environmental quality			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
T1	8	8	8	0	0	?	?	?	?	8	8	3	?	0	0
T2	8	8	8	0	0	?	?	?	?	8	8	3	?	0	0
T3	8	8	8	0	0	?	8	?	?	?	8	3	?	?	0
T4	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
T5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	8	0	0	0	0
T6	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
T7	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
T8	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
T9	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
T10	?	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
T11	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
T12	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	?	0	3	?	3	0	0	0
T13	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	?	3	0	0	0
T14	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	?	3	0	0	0
T15	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	?	0	?	0	0	0
T17	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	?	0	3	0	0	0
T18	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
T19	3	3	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
T20	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
T21	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0

TRANSPORT SUMMARY

This Chapter seeks the improvement of the local road network and the links of the urban area to the national road network. The consequent relief of congestion in the urban area will provide improved conditions enabling a shift to more efficient forms of transport, eg. buses, cycling and walking, to achieve a more sustainable transport pattern. Improvements to rail links and services will be sought including supporting the provision of new stations. More use of rail freight will be encouraged.

A policy is included to reduce the visual and noise impact of new roads.

3 Beneficial impact
8 Adverse impact
∪ Unpredictable impact
0 No relationship
? Uncertain

Chapter 10
Leisure & Recreation

| | CRITERIA | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Global sustainability | | | | | Natural resources | | | | | Local environmental quality | | | | |
POLICIES	1 Trip eff.	2 Mode eff.	3 En. eff.	4 En. renew.	5 CO² fix	6 Habitats	7 Air qual.	8 Water con.	9 Land/soil qual	10 Mineral con.	11 L/scape	12 Urban Env.	13 Cult. herit.	14 O.S. access	15 Build. qual.
LR1	3	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	U	0	0	3	0	0	0
LR2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
LR3	3	?	0	0	?	3	0	0	?	0	U	0	0	3	0
LR4	●	●	0	0	?	?	0	?	3	0	?	0	0	3	0
LR5	●	●	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	3	0
LR6	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3
LR7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
LR8	0	0	0	0	?	U	0	?	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
LR9	●	●	0	0	0	0	●	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
LR10	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
LR11	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	3
LR12	●	●	0	0	0	0	●	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
LR13	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	3	0
LR14	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	0
LR15	3	3	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
LR16	3	3	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
LR17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
LR18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
LR19	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3

LEISURE AND RECREATION SUMMARY

Due to the variety of proposals included in this Chapter impacts are hard to assess with certainty.

3   Beneficial impact
●   Adverse impact
U   Unpredictable impact
0   No relationship
?   Uncertain

Chapter 11
Utilities

POLICIES

		Global sustainability				Natural resources					Local environmental quality				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Trip eff.	Mode eff.	En. eff.	En. renew.	CO² fix	Habitats	Air qual.	Water con.	Land/soil qual	Mineral con.	L/scape	Urban Env.	Cult. herit.	O.S. access	Build. qual.
U2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
U3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
U4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
U5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0

CRITERIA

UTILITIES SUMMARY

U2 to U3 -controls to assist the water/sewage authorities in their management of water resources.
U4 to U5 -policies to minimise the impact of telecommunications equipment in environmentally sensitive areas.

3 Beneficial impact
8 Adverse impact
U Unpredictable impact
0 No relationship
? Uncertain

172

D

BEDFORD BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN
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OPPORTUNITY SITES

Site 1	Land at Lime Street / Harpur Street
Site 2	Former Granada Cinema site, St Peter's Street /Lurke Street
Site 3	Pilgrim Square
Site 4	Former Howard Congregational Church, Mill Street
Site 5	Riverside Square
Site 6	South side of St Paul's Square
Site 7	Castle Lane
Site 8	Kingsway
Site 9	St John's Station
Site 10	Ex-railway sidings east of Cauldwell Walk
Site 11	Land to west of Prebend Street
Site 12	Land south of Ford End Road

D / OPPORTUNITY SITES

INTRODUCTION

D.1   One of the main objectives of the Local Plan is to regenerate parts of the urban area which appear run-down, under-used and derelict, whilst ensuring full integration with the existing built fabric. Policy S2 recognises that several of the sites in the urban area will only come forward given favourable market conditions. These have been termed 'opportunity sites', and there are several within the town centre, and in the wider urban area, that have potential for redevelopment or refurbishment. Opportunity sites are not firm allocations, they are included in order to stimulate interest from landowners, developers and other interested parties. Any proposals arising should respect the policies of this plan and in particular, policies BE1 and BE2 concerning mixed use development, BE24 concerning archaeology and where appropriate take account of the floodplain.

OPPORTUNITY SITES IN THE TOWN CENTRE

D.2   Most of these sites are located on the fringe of the main retail core. Where this occurs, uses other than retail are likely to be the most viable, although this does not rule out an element of specialist retailing within each site. Details of the individual sites are listed below along with an indication of its potential use. The larger sites will be the subject of detailed development briefs to be prepared at a later date.

SITE 1: LAND AT LIME STREET/HARPUR STREET

D.3   This is a prominent corner site with frontages to both Lime Street and Harpur Street. Eagle Court lies to the north and the Probation Service offices to the east. Although the site has previously been identified for offices, residential use may be a suitable alternative provided there is no significant impact on the development by the adjoining club. The site also provides the opportunity to extend the specialist shopping currently present in Lime Street, and create a more active frontage to the northern side of the street.
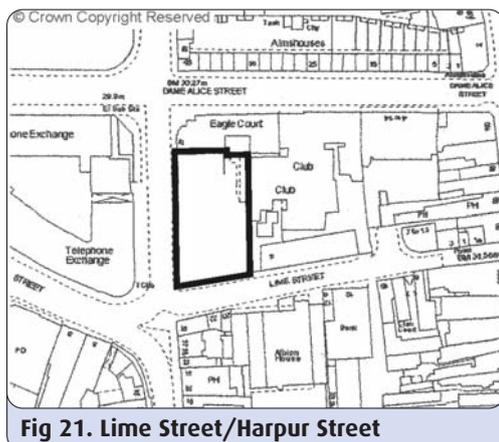

Fig 21. Lime Street/Harpur Street

Any proposal should therefore include an element of retail use on the ground floor, along the Lime Street frontage.

SITE 2: FORMER GRANADA CINEMA SITE, ST PETER'S STREET/LURKE STREET

D.4   This site has frontages to both St Peter's Street and Lurke Street and includes both the former Granada cinema site and adjacent car park. The site has now been redeveloped for retail purposes.
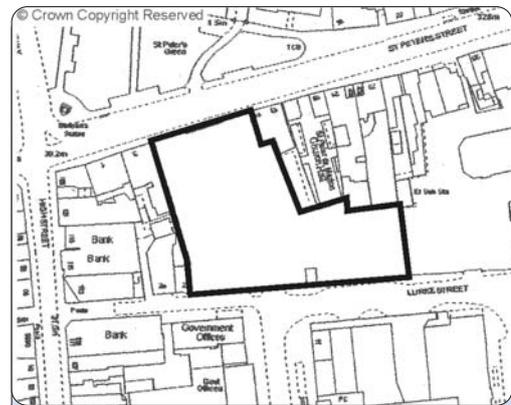

Fig 22. St Peter's Street/Lurke Street

SITE 3: PILGRIM SQUARE

D.6   This lies to the west of the town centre and consists of an L-shaped site with frontages to Greyfriars, Greenhill Street, Thurlow Street, Allhallows and Midland Road. Outline planning permission granted in 1992 for a mixture of retail, restaurant and offices with public conveniences, a relocated bus station and car parking, has now expired.

D.7   This site represents the key redevelopment opportunity in the town centre and Policy SH4 outlines the Borough Council's requirements in terms of design and layout.

SITE 4: FORMER HOWARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MILL STREET

D.8   This site consists of the former Howard Congregational Church which is a Grade II listed building. The building has now been converted to night club use.

SITE 5: RIVERSIDE SQUARE

D.10   This site is used as a car park and is one of the prime riverside sites in Bedford. With the recent relocation of Bedford Market, it provides a key opportunity to introduce new uses onto this important riverside site in conjunction with an improved Queen's Walk and a proposed footbridge linking Batts Ford with St Mary's Gardens. Provision should also be made for pedestrians to gain access to the river frontage from Horne Lane and a new public space may be appropriate in order to support more activity along the riverside. Potential uses include leisure, offices, cultural and residential in the form of a mixed use development. The site also provides the opportunity to incorporate a quality riverside pub or
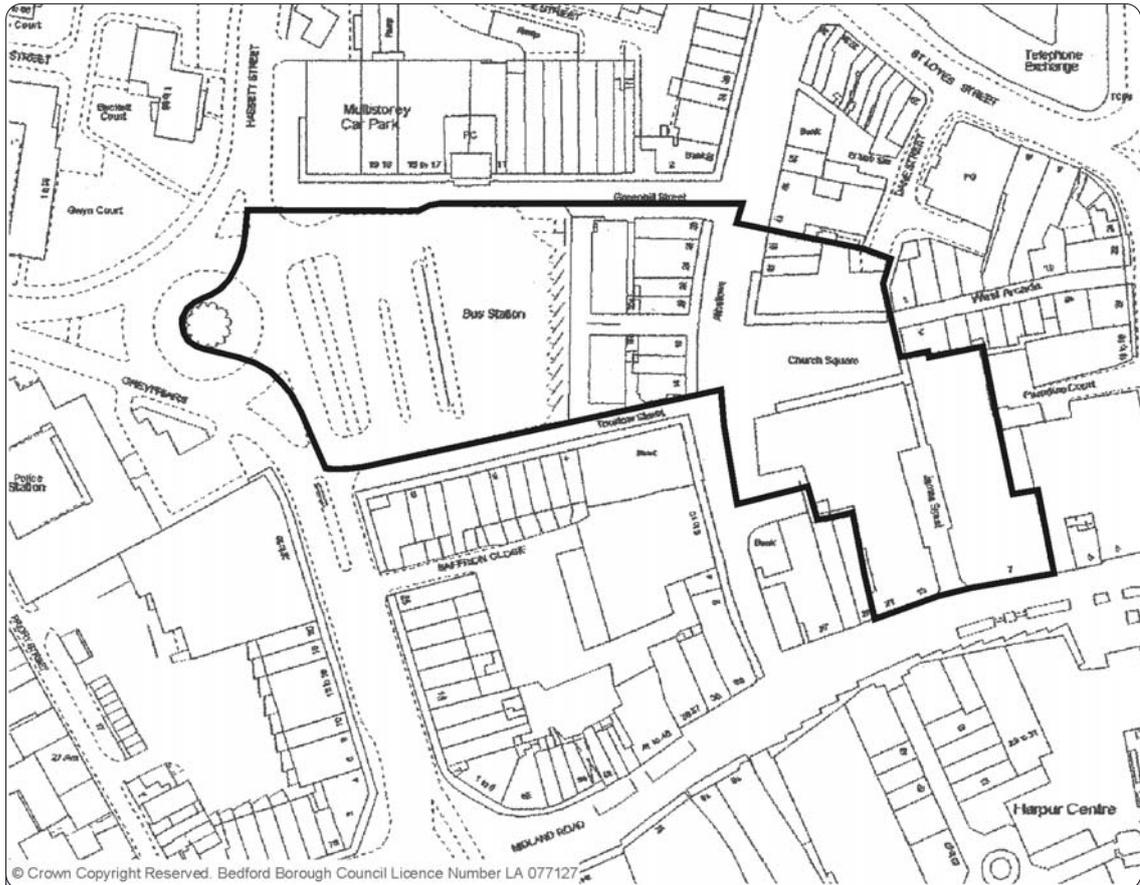
Fig 23. Site 3 Pilgrim Square
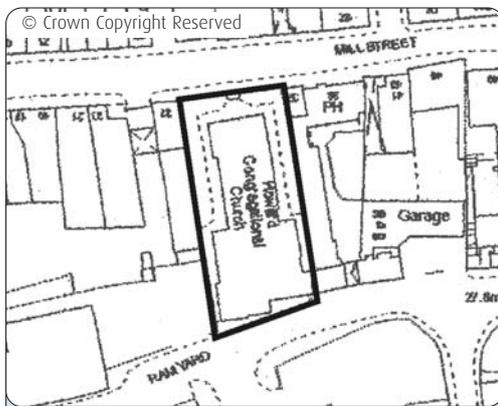
Fig 24. Site 4 Mill Street
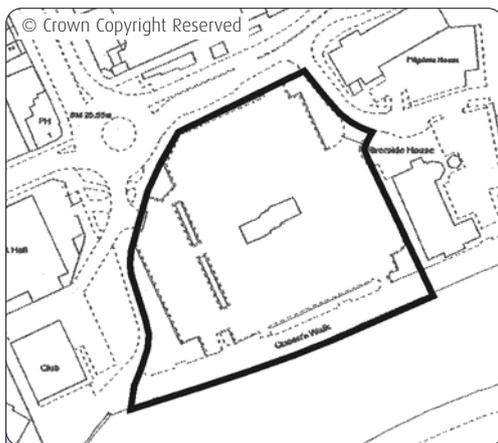
Fig 25. Site 5 Riverside Square

restaurant. The implications of the loss of the current car park facility will also have to be fully considered. It should be noted that this site is potentially at risk of flooding as it is in the River Great Ouse floodplain.

SITE 6: PROPERTIES ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF ST PAUL'S SQUARE

D.12   This site comprises the buildings on the southern side of St Paul's Square, most of which are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. The largest of these is the Shire Hall which currently accommodates the Magistrates Courts.

D.13   The buildings to the east of the Shire Hall have remained vacant for many years and their future use is linked to the Magistrates Courts Committee's requirements relating to the use of the Shire Hall. The MCC is pursuing the possibility of constructing the Magistrates Court elsewhere. Potentially, therefore the entire southern side of the Square could be vacant within the plan period.

D.14   This group of buildings forms an important part of the town's heritage and it is imperative that suitable uses are found to ensure their survival. In order to achieve this, a pragmatic approach to their conservation will be required which acknowledges the whole setting of St. Paul's Square and recognises that some alterations will be required to adapt the buildings to meet the requirements of new users.

D.15   In addition, the eastern portion of the site which fronts onto the High Street has potential for redevelopment.
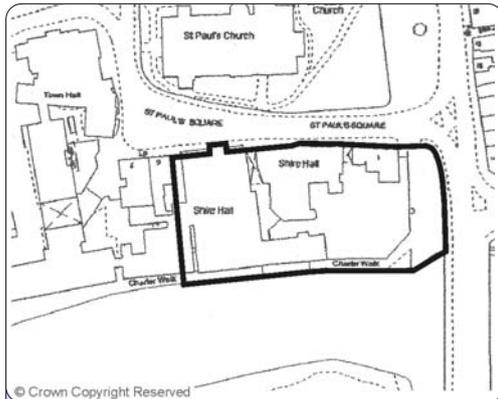
Fig 26. St Paul's Square

This is known as the Bank building site. Redevelopment should be carried out in conjunction with the renovation of the adjoining properties to ensure a comprehensive approach to the regeneration of the site. Potential uses for this part of the site and the buildings to the east of the Shire Hall include offices and residential. Once the Magistrates Courts are vacated, institutional, museum, cultural, office or hotel uses may be appropriate. Opportunities for the introduction of a quality pub/restaurant along the river frontage should also be explored. It should be noted that this site is potentially at risk of flooding as it is in the River Great Ouse floodplain.

SITE 7: CASTLE LANE

D.16   This site has been identified for redevelopment for many years. In 1991, the Borough Council published a development brief for this site, outlining the main constraints and giving guidance as to its layout and use. This included about 7500m2 of offices, 1000m2 of new retail floorspace, a new Central Library including a performance facility, car parking etc.

D.17   Since then, many of these uses have ceased to be viable and funding for the new library has not been forthcoming. The Local Plan provides the opportunity to take stock and reappraise the site's development potential. It is intended that a revised development brief will be prepared.

D.18   In considering any redevelopment proposals, the Borough Council will be mindful of the site's importance as the historic core of Bedford. Consequently, any proposals will have to adequately accommodate both the site's heritage and tourism potential including the operation of the Museum and Art Gallery. Furthermore, as part of the Borough Council's Embankment Renaissance Project an enhancement scheme is proposed for the Castle Mound and Gardens. It is anticipated that any mixture of proposed uses may have a higher proportion of housing than was previously the case.

D.19   Because this site is in multiple ownership, any proposals will be considered in the context of the entire site. A comprehensive rather than a piecemeal approach to development will therefore be essential. It should be noted that this site is potentially at risk of flooding as it is in the River Great Ouse floodplain.
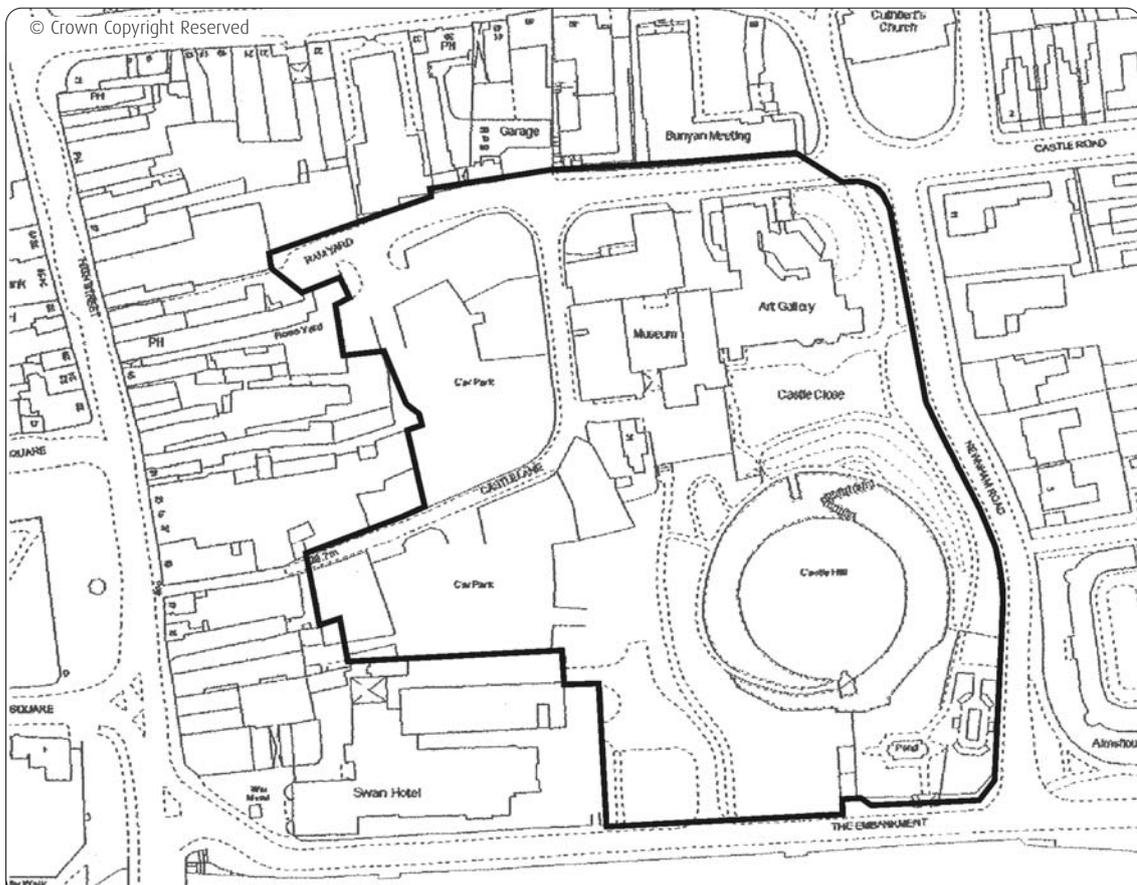

Fig 27. Site 7 Castle Lane

OTHER URBAN OPPORTUNITY SITES

SITE 8: KINGSWAY

D.20 Coupled with surface level car parks and other land in Melbourne Street, including potentially surplus railway land, there would seem to be the opportunity for major remodelling and redevelopment of this site. The proposal to divert the Bedford-Bletchley railway line partially infringes on the temporary Bedford Hospital South Wing car park and the issue of car park provision will therefore need to be addressed in any comprehensive development scheme. The site also falls within the safeguarded area of the Bedford Transport Development Plan. Kingsway is an important route within Bedford and its rundown and cluttered appearance is viewed as an investment disincentive for the town as a whole. The Borough Council would be likely to encourage proposals that incorporate a mixture of uses including housing and office based employment. Part of the site has now been developed for residential purposes.

SITE 9: ST JOHN'S STATION

D.21 The southern corner of this site has been developed for residential purposes and the site is also a safeguarded area within the Bedford Transport Development Plan. The implementation of the Bedford Transport Development Plan and the relocation of St. John's Station, presents an opportunity for surplus railway land to be used for employment based development and/or residential use (subject to significant environmental works to reduce the impact of nearby non-residential uses). The Borough Council would wish to see the nature conservation interest in this area protected. It should be noted that this site is potentially at risk of flooding as it is in the River Great Ouse floodplain.

SITE 10: EX-RAILWAY SIDINGS EAST OF CAULDWELL WALK

D.22 This area comprises operational rail sidings, a number of small scale sites based industries and overgrown vacant land. In its current state it is a wasted asset and is an eyesore especially when viewed from the mainline railway approach to Bedford; as such it is an investment disincentive to the town as a whole. The Borough Council is keen to explore with landowners and adjacent major employers what alternatives may be appropriate that will maximise the utilisation and image of the site. Any development concept should include the provision of open space in this location. It should be noted that this site is potentially at risk of flooding as it is in the River Great Ouse floodplain.

(See Fig 30)

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Fig 28. Site 8 Kingsway

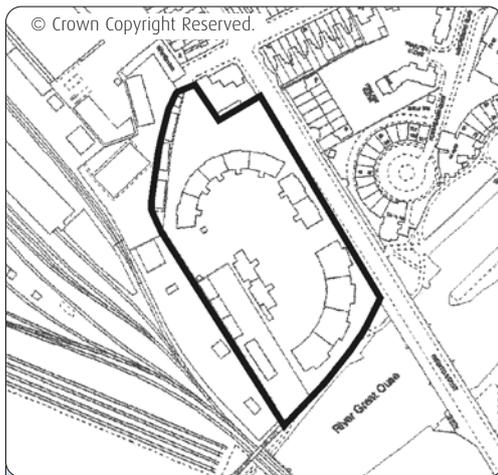© Crown Copyright Reserved. Bedford Borough Council Licence No. LA 077127

Fig 29. Site 9 St John's Station

SITE 11: LAND TO WEST OF PREBEND STREET

D.23   This site has now been developed for residential purposes.

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Fig 31. Site 11 Prebend Street

SITE 12: LAND SOUTH OF FORD END ROAD

D.24   This site forms part of the Single Regeneration Budget Bid and comprises vacant Railtrack and British Gas land. Development is encouraged in the context of the Queens Park Regeneration Strategy and following reclamation. A development brief has been adopted for this site and additional land to the north. The brief shows a mixture of residential and employment uses and the provision of comprehensive access arrangements to serve both areas of land and to facilitate a new access to the adjacent brewery. Any development must take into account the surrounding land uses and constraints. Any scheme should incorporate appropriate open space provision, landscaping and an open landscaped link through to the river. It should be noted that this site is potentially at risk of flooding as it is in the River Great Ouse floodplain.

(See Fig 32)

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Fig 30. Site 10 Cauldwell Walk

Fig 32. Land South of Ford End Road

Vitality aGlobal Warming

B8 Uses

Primary Shopping Area

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

SSSI

Traffic Calming

Housing Provision

A1Gateways

District Centres

TPO

Trunk Road Programme

Environmental Appraisal

English Heritage

Fall In

Viability

Local Centre

Important open spaces

Bedfords Transport Development Plan

wildlife corridors

Agricultural Land Classification

First Order Villages

Farm Diversification

Accessible Environments

BEDFORD BOROUGH
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GLOSSARY

A1 Uses – Shops and other high street uses.

A2 Uses – Financial and professional services available to the general public such as Accountants, Solicitors, Building Societies and Banks.

A3 Uses – Food and Drink including restaurants and hot food takeaways.

Accessible Environments – Environments which are accessible to all members of the community, including the young, the elderly, those with disabilities and people with prams and buggies.

Affordable Floorspace – Business units provided by developers to be managed by the Borough Council at affordable rents.

Agricultural Land Classification – The Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food produces a classification of the relative value of soils for agricultural use called the Agricultural Land Classification. The highest grades are 1, 2 and 3a, with the least productive being 3b, 4 and 5.

Ancient Woodland – Woodland sites which have had a continuous cover of native trees and plants since at least 1600AD.

AGLV – Area of Great Landscape Value. Designated area of landscape value, important at the County level.

Area of Special Restraint – Policy area drawn around the urban area to prevent coalescence between villages and also between surrounding villages and the urban area.

B1 Uses – Business including main offices, high tech and light industry.

B2 Uses – General industrial development.

B8 Uses – Storage and distribution including warehousing.

Bedford Transport Development Plan – A new road within the urban area to relieve congestion around the centre of Bedford and improvements to others, together with associated public transport and cycling provision.

Conservation Area Partnership – A scheme covering the central part of Bedford Conservation Area which targeted resources towards the repair of selected buildings and environmental enhancement schemes.

Commuting – Journeys to and from work whether by road, rail of other forms of transport.

Comparison Shopping – Goods such as clothes and electrical equipment, for which the consumer generally expects to direct time and effort into visiting a range of shops before making a choice.

Conservation Areas – Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities are able to designate as conservation areas any "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."

Convenience Shopping – Goods such as food, newspapers and drink, which tend to purchased regularly and for which convenience of purchase is therefore important.

County Wildlife Sites – Wildlife sites of County importance designated following a Habitat survey conducted by the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust. County Wildlife Sites were previously known as Prime Sites of Nature Conservation Interest.

Development Briefs – Prepared by the Borough Council as a detailed statement of its planning policies for a particular site and its aspirations in terms of uses, layout and design principles.

Discount Foodstores – Stores selling a limited range of goods at discount prices.

District Centres – Groups of shops separate from the town centre, usually containing at least one food supermarket or superstore and non retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants.

English Heritage – The Government's statutory advisors on matters affecting the historic built environment.

Environment Agency – The agency which carries out the duties of the former National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution and Local Authorities in respect of Waste Regulation.

Environmental Appraisal – The process of considering the environmental implications of particular policies and proposals.

Environmental Impact Assessment – Under Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental effects) Regulations 1988 (as amended), scheduled development proposals, for which planning permission is sought, must submit a statement assessing its environmental impact.

Evening Economy – Use of the town centre for a range of leisure and recreation uses after normal shopping hours.

Fall in – Development on housing sites which cannot be predicted far in advance but for which an allowance is made in development plans.

Farm Diversification – Government policy which encourages farmers to consider alternative uses for their land and buildings as a means of reducing agricultural surpluses and creating a more varied rural economy.

Financial and Professional Services – Non-retail (A2) uses as set out under the Use Classes Order. This principally relates to offices, building societies and banks.

First Order Villages – Settlements with a good range of facilities and community provision which subject to constraints may have capacity to accommodate development.

Forest of Marston Vale – One of twelve Community Forests being established throughout England by the Countryside Commission and Forestry Authority. These multi-purpose forests on the edge of towns and cities will provide opportunities for recreation, forestry, education and the creation of wildlife habitats.

Global Warming – The perceived threat to the world's climate caused by an increase in greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane which trap the sun's heat, raising the temperature of the atmosphere.

Gateways – Areas where environmental improvement is desirable to improve entries into the town.

Housing Associations – Organisations which aim to develop or provide housing for those unable to afford market prices/rents.

Housing Provision – The amount of new housing to be provided to meet predicted needs over a particular plan period.

Important Open Spaces – Designated areas where development will not be permitted in view of their importance to the history and identity of a settlement or their role in creating gaps and views.

Integrated Transport Strategy – Transport proposals jointly adopted by the Borough and County Councils to meet the Borough's needs over the next 10-20 years.

Listed Buildings – Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990, the Secretary of State for National Heritage has a statutory duty to compile lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Graded I, II* or II to reflect their importance, permission is required for works which may affect their character or appearance.

Living Over The Shop – A scheme which seeks to convert empty space over shops to residential accommodation.

Local Centre – A small grouping of shops usually including a newsagent, a general grocery store, a sub post office, a pharmacy and other small shops of a local nature.

Local Needs Housing – Low cost housing in villages likely to cater for existing residents who need separate accommodation, those whose work requires them to live locally or people who have long standing links with the community.

Local Nature Reserves – Areas of land which are of significant nature conservation value at local level.

Mixed use development – In the past there has been a tendency to define areas of single land uses. Mixed use development promotes the integration and diversity of land uses which has benefits such as reducing the need to travel and deterring criminal activity by generating different activities at different times of the day.

Mobility Housing – Housing which in addition to having the features of visibility housing is designed specifically for disabled residents. It is likely to comprise single storey dwellings for small households.

NPFA – National Playing Fields Association

Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest – Parks and gardens appearing on the register drawn up by English Heritage under the National Heritage Act 1983.

Primary Shopping Area – The area where Class A1 Uses (shops) predominate.

Primary Shopping Frontage – The key shopping frontages within the primary shopping area.

Proposals Map – The map or maps on which local plan policies and proposals are illustrated.

Regional Planning Guidance – Issued by the Department of the Environment as a guide for the preparation of Structure and Local Plans.

River Protection Area – Area designated to preserve landscape character and wildlife habitats in the riverine areas of the Borough.

Second Order Villages – Settlements with a recognisable built up character and basic facilities which subject to constraints may have limited capacity to accommodate development in the form of infill and small sites.

Settlement Policy Area – A line drawn around a village to mark the limit of development.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments – Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Secretary of State for National Heritage is required to compile and maintain a schedule of monuments of national importance. The monuments are statutorily protected in a similar way to listed buildings.

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest: Statutorily notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being nationally important sites of special nature conservation interest. SSSI's may include wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms.

Structure Plan – A Structure Plan is a strategic planning document which establishes the broad planning principles applicable within a County's administrative area. County Councils are required by law to prepare Structure Plans.

Sustainable Development – Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This Common Inheritance – Government White Paper identifying the need for planning authorities to ensure that their local plans take environmental considerations comprehensively and consistently into account.

Town Cramming – A term used to describe the result of the incremental loss of vital resources such as open space and the overdevelopment of urban sites.

TPO – Tree Preservation Order. In the interests of amenity a local planning authority may make a TPO in order to preserve a tree or

group of trees by prohibiting their cutting down, lopping or wilful destruction without prior consent.

Traffic Calming – Highway measures designed to slow traffic speed or redirect traffic to more suitable routes in an attempt to reduce accidents, congestion and pollution in the local environment.

Trunk Road Programme – Produced by the Department of Transport. Sets out priorities for trunk road investment.

Urban Fringe – The demarcation between the built up area and the open countryside.

Vitality and viability – Essential elements in the stability and future prosperity of town centres. They stem not only from a variety of retail uses but from the range and quality of activities in town centres and their accessibility to people.

Wildlife Corridors – Links between habitats, in both the town and countryside which can be utilised by wildlife. Includes tributaries, footpaths, tree belts, tracks, hedgerows, road verges and railways.

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INSETS TO THE PROPOSALS MAP

The Proposals Map forming part of this Local Plan is shown on a number of separate sheets and pages. The overall map of the Borough is contained in the pocket at the back of this document. This map shows a number of areas where insets have been made so that we can see the detailed proposals. Each of these insets is given a reference number 1 through to 43. Inset 1 shows the urban area of Bedford and Kempston and is printed on the back of the overall map of the Borough. Insets 2 to 43 are printed on the pages following this:

List of Insets

1	Bedford & Kempston
2	Bedford Town Centre
2a	Elstow New Settlement
3	Biddenham
4	Bletsoe
6	Bromham
7	Cardington
8	Carlton
9	Clapham
10	Colmworth
11	Cople
12	Upper Dean, Dean & Shelton
13	Cotton End, Eastcotts
14	Elstow
15	Felmersham
16	Great Barford
17	Harrold
19	Souldrop, Knotting & Souldrop
20	Little Staughton
21	Yelden, Melchbourne & Yelden
22	Milton Ernest
23	Oakley
24	Odell
25	Pavenham
26	Swineshead, Pertenhall & Swineshead
27	Podington
28	Church End, Ravensden
29b	Salph End, Renhold
29c	Green End, Renhold
30	Riseley
31	Roxton
32	Sharnbrook
33	Stagsden
35	Stevington
36	Stewartby
37	Thurleigh
38	Turvey
39	Wilden
40	Willington
41	Wilstead
42	Wootton
43	Wymington

List of Villages

Biddenham	Inset No 3
Bletsoe	4
Bromham	6
Cardington	7
Carlton	8
Clapham	9
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