

DISTRICT-WIDE POLICIES

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Plan is to secure sustainable development in the district, in order to improve quality of life. Therefore, the Council expects that all development should be consistent with the principles of sustainable development. This accords with government guidance in PPG1 and with the aims and objectives of the Structure Plan, set out in its Policy 1.
- 3.2 The overall strategy of the Plan translates the key objectives of sustainable development as put forward in Government policy into a series of objectives, which reflect the circumstances of Welwyn Hatfield. In turn the policies in the Plan seek to implement these sustainability objectives. In the first instance therefore, development must be consistent with the objectives and policies of the Plan.
- 3.3 In order to achieve sustainable development, it is necessary that we are able to assess, as openly and objectively as possible, the sustainability of individual development proposals. The 'precautionary principle', which is one of the main principles underlying decision making on sustainable development, suggests that we have a duty to assess the costs and benefits of a proposal, in an open and transparent way, so that we have a clear understanding of its potential risks and sustainability benefits before making a decision on it. This does not mean that we should only permit development if we are sure that harm will not arise nor that we should refuse permission if there is a limited amount of information about its impact. The planning system only allows development to be refused if it would cause 'demonstrable harm'. It is not always possible to have absolute certainty about the longer term impact of development and requiring that level of certainty would severely hinder progress towards improvements in quality of life. Furthermore, most development has both costs and benefits. However, the precautionary principle does mean considering all potential costs and benefits, having the best possible information available on these on which to make a decision and making the basis for that decision transparent.
- 3.4 To this end, the Council has devised a 'Sustainability Checklist' containing a number of detailed criteria against which all development will be assessed. This is set out in the Supplementary Design Guidance. The checklist provides a guide to enable assessment in a rigorous and transparent way as to whether a development satisfies the sustainability objectives and policies of the Plan. Further guidance regarding the checklist will be provided in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Sustainable Development Design Guide which is currently being developed by the County Council.
- 3.5 Not all of the criteria apply to all scales of development, but in general, the larger the development the greater the number of criteria which will need to be satisfied. Six categories of development are identified:
- (a) *Large scale* - more than 5 houses or 235 sq. metres of commercial floorspace.
 - (b) *Small scale* - 5 houses or less and 235 sq. metres of commercial floorspace or less.

- (c) *Householder developments.*
 - (d) *Changes of use of land, buildings and conversions.*
 - (e) *Non building development* - such as car parking, landscaping or engineering operations.
 - (f) *Advertisements and telecommunications.*
- 3.6 The criteria applying to each scale are identified in the Supplementary Design Guidance. Householder developments, which comprise the majority of planning applications in the district, have a more limited range of criteria, which are listed in a separate 'Householder Checklist' at the end of the Supplementary Design Guidance.
- 3.7 Some of the criteria relate to aspects of a development which may be covered by other legislation, such as the Building Regulations, or controlled by other statutory agencies, such as pollution and the Environment Agency. However, all of the criteria measure the contribution that a development will make to the future sustainability of the district and should therefore be considered at the planning application stage, both by the applicant and by the Council.
- 3.8 Applicants will be expected to submit a statement with their planning application, showing how their proposal addresses the criteria in the checklist. An application would be considered valid without the submission of a sustainability statement, but proposals must still however, be consistent with Sustainable Development principles which the checklist illustrates. Failure to supply such a statement could delay consideration of the proposed development. The checklist does not include design criteria, which are set out in the Design chapter and the Supplementary Design Guidance and will need to be addressed separately by applicants through an urban design statement as required in Policy D11.

Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development

Development proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the principles of sustainable development are satisfied and that they accord with the objectives and policies of this plan. To assist the Council in determining this, applicants will be expected to submit a statement with their planning application demonstrating how their proposals address the sustainability criteria in the checklist contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance.

GREEN BELT AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 One of the key objectives of the Plan is to concentrate development into the district's main towns and settlements. This is a central strand of the Plan's sustainable development strategy. Not only will this minimise development on 'greenfield' land and in the countryside, it will also ensure development occurs where it is most accessible and closest to other facilities, so reducing people's need to travel, and where there are existing infrastructure and services to support it.
- 4.2 The district's settlement pattern is characterised by a number of medium sized towns and villages, situated along main road and railway routes radiating northwards from London and separated by narrow bands of countryside. In addition, there are a number of small villages and sporadic ribbon developments within the countryside, which are generally in more isolated, less accessible locations. It is this settlement pattern which gives the district its unique qualities and should be preserved.
- 4.3 One of the main policy tools for maintaining this pattern and ensuring urban concentration is the Green Belt. This has been a long-standing feature of planning in the south-east, made necessary by the considerable development pressure around London. The whole of Welwyn Hatfield District lies within the Green Belt, which exerts a strong restraint on urban expansion.
- 4.4 The purpose of this chapter is to define the hierarchy of settlements within which development can take place and the broad limits to the extent of development. This provides a spatial framework for the rest of the policies in the Plan.

STRATEGY

- 4.5 The main objectives of the Plan in respect of the district's Green Belt and settlement pattern are:
 - (a) To maintain the Green Belt as the principal means of restraining the physical expansion of the district's urban areas;
 - (b) To maintain the existing settlement pattern in the district;
 - (c) To concentrate development into the district's main towns and settlements;
 - (d) To maintain areas of special restraint between the urban area and the Green Belt, to be safeguarded to meet future growth needs beyond the Plan period and thereby ensure the permanence of the Green Belt boundaries.

POLICIES

Definition of the Green Belt

- 4.6 The whole of the district lies within the Green Belt. Government guidance in PPG2 defines five purposes of including land in the Green Belt:
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - To safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.7 In addition, PPG2 states that the Green Belt has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following purposes:
- To provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
 - To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
 - To retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
 - To improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
 - To secure nature conservation interest; and
 - To retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.
- 4.8 Policy 5 of the Structure Plan confirms that the Green Belt will be maintained in the south of Hertfordshire which includes all of the land in Welwyn Hatfield. The Council recognises the important role of the Green Belt in the district, particularly in preventing its towns and settlements from merging into one another, preserving the countryside and concentrating development into its urban areas. As such it is a key element in achieving sustainable development and must be maintained.
- 4.9 The towns and settlements specified below where development will be concentrated are excluded from the Green Belt. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt around these settlements are defined on the Proposals Map. These boundaries were defined in the first District Plan adopted in 1993 to take account of the long-term development needs of the district. In preparing this Plan the Council has given consideration as to whether there is a need to alter the Green Belt boundaries to accommodate the development needs of the district up to 2011 and beyond, but is satisfied that these needs can be accommodated on sites identified within the towns and specified settlements excluded from the Green Belt.

Policy GBSP1 - Definition of the Green Belt

The Green Belt will be maintained in Welwyn Hatfield as defined on the Proposals Map. The towns and specified settlements listed in Policy GBSP2 are excluded from the Green Belt. The precise boundaries of the Green Belt around these towns and settlements are defined on the Proposals Map.

Towns and Specified Settlements

- 4.10 The district has two main towns - Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. They are the main sources of housing for the district, contain the major shopping and service facilities, schools and community facilities and are the principal locations for local employment. They are both well served by public transport - bus and rail - and by road. Whilst not being fully self-sufficient, as new towns they are more self-contained than many other towns of their size. In short they offer the best opportunity for sustainable development. They will be the principal focus for development in the district during the Plan period, in accordance with Policy 6 of the Structure Plan.
- 4.11 The district also comprises a number of large villages with populations of between 1,000 and 4,000. The largest of these are Cuffley, Brookmans Park, Welwyn, Welham Green, Mardley Heath and Oaklands; the smallest are Digswell and Woolmer Green. Principally they are a source of housing for their communities, but they also have shops and services, schools and community facilities, in varying ranges. The largest, except for Mardley Heath and Oaklands, have large village centres, with a wide range of shops and services, pubs and restaurants, libraries, community halls, surgeries and schools. The smallest villages have a handful of shops and facilities at their centre. Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Digswell and Welham Green are all served by rail; the other three have main road access. Whilst less self-sufficient and dependent to a certain extent on the two towns for employment and main services, they all support communities and are very accessible. In addition, there is Little Heath on the southern boundary of the district. Little Heath is a part of the town of Potters Bar, located in Hertsmere borough, from where it is well served by shops, services and employment. All of these settlements offer opportunities for sustainable development. They are identified as 'Specified Settlements' within this Plan, where, in accordance with Policy 6 of the Structure Plan, limited development will be allowed which is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of their character and the maintenance of their Green Belt boundaries.

Policy GBSP2 - Towns and Specified Settlements

The following are defined as towns and specified settlements where development will be located in accordance with the policies for urban areas in the Plan. Development will mainly be concentrated in the two towns. Within the specified settlements development will be limited to that which is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of their character and the maintenance of their Green Belt boundaries.

Towns - Welwyn Garden City; Hatfield

Specified Settlements - Brookmans Park; Cuffley; Digswell; Little Heath; Oaklands and Mardley Heath; Welham Green; Welwyn; Woolmer Green.

Settlements within the Green Belt

- 4.12 The district comprises a number of smaller settlements, including rural villages and areas of sporadic or ribbon development, which reflect the historical settlement pattern of the district based around agriculture. These are Essendon, Northaw, Newgate Street, Lemsford, Ayot St Lawrence, Ayot Green and St Peter, Burnham Green, Stanborough, Mill Green, Bullen's Green, Bell Bar, Swanley Bar, Wild Hill and Woodside. They are all located within the Green Belt and as such are subject to the general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt set out in PPG2. The forms of development considered appropriate within the Green Belt are identified in Policy RA1, which applies to all of these settlements.
- 4.13 However, it is possible to distinguish two categories of Green Belt settlement from the above list to which the Plan applies different policy approaches:
- (a) Rural villages supporting a number of facilities, such as a primary school and/or a church, a village hall, a shop/post office and pubs, and as such, have a degree of self sufficiency to sustain their communities. These are Essendon, Northaw, Newgate Street and Lemsford.
 - (b) Other small settlements, which vary in size, but comprise mainly housing grouped either around a green, in a ribbon form or more sporadically arranged, with very few or no facilities. These are Ayot St Lawrence, Ayot Green and St Peter, Burnham Green, Stanborough, Mill Green, Bullen's Green, Bell Bar, Swanley Bar, Wild Hill and Woodside.
- 4.14 Policy 6 of the Structure Plan recognises that development in smaller Green Belt settlements can be accommodated to support facilities and services needed and to meet the employment and housing needs for the settlement and its surrounding area. As part of the sustainable development strategy the Plan seeks to encourage development to sustain rural communities. Therefore, as an exception, the Council will support development in the Rural Villages listed in paragraph 4.13(a) above, where, in accordance with the Structure Plan, it is required to support the housing and employment, local facilities and service needs of the settlements and the communities they support. Policy RA2 sets out the circumstances for this.
- 4.15 Within the remaining Green Belt settlements listed in paragraph 4.13(b), in line with the strategy of the Plan, the Council wishes to see existing facilities retained. Policies RA12 and RA13 in particular set out the circumstances where this is appropriate.

Areas of Special Restraint

- 4.16 PPG2 advises that when reviewing local plans, local planning authorities should consider the boundaries of the Green Belt in relation to a timescale which is longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the Plan. In order to ensure the protection of the Green Belt within this longer term, it may

mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer-term needs.

- 4.17 The 1993 adopted District Plan identified such an area of land, designated as an Area of Special Restraint, at Panshanger Aerodrome on the eastern edge of Welwyn Garden City. In preparing this Plan, the Council has given consideration to whether this land should be released to meet development requirements in the period up to 2011. The Council is satisfied that these requirements can be accommodated on the sites identified within the towns and specified settlements elsewhere in the Plan. However, in order to maintain the permanence of the Green Belt this Area of Special Restraint has been retained and will be safeguarded to allow space for the development needs of the area beyond the Plan period. This land is not required for development in the period up to 2011. Its release for development after 2011 will be a matter for consideration in future reviews of the Plan, in the light of longer-term development requirements and advice on the sequential selection of land for development contained in government guidance. Should this land be released for development in the longer term an area of land on its northern edge has been identified for structural landscaping to be provided in advance of any development to minimise its impact on the surrounding landscape and long distance views.

Policy GBSP3 - Area Of Special Restraint And Structural Landscape Area

The area of land at Panshanger Aerodrome in Welwyn Garden City, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded against potential future growth needs beyond the period of this Plan. Any release of this land for development, in whole or in part, will be a matter for determination in future reviews of this Plan. In addition, no development should take place until structural landscaping has been provided within the area defined for that purpose on the Proposals Map.

RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 Two of the core objectives of sustainable development are the effective protection of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources. The district contains a number of important environmental resources, including land, energy, water, wildlife, air and built heritage. It is important to distinguish between resources which are non-renewable and renewable:
- (a) *Non-renewable* resources are those which once damaged, destroyed or used up cannot be replaced, reused or recycled - these include energy from fossil fuels, like oil and gas, minerals such as sand and gravel, wildlife habitats and species, archaeology and historic buildings and the earth's atmosphere or air which is being continually damaged by pollution;
 - (b) *Renewable* resources are those which occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, such as energy from the sun, wind and oceans, and the fall of water. Previously developed land also, although limited in supply, can be seen as a renewable resource, which can be reused and redeveloped.
- 5.2 Prudent use of resources involves minimising the use of non-renewable resources and increasing the use of renewable resources, without endangering the resource or causing serious damage or pollution. This is necessary not only to preserve critical environmental assets, but also so that future generations will be able to enjoy such basic standards as clean water and air, heat and light and open space.
- 5.3 The planning system, in particular the development plan, has an important role to play in this, but it is one of a number of strands of legislation and action being taken by the government, local authorities and other agencies to ensure the prudent use of resources. Planning policies can help by controlling the location and design of new development so as to, for example, preserve wildlife areas and the landscape, protect water resources from depletion or pollution, increase the energy efficiency of new buildings and reduce the need to travel and use of the car (and hence reduce the use of fossil fuels and pollution). However, in doing this the Council must work in tandem with other agencies such as the Environment Agency, water companies, Health and Safety Executive, and English Nature, which have statutory responsibilities for these resources, as well as through its own environmental health services.
- 5.4 The Environment Agency, in particular, has a broader responsibility for the management of environmental resources, including water resources and quality, biodiversity, floodplains, air quality pollution controls and waste. The Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs) covering this district have been taken into account in preparing the policies in this chapter.
- 5.5 This chapter sets out the planning policies for the management of the district's resources. As well as its natural resources such as land, energy, water, wildlife and air, this also includes the district's built heritage, such as its Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and archaeological remains, which are

regarded as a non-renewable resource. The chapter also includes policies on noise and light pollution and waste management which together have an impact on the use of land.

ISSUES

- 5.6 Land is a finite resource and therefore has to be used wisely. It is the resource which the Plan has most control over, since it is the purpose of the planning system to ensure the efficient and effective use of land in the public interest. The district lies in an area of high development pressure, close to London, but has large tracts of countryside which require protection. At the same time, under government guidance the Plan must find land to meet the development needs of the district. A central objective of the Plan, therefore, is to recycle land and maximise the use of land which has already been developed or used.
- 5.7 Energy is a basic requirement of everyday life, to enable people to heat and light their homes, factories and businesses, run household appliances and fuel vehicles. Currently, the vast majority of our energy needs are met through the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, gas or oil. However, this not only diminishes what are finite natural resources, it also produces gases, particularly carbon dioxide, which cause pollution and contribute to global warming. Government policy aims to reduce energy consumption, particularly of fossil fuels, and encourage greater use of renewable energy sources, such as solar power, as part of the strategy for sustainable development. Planning policies can contribute towards this through the location and design of development. This chapter includes relevant energy policies for the district.
- 5.8 Water is a crucial natural resource on which we rely for our drinking and other domestic needs, to support industry and for leisure and recreation. Watercourses and other wetland features are also integral features of the landscape, which support habitats for wildlife. It follows therefore, that water resources must be conserved and protected from pollution. The principal responsibility for the protection of water resources and quality lies with the Environment Agency and the provision of water supplies, drainage and sewerage treatment are the responsibility of the water companies. There is no separate government planning policy guidance on water. However, development clearly has a major impact on the supply and quality of water resources and, therefore, the Plan must ensure that account is taken of this resource in the location and design of development.
- 5.9 Wildlife and their habitats, such as grasslands, woodlands, heathlands and wetlands, are an integral part of the survival of human life, providing oxygen, water, clothing, health, education and recreation. The district contains a wide variety of wildlife habitats, including 5 Sites of Special Scientific Interest of recognised national importance and 190 Wildlife Sites of county importance, as well as other landscape features which are of local value in supporting or allowing the movement of wildlife. These are valuable natural resources, which the Structure Plan states should not be depleted. Development can have a damaging effect on these areas unless controlled and, therefore, this chapter contains policies to protect the sites of recognised value and

protected species. Government policy, reflected in the Council's own Biodiversity Action Plan aims to increase biodiversity. Policies in this chapter seek to achieve this in relation to new development.

- 5.10 Clean air is a natural resource which is important to people's quality of life. Air pollution causes damage to health, but most significantly, greenhouse gas emissions cause climate change, with a threat to life at the global level. The main source of air pollution is transport, particularly cars, although some industrial processes are also responsible. Government policy recognises the important relationship between land use planning, transport and pollution control systems in tackling air quality. Policies aimed at reducing congestion and car usage will help to improve air quality; these are covered in the Movement chapter of the Plan. Powers to control major sources of air pollution rest with the Environment Agency and the Council has a duty to produce an air quality management strategy. These powers and duties must operate in conjunction with planning policies. The role of the Plan is to control the location and design of potentially polluting uses of land; the control of emissions is a matter for other agencies.
- 5.11 Welwyn Hatfield has a significant heritage of historic settlements, buildings and archaeological remains, which are culturally and educationally important to the district as a link with the past and form a finite and non-renewable resource. These range from the remains of Roman settlements, historic houses and villages dating back to medieval ages, to the more contemporary heritage of Welwyn Garden City. There are pressures for change and development within these areas and therefore it is important that the Plan seeks to preserve and where possible enhance these resources, to ensure that they can be enjoyed by future generations.

STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

- 5.12 The overall aim of the Plan in terms of resources is to preserve and enhance the district's natural, cultural and built heritage and to minimise the use of natural resources. To achieve this there are a number of specific objectives:
- (a) To make the best use of land as a finite resource, by recycling and maximising the use of previously developed land and minimising the use of 'greenfield' land;
 - (b) To minimise the use of non-renewable energy sources and maximise opportunities to use renewable energy in the design and location of new development;
 - (c) To minimise the use of other non-renewable materials ;
 - (d) To minimise the risks of flooding, ground and surface water pollution and encourage the conservation of water resources;
 - (e) To protect the district's wildlife and its habitats and enhance biodiversity at every opportunity;
 - (f) To minimise the risks of pollution in all its forms as a result of development and seek to raise air quality standards through enabling a reduction in car use and promoting tree planting;

- (g) To preserve and enhance the district's historic, architectural and archaeological heritage.

POLICIES

Land

Maximising the Use of Previously Developed Land

- 5.13 Land is a finite resource which in Welwyn Hatfield is under considerable pressure for development. Some 60% of the land within the district is countryside and designated as Green Belt, and is subject to policies restricting development set out in the Rural Areas section of this Plan. At the same time, the district must accommodate the future development needs of its population as well as ensuring open space is preserved. Government policy urges that development should be located on previously used land, before considering 'greenfield' sites. This is particularly so for housing development, where PPG3 requires a sequential approach to be taken in the selection of sites and states that by 2008, 60% of additional housing should be provided on previously developed land and through building conversions. The overall strategy of the Plan requires that development should be concentrated into the main towns and settlements and a number of development sites are identified in the policies of the Plan for Urban Areas as well as open space which should be protected.
- 5.14 Given the pressure on land within the district, the need to maintain open space and the thrust of government policy, it is important that best use is made of those sites which have been identified and of other land which has already been used or developed. In general the Council will not support proposals for the development of 'greenfield' land where suitable previously developed sites exist. In some cases there may be constraints preventing a site which has been previously used from being developed. For example, the site may be contaminated or require significant infrastructure. Where this is the case the Council will work with the site owners and other agencies to assist in bringing sites forward. There may also be existing or potential value of a site as a habitat for nature conservation, which may need to be taken into account.

Policy R1 - Maximising the Use of Previously Developed Land

In order to make the best use of land in the district, the Council will require development to take place on land which has been previously used or developed. Development will only be permitted on 'greenfield' land where it can be demonstrated that no suitable opportunities exist on previously used or developed land.

Contaminated Land

- 5.15 Government policy in PPG23 Planning and Pollution Control specifically encourages the reuse of contaminated land as part of the strategy to make best use of land and relieve development pressure on 'greenfield' land. Under the 1995 Environment Act the Council now has a duty to inspect the district to identify sites which may be contaminated and determine the remediation requirements. The Council published its Contaminated Land Strategy in June

2001 which sets out the timetable for this. When considering planning applications for the development of land which may be contaminated, the Council will need to assess whether, in the light of the type of contamination, the proposed development will be suitable and whether there are likely to be any unacceptable risks to health or the environment arising from its development or future occupation. The responsibility for decontamination rests with the developer or owner. The Council will normally require developers to undertake a full investigation to establish the level of contamination in soils and/or groundwater/surface waters on such sites and undertake the necessary remediation measures, if necessary by imposing conditions on planning permissions.

Policy R2 - Contaminated Land

The Council will encourage proposals for the development and reuse of land which is or may be contaminated. On such sites, applications must be accompanied by a full survey of the level of contamination and proposals for remediation measures. In considering whether planning permission should be granted, the Council will need to be satisfied that there will be no unacceptable risk to health or the environment arising from the remedial works or the proposed use of the site in relation to the type of contamination.

Minerals

- 5.16 Hertfordshire, because of its underlying geology, is important for minerals such as sand, gravel, chalk and clay which are part of the national resource. There are a number of mineral workings within the district. As the minerals Planning Authority, Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for determining planning applications for the winning and working of minerals in the County. Policies regarding mineral extraction in the county are contained in the Minerals Local Plan, which was adopted in July 1998 and covers the period 1991-2006. The Minerals Local Plan identifies 'specific' sites and preferred areas to guide the location of mineral working in the County. This is currently being reviewed and potential locations for future sand and gravel workings identified. The policy towards safeguarding of mineral resources and mineral extraction is contained in the County Structure Plan.

Energy

- 5.17 The production, transfer and use of energy is a major contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. Schemes which help reduce the demand for energy through improving the efficiency with which energy is generated, transferred and used are key components of a sustainable development strategy. It not only offers environmental benefits but economic and social benefits (such as reducing fuel poverty). This section of the plan aims to provide the framework for more efficient forms of energy use as part of development. It should be noted that other guidance and legislation (in particular Building Regulations) have equally important roles to play, but are not repeated here. Further details and advice from the Council and other organisations is available.

Energy Efficiency

- 5.18 The demand for energy can be reduced through more efficient use, and the introduction of conservation measures in the design and layout of buildings. For example the use of Passive Solar Design (PSD) techniques can help to make the best use of shade or the sun's heat in order to offset the demand for cooling or heating. Factors which require consideration include orientation; built form and internal layout; window design; materials; reflective surfaces; atria and conservatories; and landscaping. Further details on PSD techniques can be found in the Supplementary Design Guidance note published in conjunction with this Plan Review. The Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) also sets out principles for designing and constructing sustainable buildings, including energy matters.
- 5.19 Up to 70% of the energy of the fuel used in conventional power stations is lost as waste heat. Local small scale combined heat and power plants are more efficient because, amongst other things, they use the heat by-products to heat nearby housing or facilities. Developers of major schemes should consider the use of such plants. Although the Council's powers to influence some of the design and construction issues under the planning system are limited, it will seek to encourage good practice. Wherever possible consideration should be given to the incorporation of energy efficiency measures in all developments. Proposals for development should take into account the best practical environmental option. This can be defined as the option that provides the most benefit or the least damage to the environment as a whole, at acceptable cost, in the long term as well as the short term.

Policy R3 - Energy Efficiency

The Council will expect all development to:

- (i) Include measures to maximise energy conservation through the design of buildings, site layout and provision of landscaping; and**
- (ii) Incorporate the best practical environmental option (BPEO) for energy supply.**

Renewable Energy

- 5.20 Government policy aims to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and encourage greater use of renewable energy sources where proposals are economically attractive and environmentally acceptable. Government planning policy is contained within PPS 22: Renewable Energy. There are several potential sources of renewable energy e.g. solar, waste, landfill gas, sewage and farm slurry, wind, water, geo-thermal and wood. In Hertfordshire, according to a 1997 survey by the Department of Trade and Industry, the potential for solar power generation is very significant and considerably higher than any other form of renewable energy. This type of energy is ideally suited to being generated at the local level, particularly for single dwellings, and thus new-build dwellings offer an excellent cost-effective opportunity to make a significant contribution to the harnessing of renewable energy in the district. Other sources of renewable energy can themselves raise environmental concerns such as pollution, traffic generation and visual impact. Whilst supporting the use of renewable energy in principle the Council will wish to

take into consideration likely detrimental impacts. Applications will be required to be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment where this is appropriate in terms of Circular 2/99.

Policy R4 - Renewable Energy Sources

Planning permission will be granted for proposals for the development of renewable energy sources subject to all of the following criteria:

- (i) It would not have a significant visual impact;**
- (ii) It would not generate an unacceptable level of traffic;**
- (iii) It would not result in an unacceptably high level of atmospheric emissions;**
- (iv) It would not have a significant adverse impact upon features or areas of ecological, architectural, landscape or conservation importance;**
- (v) It would not have a detrimental impact upon adjoining properties and land holdings; and**
- (vi) It would not generate an unacceptable level of noise.**

Waste

5.21 The disposal of waste is an essential community service. The County Council is responsible for planning for all types of waste and the disposal of household and commercial waste, while the District Council is responsible for waste collection. The amount of waste produced is increasing, and the costs of disposal, both financially and environmentally, are rising. Waste is, therefore, an issue with important land use planning and environmental implications, which need to be considered as an integral part of sustainable development.

5.22 The Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1995-2005, adopted January 1999, should be referred to for waste management policies, and it sets out detailed background and guidance on waste planning matters. The Plan forms part of the Development Plan for Welwyn Hatfield District against which all planning applications are to be considered. The District Council recognises the limited direct involvement that it can have in waste disposal and other related development. These are matters for the County Council or, ultimately, are dependent on commercial activities and social responsibility outside the scope of planning. However, the Council is supportive of the strategy of the County Council as set out in the Waste Local Plan, which represents a major shift in policies away from a dependency on landfill as the main means of waste disposal. For example, a key component of the Waste Local Plan strategy is the incorporation of the hierarchy of waste management. The four elements of the waste hierarchy are:

- Minimisation;
- Re-use;
- Recovery – recycling, energy, composting;
- Disposal as a last resort.

- 5.23 Waste production and its implications need to be considered at all stages in the development process, from initial site clearance and the choice of building materials, through its occupation to its eventual clearance. The Council will seek to ensure that the design and organisation of works minimises the waste of materials, and that a minimum of materials are removed from the site. As much as possible of existing materials should be retained on site for re-use consistent with environmental practices. Material which is to be removed should be carefully segregated by type to enable reclamation and re-use elsewhere. On larger schemes materials recycling should take place on site and the products used in the development. Materials will have to be stored carefully so that they do not cause pollution or eyesores. Where sites are contaminated, on-site remediation is preferable where practicable and appropriate. This reduces the pollution potential and the problem is not merely moved elsewhere.
- 5.24 After re-using materials found on site, the practice most likely to aid waste reduction will be the use of recycled products. Recycled aggregates provide one example of such a product that is currently available. As awareness of the importance of conserving resources increases, the list of recycled products will extend. The design of all schemes should accommodate storage for a variety of different types of segregated waste. Communal schemes (e.g. mini recycling collection points) will be encouraged provided that problems of vehicular access, vandalism, potential pollution and noise can be overcome. The potential for the recycling of green waste for combined heat and power units within larger developments should be considered. Thought also needs to be given to the deconstruction of buildings and infrastructure, the practicalities, and ease with which materials may be recovered and re-used.
- 5.25 Whilst the Council will encourage all applicants to take notice of the waste implications of their schemes, only larger development schemes will be required to submit a demonstration of how waste management issues are to be addressed. Larger schemes are defined as:
- Developments of more than 5 houses;
 - Commercial and industrial development of more than 235 sq.ms;
 - Car parks with more than 200 spaces;
 - Golf courses;
 - Developments which attract large numbers of visitors; and
 - Other developments which the Council considers to have important waste management implications.

Policy R5 - Waste Management

The Council will require applications for larger schemes (as defined in paragraph 5.24) to include details of the measures to be taken in the design, construction, operation, occupation and demolition of existing buildings on site to:

- (i) Minimise the amount of waste generated;**
- (ii) Re-use or re-cycle suitable waste materials generated;**

- (iii) **Minimise the pollution potential of unavoidable waste;**
- (iv) **Treat and dispose of the remaining waste in an environmentally acceptable manner; and**
- (v) **To maximise utilisation of appropriate secondary construction materials, including recycled aggregates.**

Water

5.26 It is very important for sustainability to conserve water resources for the future and prevent pollution of surface and ground water. Although there have been few planning controls over water resources in the past, there are ways in which the planning process can influence the resource in dealing with development. In addition PPG25 Development and Flood Risk was published in July 2001 which states the importance that the Government attaches to the management and reduction of flood risk in the land use planning process.

River Corridors

5.27 The main rivers in the district are the Lee, the Mimram and the Mimshall Brook. Their corridors are important for water resources, encouraging biodiversity, fisheries and recreation and for their function as flood plains. They also make a significant contribution to the landscape. The Mimram is a high quality chalk stream and is considered to be of regional importance because of its diverse habitats and the Lee, which has been greatly modified in the past, provides a varied riverine landscape. The Mimshall Brook is a tributary of the Colne and flows west through North Mymms. The Brook is intermittent in parts as at Water End Swallow Holes. The Council will seek to promote through consultation with the Environment Agency and other relevant organisations the effective management of river corridors of the Lee, Mimram, and Mimshall Brook, the location of which are shown on the Proposals map, as important areas for water resources, biodiversity and recreation. There is a need to protect and, where possible, enhance the natural elements of the river corridors to maintain and increase biodiversity, their function as floodplains and to protect operational access. Development in river corridors should be set back from the river separated by a sympathetically landscaped buffer strip planted with suitable native species. The Council will support proposals which include the enhancement of the river corridor especially if it involves deculverting and/or naturalisation. This aim has to be balanced against improving public access and encouraging suitable water-related recreation.

Policy R6 - River Corridors

Initiatives to protect and enhance the river environment for biodiversity, including proposals for deculverting and naturalisation of the river channel, will be supported. Suitable public access and informal water based or waterside recreation within main river corridors will also be supported where it is appropriate, provided that there is no conflict with the biodiversity of the site. Development will not be permitted which would involve the culverting or diverting of any watercourse, and/or the siting of buildings in close proximity to the river channel, unless the

Council is satisfied that there would be no detriment to the river corridor.

Protection of the Water Environment

- 5.28 The water environment consists of the aquifer and surface water e.g. rivers, streams, wetlands and ponds. The aquifer in the district is essential to provide water supplies for domestic, industrial and agricultural use. Groundwater also feeds into the surface water system by means of springs and river flows. Pollution of ground and surface water can result from varied activities such as disposal of effluent in soakaways, contaminated land, landfilling of unsealed sites over permeable bedrock, chemical spillage from industrial process or discharge from roads. In turn this pollution can affect the natural water cycle and cleaning up of contaminated water, in particular groundwater, is very expensive and difficult. The Environment Agency has produced "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater " which provides a policy framework for the protection of groundwater, and is based on the principles of groundwater vulnerability. Source Protection Zone Maps are available from the Environment Agency. These show areas which form an increased risk to abstractions. The Council will therefore resist development following consultation with the Environment Agency that may prejudice both the aquifer and surface water quality. If proposals are acceptable the use of sustainable drainage systems, which amongst other objectives seek to reduce the concentration of pollutants entering the water environment, should be encouraged if they will lead to enhancement of ground water quality. The Environment Agency can offer advice on best management practices.

Policy R7 - Protection of Ground and Surface Water

Planning permission will not be granted for development which poses a threat to the quality of both surface and/or groundwater. Where proposals are acceptable the use of sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged, dependent on local site and underlying groundwater considerations.

Development on Floodplains and Flood Prevention

- 5.29 Floodplains act as storage and conveyancing areas for floodwater and may also have high environmental and amenity value. Floodplains therefore need safeguarding from inappropriate development. Any development, including raising the floor of the floodplain, may affect its storage capacity. This results in an increased risk of flooding and may affect other parts of the interconnected water system. The Environment Agency has identified the floodplains in the district, the majority of which are in the Green Belt. The Council will resist proposals after consultation with the Environment Agency for new development in these areas.
- 5.30 New development outside floodplains can result in increased problems of flooding downstream because of an increase in run-off from impermeable surfaces. There may be ways however of ameliorating the problem by the use of sustainable drainage systems including, for example, balancing ponds, swales and porous pavements. These techniques will require appropriate design and siting. The suitability of certain infiltration techniques will also

depend on site specific groundwater considerations. There may also be opportunities for increasing biodiversity with sustainable drainage techniques. The Council will not allow development, after consultation with the Environment Agency, that would increase the risk of flooding downstream because of increased surface run-off.

Policy R8 - Floodplains and Flood Prevention

Within the floodplains identified on the Proposal Map, planning permission for development will not be granted where proposals would;

- (i) Decrease the capacity of the floodplain to store flood water; or**
 - (ii) Impede the flow of water; or**
 - (iii) Increase the number of people and properties at risk from flooding.**
- Planning permission for new development outside floodplains will not be granted where the proposals would result in an increase in flooding downstream because of increased run-off.**

The use of sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged, dependent on local site and underlying groundwater considerations.

Proposals for development necessary to prevent an increase in flooding will be considered in terms of their impact on biodiversity, the landscape and recreation.

Conservation of Water Resources

- 5.31 Water companies still hold the responsibility for provision of water supplies and must provide water as a statutory duty, whatever the demand. However the supply of water, the conservation of water supplies, and wastewater disposal must be important factors in considering development. There is a need to ensure that measures to meet increased demand should not be detrimental to other water users of the environment. For example increase in demand impacts on local water tables and hydrology and may then have a negative effect on local wetland habitats and wildlife. The Mimram in particular already suffers from low flows and it is possible that the river has been badly affected by abstraction for public supplies. The Environment Agency is currently investigating the problem of low flows in the Mimram. Development should ideally be restricted to areas with an adequate existing water resource and a more sustainable approach applied i.e. the use of local water supplies, the recycling of drinking and wastewater. The Council will consult with the relevant bodies regarding proposals and would wish to promote sustainable water management where applicable, especially in larger development sites.

Policy R9 - Water Supply and Disposal

Permission will not be granted for proposals that:

- (i) Would be detrimental to existing water abstractions, fisheries, amenity and nature conservation;**

- (ii) **Would cause adverse change in flows or levels in the groundwater, or any rivers, streams, ditches, springs, lakes or ponds in the vicinity.**

Proposals should be consistent with the long term management of, and co-ordinated with, the provision of new water supply and disposal infrastructure.

5.32 In addition all development should include water conservation measures. The Council accepts that some water conservation measures such as sustainable drainage systems, large water storage systems, reed beds and alternative water supplies can only be used on large scale developments, but other measures should be incorporated in small scale development proposals. These include:

- Water butts;
- Rainwater recovery systems;
- Soft planting;
- The use of permeable surfaces and minimal hard landscaping on areas such as driveways and patios to help reduce surface water run-off.

Policy R10 - Water Conservation Measures

New development will be expected to incorporate water conservation measures wherever applicable, including sustainable drainage systems, water storage systems, soft landscaping and permeable surfaces to help reduce surface water run-off.

Biodiversity

- 5.33 Biodiversity is the term used to describe the variety of life throughout the natural world. The intricate and diverse networks of ecosystems provide the support systems which are essential for human existence i.e. oxygen, water, food, clothing, health and relaxation. Human activities however continue to destroy the world's biodiversity; over 100 species have been lost to the UK alone in the last century and many more are at risk including at a local level common birds such as the starling and house sparrow.
- 5.34 The Rio summit of 1992 made a commitment to maintain the world's biodiversity and the Government subscribes to the principles of the Rio convention. In consequence a UK Biodiversity Action Plan was published in 1994. This led to a County Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), "A 50 year vision for the Wildlife and Natural Habitats of Hertfordshire", published in 1998. The BAP identifies key habitats and species in Hertfordshire. The Council has adopted a BAP for Welwyn Hatfield District to replace the Nature Conservation Strategy for the district.

Enhancing Biodiversity

- 5.35 PPG9 states that our natural wildlife heritage is not confined to the various designated sites but is found in many urban areas. In addition to protecting specific sites, the Council wishes to enhance biodiversity throughout the district by ensuring that all new development contributes positively to increasing the range of habitats and species in the area. In addition, the Council requires that new development should demonstrate how it would

enhance a site's biodiversity, for example through a management agreement or the inclusion of appropriate landscaping. Applicants are expected to submit a sustainability statement covering ecological appraisal in accordance with Policy SD1.

Policy R11- Biodiversity and Development

All new development will be required to demonstrate how it would contribute positively to the biodiversity of the site by;

- (i) The retention and enhancement of the natural features of the site;**
- (ii) The promotion of natural areas and wildlife corridors where appropriate as part of the design;**
- (iii) The translocation of habitats where necessary, where it can be demonstrated that the habitat or species concerned cannot be successfully accommodated within the development;**
- (iv) The use of locally native species in planting in accordance with Policy D8 Landscaping;**
- (v) Helping meet priorities/targets set out in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.**

5.36 PPG9 Nature Conservation identifies different levels of protection for sites of varying importance for biodiversity, for example European and National statutory sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAS), National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Local Nature Reserves and non statutory locally designated sites such as County Wildlife Sites. PPG 9 recognises that local and informal designations form part of a habitat network which helps to retain local biodiversity, but designation should only be for sites of substantive local value.

Sites of International Importance

5.37 The district contains a small part of the Wormley-Hoddesdon Park Woods candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is identified on the Proposals Map. This designation is intended to protect the habitat of threatened species of wildlife. In accordance with PPG 9 development proposals for a candidate SAC will be treated in the same way as if it had already been designated.

Policy R12 - Special Area of Conservation

Proposals for development or land use which may affect a designated or candidate special area of conservation will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Development or land use change not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site and which is likely to have significant effects on the site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) and which would affect the integrity of the site will not be permitted unless the Council is satisfied that:

- (i) There is no alternative solution;**

- (ii) **There are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development or land use change.**

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and /or a priority species, development or land use change will not be permitted unless the Council is satisfied that it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety or for the beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

5.38 English Nature is responsible for the notification of Sites of Special Scientific Interest of national and international importance for nature conservation. These are areas of special national interest because of their flora, fauna, geological or landform features. There are five such sites designated within the district, which are identified on the Proposals Map. They are Sherrardspark Wood, SSSI 1; Wormley-Hoddesdon Park Wood South, SSSI 2 (also in Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire); Water End Swallow Holes, SSSI 3; Northaw Great Wood, SSSI 4; and Redwell Wood SSSI 5 (part Hertsmere). In addition the district shares a boundary with Tewinbury SSSI, which is in East Hertfordshire. The Council will protect these sites and any other SSSI designations, which may come forward in the future, from development proposals likely to affect them, following consultation with English Nature.

Policy R13 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Proposals for development in or likely to affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be subject to special scrutiny. Where such development including that on land adjoining or adjacent to the sites may have an adverse effect, directly or indirectly, on the SSSI it will not be permitted unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the national network of such sites.

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

Local Nature Reserves

5.39 A Local Authority has statutory powers to set up and manage Local Nature Reserves on land in its ownership. Five Local Nature Reserves have been designated in the district, and are identified on the Proposals Map. They are Danesbury Park, LNR 1; Sherrardspark Wood, LNR 2; The Commons, LNR 3; Northaw Great Wood, LNR 4; and Mardley Heath, LNR 5. The Council would wish to protect these from development and also intends to identify and set up further sites in conjunction with English Nature and other interested parties, where appropriate and as resources allow.

Policy R14 - Local Nature Reserves

Planning permission will not be granted for any development likely to have an adverse effect on local nature reserves unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh

the need to safeguard the substantive nature conservation value of the site.

Where development is permitted which would damage the nature conservation value of the site such damage should be kept to a minimum. Where appropriate the Council will consider the use of conditions and/or planning obligations to provide appropriate compensatory measures.

Wildlife Sites

- 5.40 PPG 9 Nature Conservation also allows for the designation of Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS). Such features of the landscape are of major importance for wildlife flora and fauna. They are similar to the Wildlife Sites in that they are non-statutory locally designated sites. The Hertfordshire RIGS group has identified a potential site in the district and there may be potential for further sites to be identified for example, through mineral workings.
- 5.41 The Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre (HBRC), in conjunction with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, carried out a Habitat Survey from 1994 to 1997 and subsequently identified Wildlife Sites for this district, based upon the latest available information. These are listed in Appendix 1 and identified on the Proposals Map. Wildlife Sites are defined as areas, identified by locally developed criteria, which are the most important places for wildlife outside statutorily protected areas. The Wildlife Sites include most of the areas identified in the previously adopted Plan, additional sites and areas run by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Gobions Woodland Trust and the Digswell Lake Society. These Wildlife Sites may change over time and as new information becomes available sites may be added to or removed from the list in Appendix 1, depending on their value. Some Wildlife Sites extend into the settlements, but most urban areas as such, are not covered by the Wildlife Sites. Most areas of potential wildlife value within the urban areas are part of the network of 'Urban Open Land' sites designated under Policy OS1. Urban Wildlife Sites will be designated in the future when specific criteria have been developed in conjunction with the HBRC and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.
- 5.42 The Council will seek to protect the Wildlife Sites from development and planning permission will not be granted for any development likely to cause harm to their wildlife habitats, unless there are strong reasons to do so and mitigating measures are taken. Within some sites, there may be a threat of harm from development which would normally enjoy 'permitted development rights', for example, war games, motorsports or clay pigeon shooting in woodlands or small scale buildings on those sites which are within the grounds of a residential property. Where this is the case and the Council considers that there is a real threat of 'permitted development' causing harm, it may consider the use of Article 4 Directions, to remove permitted development rights and bring such forms of development under planning control.

Policy R15 - Wildlife Sites

Planning permission will not be granted for any development which would have an adverse effect on Wildlife Sites or Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites unless:

- (i) It can be demonstrated that the reasons for development outweigh the need to safeguard the biodiversity of the site; and**
- (ii) Measures are taken to mitigate the effect of the development, to compensate for any residual adverse effects and to reinstate the nature conservation value of the site.**

Protected Species

5.43 The loss of some species of wildlife has been increasing since the Second World War and therefore the Council will resist development which would adversely affect the most vulnerable species. Many endangered species may be found in many places not notified as SSSIs. These species are identified in the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and in the Habitat Regulations, the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. Where development is permitted that may affect those species the Council will where appropriate consider the use of conditions and/or planning obligations to:

- Facilitate the survival of individual members of the species;
- Reduce disturbance to a minimum;
- Provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of population.

Policy R16 - Protection of Species

Planning permission will not be granted for any development or use of land which would have an adverse impact on badgers or species protected by schedules 1, 5, or 8 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, as amended.

Where development is permitted the Council will consider the use of conditions and/or planning obligations to ensure the protection of the site's species.

Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

5.44 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows are important for biodiversity and as a vital element in the landscape; they help reduce atmospheric pollution and the build up of CO² and can reduce noise. They can supply shelter and help with a feeling of enclosure and greatly add to the character and attractiveness of the district, in both rural and urban areas. The district contains areas of ancient, semi-natural woodland as well as veteran trees, and hedgerows which can act as wildlife corridors between rural and urban areas. In the rural areas the changing nature of agriculture has resulted in the loss of woodland and more specifically hedgerows.

5.45 In the urban areas there is also a significant green heritage to protect. The origins of Welwyn Garden City, which combined the benefits of both town and countryside, set standards of landscaping which have been the basis of

design for new towns ever since. This approach of planting of trees and shrubs combined with the retention of original trees, hedgerows and woods has continued throughout the urban areas of the district. The Council would wish to retain existing trees, hedgerows, and woodland whilst requiring where appropriate new planting of locally native species to encourage biodiversity. Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders are protected by law requiring the Council's consent before potentially harmful work is carried out. Work to trees in Conservation Areas require six weeks notice to the Local Authority.

Policy R17 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

The Council will seek the protection and retention of existing trees, hedgerows and woodland by the use of planning conditions, section 106 agreements, hedgerow retention notices and tree preservation orders where applicable. New development will be required to incorporate wherever appropriate new planting with locally native species and should be in accordance with Policy D8 Landscaping.

Air Quality

- 5.46 The maintenance of high air quality is a major factor affecting quality of life. Major developments, road related development, traffic levels and some types of industry can increase emissions which reduce air quality. The Environment Act 1995 places a duty on local authorities to review and assess air quality in their districts. Those areas that are expected to exceed national guidelines in the year 2005 will be deemed Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and the local authority must devise a strategy to reduce pollution concentrations. The review is underway in Welwyn Hatfield District, but it is unlikely that any AQMAs will be identified. However, provision is made in the following policy to cover the possibility.

Policy R18 - Air Quality

The Council will have regard to the potential effects of a development on local air quality when determining planning applications. Consideration will be given to both the operational characteristics of the development and to the traffic generated by it. Any development within areas designated as Air Quality Management Areas must have regard to guidelines for ensuring air quality is maintained at acceptable levels as set out in the Air Quality Strategy.

Noise and Vibration

- 5.47 Noise can have a detrimental effect on the environment and on quality of life. PPG 24 'Noise' provides guidance on the use of planning powers to minimise the adverse impact of noise. In accordance with that advice the Council will seek to ensure that noise-sensitive developments, such as housing, are separated from major sources of noise. It will also seek to ensure that new development with a potential for causing noise nuisance is sited away from noise-sensitive land uses, both existing and known proposed developments. Noise can be accompanied by vibration that can cause disturbance. British Standard 6472:1992 will be used to evaluate exposure to vibration in

buildings. The Council has powers under Environmental Health legislation in respect of statutory noise nuisances.

5.48 In considering proposals for development the Council will take into account:

- Possible future increases in noise levels;
- That the introduction of noisy activities into some residential and rural areas can be especially disruptive because of their existing very low background noise levels;
- That intermittent sources of noise can be more disruptive than constant sources;
- That particular difficulties are posed by fast food restaurants, public houses, night clubs etc, both from noise generated within the establishments and by customers in the vicinity, traffic and parking, especially in view of their evening and late night activity;
- That whilst design measures such as orientation, layout and double-glazing can reduce noise levels within buildings, such measures are less effective in reducing the level of noise experienced in public or private amenity areas.

Policy R19 - Noise and Vibration Pollution

Proposals will be refused if the development is likely:

- (i) **To generate unacceptable noise or vibration for other land uses; or**
- (ii) **To be affected by unacceptable noise or vibration from other land uses.**

Planning permission will be granted where appropriate conditions may be imposed to ensure either:

- (iii) **An adequate level of protection against noise or vibration; or**
- (iv) **That the level of noise emitted can be controlled.**

Proposals should be in accordance with the Supplementary Design Guidance.

Light Pollution

5.49 Light pollution concerns the adverse effects of light spill from artificial light installations. Artificial light is beneficial for community safety and security, for extending the time available for recreation and leisure, ie optimising the use and viability of facilities such as sports playing surfaces and for adding interest (such as the enhancement of buildings). However artificial light can be detrimental to both humans and wildlife if poorly designed or installed. Street, security and commercial lights as well as sports floodlighting can illuminate wide areas of land and atmosphere. Residential amenity and both rural and urban views can be detrimentally affected. Artificial light can change the character of the countryside at night by creating the impression that it is urbanised, and thereby harm the character and openness of the Green Belt. Photos taken from satellites at night reveal the extent of light pollution in

Western Europe and it is now virtually impossible for astronomers to find any location in southern England where light pollution does not disrupt visibility. Added together light spillage represents a massive waste of energy and also unnecessary expenditure.

- 5.50 The Council will use its development control powers to try to keep light pollution to a minimum. Careful lighting schemes and installations that avoid detrimental impacts on amenity and wildlife, and minimise spillage and glare will be encouraged. Where appropriate, the Council may require landscaping to minimise the effects of external lighting. In determining applications, the Council will use the guidance contained in the Institution of Lighting Engineers Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution which also lists other relevant standards.

Policy R20 - Light Pollution

In order to minimise light pollution, external lighting scheme proposals, including floodlighting, will only be approved where it can be demonstrated that all of the following criteria can be satisfied:

- (i) The scheme proposed is the minimum needed for security and operational purposes or to enhance the external appearance of the building to be illuminated;**
- (ii) Glare and light spillage are minimised;**
- (iii) The amenity of residential areas is not adversely affected;**
- (iv) The visual character of historic buildings and conservation areas are not adversely affected;**
- (v) There would be no adverse impact on the character or openness of the countryside and green belt;**
- (vi) There would be no adverse effects on ecology and the natural environment including wildlife; and**
- (vii) There would be no dazzling or distraction of drivers using nearby roads.**

Telecommunications Installations and Apparatus

- 5.51 Government planning policy on telecommunications in PPG8 emphasises that modern telecommunications are an essential and beneficial element in the life of the local community and the development of the economy. They enable people to work, shop, gain access to information and services and be entertained without leaving their homes. In this way, modern telecommunications can also benefit the environment by reducing the need to travel and thereby reducing vehicle emissions. Telecommunications apparatus includes masts, aerials, radio antennae, satellite dishes and development for cable television.
- 5.52 PPG8 advises that local planning authorities should respond positively to proposals for telecommunications development, especially where alternative locations are unsuitable due to technical constraints, whilst at the same time, taking account of the need to protect the environment of urban and rural

areas. This requires a balance to be struck between the wider benefits of telecommunications development and the potential harm it can cause to visual amenity.

- 5.53 It is essential to ensure that telecommunications development does not harm the quality and appearance of the natural and built environment, including the countryside, towns and villages in the district. The Council will therefore require telecommunications apparatus to be sensitively sited so as to minimise its visual impact. In all cases, opportunities to screen the development should be taken, such as by using existing tall buildings/structures or natural features such as trees or woodland. The Council will encourage mast sharing wherever this is possible and environmentally acceptable. When considering proposals for new free standing masts, the Council will require written evidence from the developer to demonstrate that they have explored the possibility of sharing existing masts or using locations such as tall buildings, together with evidence of why this is not Practicable.
- 5.54 In recent years, there have been increasing concerns about the health implications of mobile telephones and their associated masts and base stations. In May 2000, the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (IEGMP) chaired by Sir William Stewart, published their report (The Stewart Report) into the possible health effects of the use of mobile phones, base stations and transmitters. The report concluded that it is not yet possible to state categorically that there are no risks to health from the radiation that these installations produce and that further research is needed. It therefore recommended that a 'precautionary approach' should be taken in dealing with mobile phone technology. Accordingly, emissions should be required to fall within ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) guidelines and accord with the advice contained in PPG8 on locations next to sensitive sites such as colleges and schools, including nurseries or pre-school play groups. Due to the sensitivity of such sites, all applications and determinations received for mobile phone masts, base stations and transmitters proposed near college, school, nursery or pre-school playgroup locations will be required to include details of consultation in line with PPG8 or its successor.
- 5.55 The Council will work with the telecommunication code system operators in providing and maintaining a register of existing sites where planning permission has been granted for telecommunications development, in order to maximise the opportunities for mast sharing, and will encourage them to advise the Council of their wider strategic requirements for installations within the individual towns and settlements where they are proposing development. The Council will adopt the following policy in considering proposals for telecommunications installations and apparatus. Proposals may either require the submission of a planning application or an application for prior approval of details. Before installing certain telecommunications apparatus under permitted development rights, a code system operator must apply for a determination as to whether the Council's approval of the siting and appearance of the development is required. This only allows the Council to consider the issues of the siting and appearance of the development, not the

principle of the development itself. This policy will be reviewed in the light of developing technology and further government guidance on the health issues associated with telecommunications development.

Policy R21 - Telecommunications Development

Proposals for telecommunications development will be considered against the following criteria:

For mobile phone masts, base stations and transmitters:

- (i) For new free standing masts, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that there are technical reasons which prevent the installation of the apparatus on existing masts, buildings or other structures;**
- (ii) New free standing masts must have sufficient spare capacity to allow mast sharing, subject to any technical or environmental constraints, which will be secured by the use of planning conditions or Section 106 Agreements;**
- (iii) All applications and determinations must be accompanied by information on the level of emissions likely to be generated by the installation and the level of emissions must fall within the ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) guidelines and the advice contained in PPG8 in relation to emissions near college, school, nursery or pre-school playgroup grounds and buildings;**
- (iv) Clear public exclusion zones should be placed around all base station antennae together with appropriate warning signs;**
- (v) All applications and determinations received for mobile phone masts, base stations and transmitters proposed near college, school, nursery or pre-school playgroup locations must include details of consultation in line with PPG8 or its successor.**

For all telecommunications development, including mobile phone installations, domestic satellite equipment and radio masts:

- (vi) The development must not harm the appearance of the street scene nor appear visually intrusive;**
- (vii) The development must not harm the character of a Conservation Area nor the character and setting of a Listed Building;**
- (viii) If erected on a building, it must not be out of keeping with the building, in terms of siting, scale, size, profile and colour, so as to harm the appearance of the building;**
- (ix) If proposed in areas designated for their landscape, historic or nature conservation importance, including Conservation Areas and the Green Belt, applicants must be able to demonstrate why sites outside these areas cannot be used.**

Where permission is granted for telecommunications development, the Council will impose a condition requiring the installation to be removed

as soon as possible once it is no longer required for telecommunications purposes.

Historic Environment

5.56 The Historic Environment is by its nature irreplaceable. It is evidence of past human activity, from the prehistoric period to the present day. It encompasses the whole of the historic landscape not just designated sites, such as listed buildings, conservation areas, ancient monuments, archaeological areas of significance and registered parks and gardens, but also other historical features such as places of worship, defence installations, burial grounds, farms and fields, and sites of manufacture.

Conservation Areas

5.57 The district has eight Conservation Areas. These are the historic cores of Ayot Green, Ayot St. Lawrence, Essendon, Old Hatfield, Northaw, and Welwyn, together with two areas in Welwyn Garden City, the central part and the Beehive area. Their boundaries are defined on the Proposals Map. These areas contain significant links with the past, in terms of the historical development of the district and traditional forms of architecture. In particular, they contain most of the district's Listed Buildings. Therefore, it is important that the historical and architectural character of these areas is preserved and enhanced. As far as possible existing buildings should be retained and adapted for re-use rather than demolished and redeveloped. Where new buildings are acceptable, they must be designed to harmonise with their surroundings and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, using, where appropriate, traditional materials and features. Advertisements in Conservation Areas are dealt with in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9 of the Supplementary Design Guidance. Shopfront security, shop awnings, canopies and blinds within the Conservation Areas are dealt with in paragraphs 6.5 and 6.11 of the Supplementary Design Guidance.

Policy R22 - Development in Conservation Areas

Within the Conservation Areas, as shown on the Proposals Map, any proposals for new buildings or extensions and alterations to existing buildings will only be permitted where they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, in terms of siting, form, scale, materials, detailing and landscaping.

Before determining an application for planning permission in a conservation area, the Council will require detailed plans and elevational drawings showing the proposed development in relation to its surroundings. Minor works will also be required to respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.58 Within Conservation Areas the demolition of most buildings is subject to planning control. The general presumption in PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment is in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. The Council will therefore resist proposals for demolition within Conservation Areas, unless a very special case has been made and acceptable detailed plans for the site's redevelopment have been put forward. The wider effects

of demolition and redevelopment on the character of the Area will be assessed before consent is granted. In order to aid the Council make this assessment developers will be required to provide documentary evidence in line with criterion (iv) of Policy R27.

- 5.59 Where appropriate, the Council will require historic materials and/or components arising from demolition or other works to historic buildings to be set aside either for re-use in alterations works to the building or for disposal to a bona fide architectural salvage company.

Policy R23 - Demolition of Buildings in Conservation Areas

Within Conservation Areas consent will not be granted for the demolition of any buildings or structures in the designated Conservation Areas, unless the character or appearance of the Conservation Area is thereby preserved or enhanced (whether or not such works form part of a redevelopment scheme).

Consent will not be granted for demolition without acceptable detailed plans for the redevelopment or landscaping of the site. Conditions will be imposed in order to ensure that a contractual obligation has been entered into to undertake the proposed works prior to the commencement of demolition and that planning permission has been granted.

- 5.60 Local Authorities have a duty, under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to consider whether further reviews of their Conservation Areas are called for. As part of the monitoring process, and to assess the need for such reviews, the Council will endeavour to produce a character appraisal for each of the Conservation Areas in the district, as advised in PPG15. These character appraisals will identify those areas in need of review or enhancement, provide guidance for the design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings and will also serve to co-ordinate the standard of development expected from the Council's own works, and those of statutory undertakers.
- 5.61 Unsympathetic alterations or improvements to buildings can damage the character of these areas as can neglect of infrastructure and landscape. Where, following a conservation area review or character appraisal, this is identified as a problem, the Council will carry out a dual policy approach of improvement works and Article 4 directions to remove permitted development rights, subject to the availability of resources.

Policy R24 - Character Appraisals and Enhancements

The Council will produce a character appraisal for each of the district's Conservation Areas, to guide the design of development or alterations to existing buildings and identify the need for Conservation Area enhancement schemes. Based on these, subject to the availability of resources, the Council will draw up and implement a programme of works for the maintenance and enhancement of their historic and architectural character.

Where a character appraisal identifies that the carrying out of permitted development in a Conservation Area could cause serious harm to the character of the area, the Council will make a direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order, requiring planning permission to be obtained for such development.

Listed Buildings

5.62 Welwyn Hatfield District has over four hundred Listed Buildings, which are listed in Appendix 2. The preservation of the historic and architectural character of these buildings is of prime importance. Any alteration or extension must pay full attention to the existing fabric and to its restoration where decay or neglect has caused damage. The Council will consider the use of repairs notices and emergency repairs notices, where appropriate, to effect repairs to buildings not held in good repair or to barns under threat due to neglect. The Council will expect traditional methods and materials to be used, wherever possible, in any works carried out to a Listed Building. In considering proposals for development affecting a Listed Building, the Council will normally seek the advice of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust. Listed Buildings often provide a refuge for protected species such as bats, barn owls etc. Their presence will be a material consideration in the determination of applications for Listed Building consent. Proposals for works to Listed Buildings should safeguard them from any adverse impacts resulting from the development and where appropriate enhance their habitat, in accordance with Policy R16 of the Plan.

Policy R25 - Works to Listed Buildings

Permission will be refused for any proposal which would adversely affect the historic character or architectural quality of a Listed Building or its setting. Listed Building Consent will not be granted for any extensions or external or internal alterations to buildings of special architectural or historic importance unless all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- (i) New works respect the character, appearance, and setting of the building in terms of design, scale and materials;**
- (ii) Architectural or historic features which are important to the character and appearance of the building (including internal features) are retained unaltered;**
- (iii) The historic form and structural integrity of the building are retained; and**
- (iv) Full detailed drawings of the proposed works are submitted with the application.**

5.63 In some cases it may prove impossible to maintain Listed Buildings in their original use. The most important issue is the preservation of their historic and architectural features and character. Therefore, the Council will adopt a flexible policy towards the use of Listed Buildings, since it is often the case that a more economic use can secure their restoration and ensure continued preservation.

Policy R26 - Alternative Uses for Listed Buildings

Applications for the change of use of Listed Buildings will only be permitted when all of the following criteria are met:

- (i) The proposal would not harm the character or setting of the building;**
- (ii) The change of use could be successfully implemented without the essential need for other development which would harm the building's character or setting, and;**
- (iii) The change of use results in the continued preservation of the building's fabric or its restoration.**

5.64 There is a general presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings. It is important that these buildings are given maximum protection. Indeed there is a statutory duty on local planning authorities to 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'. Demolition will be acceptable only in very exceptional circumstances. The Council will endeavour to protect Listed Buildings wherever possible, and will consider demolition only as a last resort. In assessing proposals for the demolition of Listed Buildings, the Council will consider the following factors, as advised in PPG15:

- The condition of the building, and the costs involved in repairing and maintaining it;
- The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use;
- The merits of alternative proposals for the site.

5.65 Where proposals for the demolition or major alteration of a Listed Building are submitted they should be accompanied by an impact assessment report setting out the historic/archaeological interest and importance of the structure affected by the proposal, and assessing the impact of the proposed demolition work. In cases where exceptional circumstances result in consent being granted for demolition or major alteration to a Listed Building, an appropriate condition will be imposed requiring the developer to secure a programme of archaeological historic building recording prior to the commencement of any works, including a photographic record. A full report of this recording work should be submitted to the Council for approval.

Policy R27 - Demolition of Listed Buildings

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

- (i) Clear and convincing evidence has been provided that it is not practicable to continue to use the building for its present or previous use and that no viable alternative uses can be found, and that preservation in some form of charitable or community ownership is not possible;**

- (ii) **The physical condition of the building has deteriorated, to a point that it can be demonstrated that demolition is essential in the interests of public safety. A comprehensive structural report will be required to support this criterion;**
- (iii) **Demolition or major alteration will not be considered without acceptable detailed plans for the site's development. Conditions will be imposed in order to ensure a contractual obligation has been entered into for the construction of the replacement building(s) and / or the landscaping of the site prior to the commencement of demolition; and**
- (iv) **Where, exceptionally, consent is granted for the demolition or major alteration to a listed building, before any demolition or major alteration takes place, applicants will be required to record details of the building by measured drawings, text and photographs, and this should be submitted to and agreed by the Council.**

Historic Parks and Gardens

- 5.66 Historic parks and gardens contribute to the quality and character of the landscape, reflecting cultural and horticultural ideas of their time. They may often provide outstanding landscape settings for Listed Buildings, have rare plant collections and may be an immensely valuable ecological resource, contributing to biodiversity. The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest is prepared by English Heritage. The designation is non-statutory, but PPG15 "*Planning and the Historic Environment*" advises local planning authorities to protect registered parks and gardens in preparing development plans and in determining planning applications. PPG15 also allows for the identification of locally important historic parks and gardens that make a contribution to the heritage of the district. They also offer a resource for recreation, tourism and education and often provide outstanding settings for Listed Buildings.
- 5.67 The registered sites are identified on the Proposal Map. These are listed in Appendix 3 to the Plan, together with other sites which at present are regarded as being of more local significance. The Council will seek to preserve their character and setting through the application of its planning powers.

Policy R28 - Historic Parks and Gardens

Development will not be permitted if it would lead to the loss of, or cause harm to, the historic character, appearance or setting of any part of a registered historic park or garden.

Proposals for development in any unregistered historic parks and gardens listed in Appendix 3 will be considered in terms of their contribution to the quality and character of the historic environment.

The Council will work with the County Council, the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust and the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust to promote the preservation and maintenance of this resource.

Archaeology

- 5.68 Ancient Monuments and archaeological remains are an important part of the district's heritage and form a finite and non-renewable resource which is important both culturally and educationally. These remains take the form of those that are known, such as scheduled ancient monuments, those that are anticipated, and those that are undiscovered and unsuspected. There are over 340 individual records of known archaeological sites and finds in Welwyn Hatfield recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record maintained by Hertfordshire County Council. Of these, four are designated as scheduled ancient monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and are statutorily protected.
- 5.69 Government guidance, in the form of PPG16, explains the importance of archaeology and advises on the handling of such matters in the planning process. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of policies within development plans and their implementation through development control, as a means of ensuring remains are preserved or recorded.
- 5.70 The list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Areas of Archaeological Significance is not exhaustive, and will be revised as necessary. Exclusion from either designation should not imply that a site has no archaeological merit. Some of the most important concentrations of archaeological remains recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record, as maintained by Hertfordshire County Council, are identified on the Proposals Map as Areas of Archaeological Significance, although important archaeological remains may exist elsewhere in the district. These Areas have been identified in order to alert developers to the need to consider the archaeological implications of their proposals at the earliest possible stage of any development proposal in order to minimise potential conflict. However, the Council will seek to protect valuable remains throughout the district in its planning policies.
- 5.71 In considering planning applications on sites within the Areas of Archaeological Significance or other sites of potential interest, the Council will, as necessary, seek guidance from the County Council's Archaeologist. Account will also be taken of archaeological planning guidance notes where these have been produced by the County Council as supplementary guidance. Where appropriate the Council will seek to secure the enhanced management of sites and remains within the district.

Policy R29 - Archaeology

Where a proposal for development may affect remains of archaeological significance, or may be sited in an area of archaeological potential, developers will be required to undertake an archaeological assessment, if necessary with a field evaluation, and to submit a report on the findings to the Local Planning Authority, before an application is determined.

Planning permission will not be granted for development which adversely affects the site or setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, or other nationally important sites and monuments.

Where development proposals affect sites and monuments of less than national importance, the Council will seek preservation *in situ* of remains. In cases where this is neither feasible, nor merited, planning permission may be granted, subject to conditions requiring adequate provision being made for excavation and recording.

When planning permission is granted for development that would affect archaeological remains, taking into account the importance of the remains, conditions will be imposed to ensure that the remains are properly recorded, the results analysed and published and where practicable, the management and presentation of archaeological sites and their settings is enhanced.

MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 The relationship between land use and transport is a key element in any strategy for sustainable development and quality of life. The movement of people and goods between different land use activities generates the demand for transport facilities and services. An efficient transport network is essential to economic prosperity, but the way in which movement is accommodated can have an impact on the quality of the environment.
- 6.2 Statutory responsibility for the transport system rests with a number of bodies, including the Highways Agency, County Council, rail and bus operators. Their plans and priorities are determined at a national level through the government's 10-year Transport Plan. At the local level, the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan defines the objectives and programme for transport improvements. The District Council itself has limited statutory responsibility for transport, apart from car parking management, taxi licensing and bus passes, but it works in partnership with the County Council and the operators to shape their investment programmes. In particular, as the local planning authority, it has a major role to play in controlling the location and design of development to integrate with transport planning objectives.
- 6.3 This chapter sets out the planning policies which the Council will use to integrate land use with transport and to ensure the movement patterns generated by development can be accommodated by the transport system. It has been prepared in the context of the priorities set out in the Local Transport Plan and government guidance.

ISSUES

- 6.4 The effective management of movement is particularly critical in Welwyn Hatfield. Its settlement pattern, with a number of small and medium sized towns, which are relatively interdependent, generates significant movement flows within the district, as people travel to different towns for shops, leisure and work. The district's two main towns, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, are also important centres of employment within the county, attracting large commuting flows from outside of the district. At the same time, a significant proportion of the district's population work in London and other nearby settlements, generating flows out of the district. Welwyn Hatfield is dissected by several strategic transport routes, being on the M25, A1(M), A414 and the East Coast Main Line Railway. Whilst this is good for business and people's own geographical mobility, it brings with it associated environmental problems.
- 6.5 Government and county transport policy has shifted fundamentally over the last decade. Whilst it recognises that the car will remain a vital element of the transport system, because of concerns about congestion, safety and pollution, the emphasis now is on reducing the overall need for people to travel and encouraging a shift to other modes of transport, in an effort to reduce the need for people to use their cars. This position is reflected both in

the government's 10-year Transport Plan and Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan.

- 6.6 Within this context the key challenge for Welwyn Hatfield will be to achieve a more sustainable pattern of movement, whilst maintaining the current level of accessibility, which is important to its economic vitality. The District Plan has an important part to play in this, in a number of ways. Firstly, it seeks to locate development where it is already accessible by a number of modes of transport, in particular concentrating new retail and leisure development into the two town centres, but also housing where it is close to facilities or well served by transport. Policies in the Housing and Retailing and Town Centres chapters of the Plan promote this. Secondly, in order to improve the infrastructure and services for non-car modes, where development takes place, the Plan seeks to ensure that priority is given to walking, cycling and passenger transport in the design and servicing of development. Thirdly, where development can be made more accessible by non-car modes, either by location, design or improvements to infrastructure, car use can be limited by reducing available car parking.
- 6.7 This chapter sets out a range of policies through which the movement elements of these three aims can be achieved. It is important to say that they can only be effective if they are implemented as a package of policy measures and in conjunction with other policies in the Plan.

STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

- 6.8 To achieve the overall aim of a more sustainable pattern of movement, the policies in this chapter seek to fulfil the following objectives:
- (a) To reduce the overall need to travel by integrating land uses with transport;
 - (b) To support the development of integrated transport policy;
 - (c) To reduce dependency on the car and encourage modes of travel which have less adverse environmental impact;
 - (d) To give priority to walking and cycling;
 - (e) To encourage effective traffic management and the improvement of road safety for all sectors of the community;
 - (f) To encourage greater use of passenger transport and improvements to services and facilities; and
 - (g) To facilitate the accessibility needs of all in a safe and sustainable manner.
- 6.9 These objectives are to be achieved by implementing a range of policies and strategies. The policies and strategies will be two-pronged in that they tackle both land use in relation to movement and movement in relation to land use.

POLICIES

Integrating Transport and Land Use

- 6.10 The location and design of development can play a positive role in encouraging more sustainable modes of transport. A key aim of the Plan is for development to be located in existing settlements. Amongst other things this is where the greatest choice of more sustainable transport modes is to be found and the concentration of different land uses reduces the distance of journeys. Even in these locations development offers opportunities to improve existing movement networks and facilities and to create new ones.
- 6.11 A key to attaining a more sustainable pattern of movement lies in changing attitudes towards the car and to lessening dependency upon it especially for short journeys. However, a radical change in behaviour will only be achieved in response to a comprehensive and integrated transport strategy, which relates different modes of transport to each other to offer real modal choice. It must ensure that measures to make the use of cars less attractive are balanced by the adequate and enticing provision of sustainable alternatives.
- 6.12 In the Local Transport Plan (LTP), the County Council groups inter-related towns where significant capital investment is needed to make improvements to the local transport system. Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield have been grouped together with St Albans in the Mid Hertfordshire Area. The District Council will work with Hertfordshire County Council and other bodies in the preparation and implementation of an Area Plan for Mid Hertfordshire as part of the LTP. Wherever possible this will provide more sustainable alternatives to the car and it will provide improved east-west linkages incorporating the Hatfield Aerodrome development as set out in the master plan for the site.

Policy M1 - Integrating Transport And Land Use

Through the development process the Council will take every opportunity to integrate different modes of travel. Development proposals, except for those which are necessary in rural areas, will be permitted only in locations with accessibility to pedestrian and cycle routes and passenger transport services, or where this can be created, and where the environment and infrastructure can accommodate the amount and type of transport movement likely to be generated. In considering development proposals, the Council will give priority to walking and more sustainable modes of travel.

Internal layouts in development schemes must demonstrate priority to non-car users. They must include safe and effective routes for pedestrians and cyclists, with appropriate facilities, as well as catering for people with mobility difficulties and making provision for passenger transport and where appropriate the needs of horseriders.

Transport Assessments

- 6.13 Developments which are likely to generate significant movement and travel demand, must be assessed comprehensively in terms of their impact on the transport network. Developers will be required to submit a Transport Assessment with any such application. These should demonstrate the journey

patterns the development would generate for different modes of travel and the ability of the existing infrastructure and services to accommodate this demand, as well as proposing measures to ameliorate those impacts and assist in shifting journeys onto more sustainable modes. These will replace the previous requirement for Traffic Impact Assessments.

- 6.14 Guidance for the preparation of Transport Assessments is available from the County Council. Studies will be required for the following thresholds of development:
- (a) Housing developments of 200 dwellings or more;
 - (b) Retail developments of 2000 sq. m gross floor area or more;
 - (c) Business development of 5000 sq. m gross floor area or more;
 - (d) Industrial/Warehouse developments of 5000 sq. m gross floor area or more;
 - (e) Sports Centres, leisure complexes, golf courses and centres.

Policy M2 - Transport Assessments

Developers of major new traffic generating developments will be required to submit a transport assessment with the planning application. This must demonstrate the measures to be taken to minimise vehicular movements through improvements to passenger transport, pedestrian, and cycling facilities and state whether new highways works or traffic management measures will be required.

Green Travel Plans

- 6.15 Commuting to work by car is the main cause of traffic congestion. Other business related car journeys also exacerbate the problem. For some people the car is their only means of getting to work, such as people living in rural areas or working night shifts where no passenger transport or other suitable mode of travel is available. However, there are many opportunities for people to travel to work by other modes. Retail and leisure centres and large visitor attractions also generate significant car travel.
- 6.16 The County Council and the Hertfordshire Business Travelwise Initiative promote the use of Green Travel Plans (also called Green Transport or Green Commuter Plans). A Green Travel Plan (GTP) is a set of measures aimed at staff, customers and clients, that reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable transport, including alternatives to or more efficient use of the car, in journeys to and from a business site. Detailed guidance on the preparation of GTPs has been published by the Hertfordshire Technical Chief Officers Association (HTCOA), setting out the thresholds of development for which GTPs are required.
- 6.17 The Council will encourage all existing businesses to introduce GTPs, particularly those employing large numbers of people. However, it is an easier task at the planning stage, before employees or customers have become set in their travel patterns. It is also easier for the infrastructure necessary to

accommodate alternatives to the private car to be incorporated into the design of a site from the outset rather than be fitted in afterwards. The Council will therefore require all new development above the thresholds set out in the HTCOA's guidance to be supported by a GTP.

Policy M3 - Green Travel Plans

All new development at or above the thresholds set out in HTCOA's guidance on 'Developing a Green Travel Plan', should be supported by a Green Travel Plan. The implementation of measures included in a Green Travel Plan will be secured through planning conditions, or a Section 106 Agreement. The Council will also work with existing businesses to encourage the adoption and implementation of Green Travel Plans in line with the guidance.

Developer Contributions

- 6.18 Where a development is proposed which is likely to place additional demand on the local transport system, the developer will be expected to meet, or where appropriate, contribute towards the cost of any improvements to infrastructure or services necessary to accommodate the development and ameliorate its impact. This will not just involve improvements to the highway infrastructure, but will also include provision for pedestrians, cyclists, passenger transport and where appropriate horse riding. This may, for example, include the cost of providing a bus service at the early stages of a development when the level of use is insufficient to make the service viable without subsidy. The important criteria will be to ensure that the development is adequately served by a range of means of transport and that there are realistic alternatives to the car.
- 6.19 Any such contributions will be secured ideally by means of Section 106 Agreements attached to the planning permission or by other appropriate legally binding agreements. However, it must be noted that any necessary infrastructure works must be environmentally acceptable and the provision of adequate transport infrastructure in itself will not be sufficient to make the development acceptable if there are substantial environmental objections to it.

Policy M4 - Developer Contributions

Where development necessitates alteration to existing or the provision of new transport infrastructure or services, permission will be granted only if those works are environmentally acceptable and if the applicant agrees to meet, or where appropriate contribute to, the cost of the works or services. Planning conditions or a Section 106 Agreement or other legal agreement will be used to ensure the implementation of the works or obligations.

Walking

- 6.20 Walking is undoubtedly the healthiest, cheapest and most sustainable mode of travel. It accounts for a significant number of journeys, particularly for the

young, the elderly and those without a car. It is being promoted by health organisations and is of increasing significance as a leisure activity. The Council wishes to promote walking as a realistic alternative to the private car, primarily for short journeys, but also for longer journeys, when combined with bus or rail travel for example. The Council is already supporting the creation of 'Safer Routes to School' in conjunction with the County Council, but would like to see greater priority given to this mode in future.

- 6.21 To this end the Council has published a 'Walking Strategy' setting out its proposals for pedestrian movement. In particular, it requires improvement of the existing pedestrian network, to ensure it is convenient, safe and attractive to use and serves other modes, particularly in and to town and local centres, leisure and community facilities, where people wish to visit. With regard to new development, the Council will expect to see priority given to the pedestrian in the design and layout of schemes and to see footpaths linking into the existing network. Good pedestrian routes and crossing facilities will be required to ensure convenient access to bus stops in order to promote the use of buses. It will seek to protect and where possible enhance existing public rights of way within urban areas and rural areas, opposing development which would divert or obstruct footpaths in such a way as to make pedestrian movement less convenient.

Policy M5 - Pedestrian Facilities

Wherever possible and practical the Council will seek improvements in facilities for the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians. The Council will require proposals for new development to give priority to pedestrian access in their layouts through the inclusion of safe and direct routes linking to existing or proposed footpath networks and facilities. Developers may be required to provide or contribute towards off-site pedestrian facilities where this would be necessary to integrate it with surrounding areas. Development which would prejudice convenient and safe pedestrian movement will be refused.

The Council has published a walking strategy for the district, setting out its proposals for improving the pedestrian network and promoting walking and to provide guidance on the priorities for new development.

Cycling

- 6.22 Cycling is a cheap and sustainable method of movement that is especially suitable for short to medium length journeys. However, the use of bicycles needs positive encouragement with adequate facilities for cyclists and the creation of a safe cycling environment. In 1998 the Council published the Welwyn Hatfield Cycling Strategy, the aim of which is 'to increase cycle usage'. In recent years, new east-west and north-south routes have been created and the Council is working with the County Council and other organisations to extend the network. However, there remain gaps in the district's cycle network, which require completion, including better linkages into town centres and cycle links to/from development on the Hatfield Aerodrome development. The Council has produced an updated Cycling Strategy Review which identifies new routes and initiatives.

Policy M6 - Cycle Routes And Facilities

The Council will require proposals for new development to encourage cycling through the inclusion of safe cycle routes and parking for cycles, and where appropriate secure waterproof storage and changing and showering facilities for cyclists. New cycle routes should link with existing or proposed cycle paths. Developers may be required to provide or contribute towards off-site facilities and the overall planned cycle network.

The Council has reviewed the Welwyn Hatfield Cycling Strategy, to ensure that it continues to provide an adequate framework to guide investment in the infrastructure necessary to create a comprehensive network of routes and facilities in the district.

Horse Riding

- 6.23 Welwyn Hatfield has a large horse riding population and a fragmented bridle network. New developments can encroach on the minor roads used by riders. In consideration of a sustainable and integrated transport system, the Council will seek to retain minor roads (and verges on busier roads) used by riders, or will require appropriate alternative paths to be provided.

Policy M7- Equestrian Facilities

The needs of horse riders will be taken into account, whenever development would affect routes used by riders, or where the creation of new paths along strategic routes would be jeopardised. Suitable replacement paths will be required when routes used by riders will no longer be suitable for continued use, as a result of other changes to the road network or new development.

Powered Two-Wheeled Vehicles

- 6.24 Powered two-wheelers range in size from motorised bicycles through motor scooters to high performance motorcycles. At the lower end of the scale, two-wheelers are more environmentally friendly than cars and can help deliver environmental improvements provided that they are not a substitute for walking, cycling or passenger transport. In road safety terms powered two-wheeled vehicle users are vulnerable road users; something they have in common with cyclists and pedestrians. The needs of powered two-wheelers must be considered in the design and implementation of transport schemes, parking provision and new development. Employers and others should cater for the need of users of two wheelers to wash, change and store clothing as would be expected for pedal cyclists.

Policy M8 - Powered Two-Wheelers

The Council supports the use of powered two-wheeled vehicles as a more environmentally friendly mode of transport than the car. It will require that the internal layouts for development schemes are designed to make provision for powered two-wheeled vehicles and their users.

Passenger Transport

- 6.25 Passenger transport in the form of buses, coaches and trains is more environmentally friendly than the private car because of the greater numbers of people that can be carried on each trip. Taxis can also be considered part of the passenger transport system; although mainly used by only one or two people per trip, they frequently act as feeders to transport nodes where passengers transfer to buses or trains for longer journeys.
- 6.26 Passenger transport will be of growing importance if progress is to be made towards a more sustainable pattern of movement. Whilst the Council has very limited powers to directly influence the basic network of bus and rail passenger services, it can intervene in the form of subsidies and support for community transport initiatives and various voluntary sector services. The Council will encourage initiatives such as 'Dial-a Ride' which can complement standard bus services by serving people with mobility difficulties and those living in rural areas, and 'Park and Ride' which can help to integrate modes.
- 6.27 Passenger transport, particularly the bus, is the only means of transport available to many people including women, children, the elderly and people on low incomes. The government sees the bus becoming the focus of an efficient transport system where people can get where they want to be quickly and comfortably without having to rely on using a car. But at the moment buses, in particular, are seen by many as inconvenient and unreliable; this perception must change. Buses must be responsive to local needs and provide for essential journeys to work, including acting as feeders to the rail network, and to shops, education, social and health facilities. The Council will work with the County Council and bus operators to seek improvements to the quality of services.
- 6.28 Wherever possible passenger transport services should be given priority over the car in the design of development and transport schemes, including road and traffic management schemes. Whenever a new development generates a need for passenger transport the developer will be required to provide or contribute to the necessary infrastructure within the development or off-site. Developers may also be required to subsidise bus services to new developments, particularly at the early stages of development to ensure provision before services becomes commercially viable.

Policy M9 - Bus And Taxi Facilities

The Council will support the improvement of passenger transport services throughout the district and will require priority to be given to this mode over the car in the design and layout of new developments. For developments which are likely to place significant additional demands on existing infrastructure the Council will require developers to provide additional infrastructure as necessary. This may include the provision of bus lanes and parking bays, taxi ranks, bus stops with shelters and seating, either within the layout of the scheme or off-site. Where appropriate developers may also be required to fund the provision of bus services, particularly at the early stages of a development before they become independently viable.

Railways

- 6.29 The rail network is critical to achieving more sustainable travel patterns in the district. Currently around 20% of the district's workers travel to work by train and demand for services is increasing. The district is served by the East Coast Main Line which includes lines from London Kings Cross and Moorgate via Finsbury Park, serving stations to the north, including Brookmans Park, Welham Green, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City and Welwyn North in the district. A branch from Finsbury Park also serves Cuffley on the eastern side of the district then proceeds through Hertford North linking back to the ECML at Stevenage. This route is a key commuter route for the district; services comprise a mixture of local and long distance services. Furthermore a number of freight operations share the lines.
- 6.30 Growth in use of the route has taken place in recent years and is forecast to continue, but there are capacity constraints to future growth in services. The Strategic Rail Authority will publish a strategy for the ECML setting out proposals for improving capacity. The Council recognises the need for additional capacity along the ECML and therefore supports in principle the improvement of rail services along the route. However, the Council will monitor any strategies or proposals put forward by the SRA for the ECML to ensure that any changes benefit local services and achieve the best outcome for local residents, both in terms of future rail services and environmental impact.
- 6.31 The Council also supports the Thameslink 2000 project, another major capital investment scheme to expand the strategic network and introduce new cross-London routes, including services on the ECML. This should mean that stations within the district have improved services with more trains and trains that continue to Gatwick airport and to south coast destinations rather than terminating at London.
- 6.32 With all the projects which may give direct or indirect benefits to rail users in the district, the Council is concerned that local stations should benefit from improved services. However, services depend not only on the rail infrastructure but on the train operators too. The Council will therefore closely monitor the current franchises replacement programme, as the new franchises will specify the required service levels. Existing conditions at some stations in the district, in particular those which are not permanently staffed,

are poor, with specific concerns about safety. With so much attention being drawn to major projects elsewhere, it is essential to maintain pressure for improvements to local stations. Thus the Council will work with the County Council, Railtrack and the train operating companies to secure improvements to local railway stations to provide a safe and pleasant environment for travellers and good interchange facilities.

Passenger Transport Interchanges

- 6.33 In order for passenger transport to be attractive and effective there needs to be easy interchange between the various modes of travel, with a safe and secure environment for travellers and a good information service. The building of the Howard Centre in Welwyn Garden City gave the Council the opportunity to secure a new bus station and rail travel centre in close proximity to each other and to car parks in the town centre. Facilities for taxis have proved less satisfactory, but the Council is seeking better arrangements for these.
- 6.34 By comparison, in Hatfield, the distance separating the railway station from the town centre means that the same level of integration of passenger transport services is not possible. However, within the town centre there is an opportunity to create a bus interchange and this is an objective of town centre regeneration strategy set out in the Retailing and Town Centres chapter. The provision of new services to the Hatfield Aerodrome development should offer the opportunity to provide a strategic transport corridor between that area, the town centre and the railway station, which will help to overcome the physical separation. In line with the priority to be given to walking and cycling and the aim to integrate modes, the Council will also wish to see better linkages between the cycle and footpath network and passenger transport interchanges.

Policy M10 - Passenger Transport Interchanges

The Council will work with the County Council and passenger transport operators to seek improvements to passenger transport interchanges that will improve accessibility within the district, through the Local Transport Plan and where appropriate developer contributions.

Freight Transport

- 6.35 A considerable volume and range of freight is hauled by road because of the convenience of door to door delivery. Much freight passes through the district en route to other destinations on the motorway network. Where road haulage continues the Council wishes to see it on primary routes. These are the motorways, trunk roads and the more important County "A" roads built to 70mph standards, which avoid towns and villages.
- 6.36 The use of the railways for freight transport is less environmentally damaging than using road transport. The Council will support rail operators in seeking to increase opportunities for rail freight, subject to its impact on passenger services and people living close to railway lines. In order to facilitate rail freight the Council will support the provision of more facilities for the transfer of freight onto rail transport.

Policy M11 - Rail Freight Depots

The Council will work with the County Council, Railtrack, the Strategic Rail Authority and railfreight operators to ensure that the potential for transfer of freight movements from road to rail is maximised. The Council will identify and where appropriate protect sites which could be critical in developing infrastructure for the movement of freight, and support the establishment of railfreight terminals taking into account local employment uses, environmental impact and the suitability of the local road network to accommodate collection and distribution vehicles.

Transport Land

6.37 In the past land no longer required for transport purposes has been developed or used for alternative purposes appropriate to the location. Thus in many places operational transport land, such as rail freight depots, former rail sidings and bus depots, have been lost forever. However, with the reassertion of the importance of passenger transport, every effort now needs to be made to retain appropriate operational transport land for transport uses. The Council would prefer to see redundant or surplus operational transport land remain available for potential future transport uses during the Plan period. However the individual circumstances of each site will be taken into account when considering proposals for development or change of use.

Policy M12 - Operational Transport Land

Where applications are submitted for the redevelopment or change of use of operational transport land, priority will be given for uses related to sustainable transport. Applications for change of use will need to demonstrate that there is no long-term need for the land for transport purposes, taking account of the operator's strategy, the local transport plan and other relevant strategies. Applications for change of use which would benefit from the accessible location and meet sustainable development and integrated transport objectives, will be encouraged.

The Road Network and Traffic Management

6.38 The change in emphasis from roads to a more integrated transport policy does not mean that investment in roads will cease. Government and County Council policy still recognises that the car will remain a vital element of the transport system. However, it does mean that the emphasis will gradually shift from ever increasing road capacity towards improving capacity in other modes of transport.

6.39 One of the functions of traffic management is to do with getting different types of traffic onto appropriate roads. Roads of national importance have local impacts too. There are economic advantages from being located on a strategic network and there can be environmental benefits from the diversion of heavy through traffic away from local roads. However, strategic roads themselves can have adverse environmental impacts on areas through which they pass.

- 6.40 The A1(M) runs north-south through the district. Proposals put forward in the 1990s to ease congestion on the A1(M) by widening it to 3 lanes between junctions 6-8 were supported by the Council, subject to provisos on minimising environmental impact. These proposals have since been deferred pending a study of capacity along the whole of the London-South Midlands corridor, including the A1(M), M1 and M11 routes. This study will look into all modes of travel, including the rail network to identify solutions to the capacity problems, but it is required to make a recommendation on whether the scheme for junctions 6-8 of the A1(M) should go ahead. The Council is aware that the delay in the decision on this scheme adds to the anxiety of those residents who are concerned that their properties might be affected. The Council will continue to lobby for a satisfactory solution to congestion on the A1(M) to be found as soon as possible, through the early completion of the London-South Midlands Multi-Modal study.
- 6.41 Another government commissioned study, the Orbit Study, looked at existing problems of orbital travel around London, to see what could be done to address them. The Orbit Study produced a long-term strategy for the better management of the M25 and considered a wider corridor. The Council will also support the County Council in examining opportunities to improve east-west routes within Hertfordshire which will bring benefits to the district.

Motorway Service Areas

- 6.42 Government policy on motorway service areas (MSAs) is to concentrate on completing a national network of MSAs at 30-mile intervals. Infilling at around 15 mile intervals should only be granted exceptionally where a clear and compelling need and safety case has been established.
- 6.43 There is a comprehensive MSA, including a hotel, adjacent to the A1(M)/M25 interchange at South Mimms, in the Borough of Hertsmere, south of Welwyn Hatfield District. The lengths of the A1(M) and M25 passing through the district fall within the fifteen-mile catchment of the South Mimms MSA. Furthermore the most suitable locations for additional MSAs are all located in the Green Belt, where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. It is therefore highly unlikely that proposals for a new MSA in this district will be required or acceptable.

Policy M13 - Motorway Service Areas

Proposals for new motorway service areas within the district will only be permitted where all of the following criteria can be satisfied:

- (i) It can be shown that there is an overriding need to make such provision within 15 miles of the existing facility;**
- (ii) If the proposed location is within the green belt the developer will be expected to demonstrate the very special circumstances which exist to override green belt policy;**
- (iii) If the proposed site is at an existing motorway junction, the developer will be expected to demonstrate that no other site is**

available and that steps will be taken to mitigate the likely impact of the development;

- (iv) That the proposals do not include features such as significant hotel, leisure or conference facilities, which may cause the service area to become a destination in its own right.**

Traffic Management

- 6.44 The County Council's policy, as the Local Highway Authority, is to channel traffic onto appropriate routes within the highway network, which comprises a variety of routes from motorways down to local distributor and access roads. This requires roads to be designed to appropriate engineering standards to establish the correct priority. The Council supports this approach. Whereas roads in new developments can be designed to give priority to non-car users, existing residential areas and shopping centres, which were built with general purpose roads, may require the introduction of traffic calming and other management measures, in order to change priorities.
- 6.45 As part of the studies being conducted on the two town centres, the Council is looking at movement and traffic and will bring forward proposals to improve priority and access for non-car modes. Traffic and parking arrangements at some of the neighbourhood shopping centres also require review. In a number of areas conditions are difficult in residential streets served by general-purpose roads. There is conflict between the interests of pedestrians and cyclists, parked cars, buses, delivery and service vehicles and people using the road as a through route. The Council will work with the County Council to bring forward highway schemes to calm traffic, increase safety for all road users and make visual and other improvements to the environment. In the past a solution to conflicting users has been to segregate the different modes and to introduce physical methods of traffic calming. Increasingly the solution is being sought by mixing modes and requiring a greater duty of care from motor vehicle users. For example, the concept of 'Home Zones' is being promoted nationally, for residential areas where non-motorised movement is given precedence, reinforced by low speed limits, revised carriageway alignment, the location of parking bays, and new landscaping which includes planting, sitting out areas and play equipment. The Council supports this initiative and will look for opportunities where it can be applied in the district.

Parking

- 6.46 The availability of car parking has a major influence on the choice of means of transport. Car parking can also take up a large amount of space in developments and reduce densities. Government policy sees reducing the level of parking in new development as essential in promoting sustainable travel choices, making the best use of land and tackling congestion. It considers it necessary to achieve lower levels of parking in association with development than has generally been achieved in the past. Accordingly, PPG3 includes a maximum advisory parking standard for residential development and similar national maximum standards are expected to be identified for other land uses, through revisions to PPGs or in the new RPG9

for the South East. Policy 25 of the County Structure Plan also promotes a restraint-based approach to car parking.

- 6.47 The Council supports this approach to parking, but any restraint in car parking needs to be introduced carefully. Reducing or preventing car parking in one area, can push the problem elsewhere. Where non-residential parking is concerned, for businesses and in town centres, too restrictive a regime can threaten the viability and competitiveness of the economy, where business and development could be drawn away to other areas which are more lenient with provision. Moreover, restraining car parking can only work where there are improvements in the quality and availability of other modes of transport, at which other policies in this chapter are aimed.
- 6.48 In order to have effective policies on parking they need to be set in the context of an overall parking strategy. The Council intends to produce such a strategy for Welwyn Hatfield. It will cover not only the provision of parking in new development but the management of existing parking, both on- and off-street to meet a variety of objectives, covering the range of different users, and using a variety of tools including pricing and time controls. Because the subject extends beyond the remit of a land use plan, the parking strategy will have to be in the form of a corporate document, setting a wider framework for policies in this Plan. It will anticipate the side effects of addressing specific problems and will identify appropriate remedial solutions.
- 6.49 Parking standards for the district are set out in the Council's supplementary planning guidance (SPG) on parking, which is based on the guidance prepared by the County Council to supplement Structure Plan Policy 25 and ensure countywide consistency. They include provision for powered two-wheelers. In addition, in order to ensure accessibility for all, dedicated parking provision will be required for people with mobility problems. At the same time to ensure greater provision is made for good quality cycle parking, the standards seek provision for cycle parking. The standards for car parking and for powered two-wheelers represent the maximum provision that will be permitted in new development. However, the standards for disabled people and for cycle parking represent the minimum standards.
- 6.50 The standards for parking provision for non-residential uses, set out in the Council's SPG, are demand-based and therefore should meet needs without resulting in over-provision. In rural areas they will normally apply directly to all new non-residential development. Within the district's urban areas, in locations where there is good accessibility by non-car modes and which are economically buoyant, the standards for non-residential uses will be the starting point for applying progressive reductions in on-site parking. The supplementary planning guidance sets out the approach for reduced parking in these areas. It identifies the zones where different percentage reductions can be made. Under this approach rural areas would be allowed the full maximum demand based standard. At the other extreme, in town centre locations with a thriving economy and access to a range of non-car alternatives, fewer non-operational parking spaces would be needed and the provision for new developments could be a reduced by up to 50% of the maximum standard.

- 6.51 Residential development will generally be expected to accommodate all parking on-site and full provision to the maximum standard will be the norm. The standards set out in the supplementary guidance reflect the expected lower levels of demand associated with certain categories such as housing for the elderly. Significantly lower levels of parking provision may be acceptable where demand is likely to be less and any tendency for overspill on-street is or can be controlled e.g. high density housing in town centres, near rail stations or housing over shops. The Council will support 'car-free' developments where tenants, lessees or purchasers have entered legally binding agreements that they will forgo car ownership.

Policy M14 - Parking Standards For New Development

The Council will require parking provision for new development to be made in accordance with the standards set out in the Council's supplementary planning guidance on parking. These standards represent the maximum allowable provision, except for cycle parking and car parking for disabled people where the standards represent the minimum allowable.

In urban areas of the district which are accessible by non-car modes, the Council will require parking standards for non-residential development to be reduced below the maximum allowable provision, in line with the methodology set out in the supplementary planning guidance on parking, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such a limitation to the development would be detrimental to the economic viability of the area. The zones where such reductions will be applied are identified in the supplementary planning guidance.

Aviation

- 6.52 There is one remaining active airfield in the district at Panshanger, which was formerly a military airfield but was granted planning permission as a civil airfield in 1954 for use by light aircraft. Since then the Panshanger residential area has been developed and now borders the airfield. The airfield is identified in the Plan as an area of special restraint and has been since 1993. This means that it has been safeguarded for potential future development needs in the district beyond the period of this Plan. As such its release for development will be a matter for consideration in a future review of the Plan.
- 6.53 Meanwhile, there are increasing concerns about the effect of aircraft noise from the airfield on residents in Panshanger and surrounding villages. The Council will therefore continue to monitor its use to ensure that it is being operated within the terms of its planning permission and within acceptable noise levels on the ground. However, the Council cannot act against aircraft in flight. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulates controlled airspace, uncontrolled air space being regulated by the Air Navigation Order and other national and international regulations. The CAA, based on aviation safety criteria, licenses the airfield and does not have responsibility for environmental issues. The Council will not permit any expansion of facilities

or intensification of the use of the airfield beyond the limits of the existing planning permission.

Policy M15 - Panshanger Airfield

The Council will monitor the use of Panshanger Airfield and will not permit any expansion of its facilities nor its use for flying activities beyond that allowed by its existing planning permission.

DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

- 7.1 Design is not only concerned with how places look but with how places work and are used by people. It is to do with the interaction between people and places, the built form, movement in and around this form and the natural environment.
- 7.2 Design is an integral part of creating sustainable environments; it can aid with the careful use of natural resources and help with social progress. A poor environment can affect the quality of life of residents; good design can help improve the environment and help create lively places with well-used safe and accessible streets and spaces.
- 7.3 This chapter sets out the major design principles and policies that need to be considered within the district to ensure the highest quality of design in all new developments, to preserve and enhance the overall quality of design in the district.

ISSUES

- 7.4 The value of urban design and its role in the planning system has become increasingly important in the past few years. The Government's 'Quality in Town and Country' initiative in 1996 and the Urban Design Campaign marked a turnaround in government thinking. The quality of design in new development is now recognised as one of the three key aims of the planning system with which local authorities should be concerned. Good design will help to encourage more sustainable and viable communities for the future.
- 7.5 Over the past few years, the Government has paid increasing attention to the design and sustainability of settlements. In the past, greater attention was paid to preserving and enhancing 'special areas', such as Conservation Areas (i.e. 'making the best better') and less regard was paid to the other areas, which were often those that needed time and money spent on them. Current government policy aims to enhance the vitality and viability of urban areas by improving urban design and encouraging the use of previously developed land without causing town cramming. Whilst raising residential densities is important, the quality of design of such developments is equally if not more important.
- 7.6 The publication of the revised PPG1 in 1997 gave a high priority to design in planning. The latest versions of other PPGs, in particular PPG3, have also given an increased importance to the quality of design in new development. In summary, government guidance on design promotes:
 - High quality, mixed use developments;
 - That the design of buildings and urban design both require an understanding of the context in which the development takes place;
 - That good design can promote sustainability, improve the environment, attract business and investment and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place;

- Attention should be paid and weight given to the impact of new development on existing buildings;
- New residential development should be well designed, concentrated principally in existing urban areas and make a significant contribution to promoting urban renaissance;
- The need to travel, in particular by car, should be reduced by influencing the location of different types of development and fostering forms of development which encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
- That landscaping should play an integral part in all new development;
- That applicants for planning permission should be able to demonstrate how the need for good design has been taken account of in development proposals and that regard has been paid to relevant planning policies, design guidance and good practice guidance;
- Local authorities should reject poor design, but should not impose a particular taste or style on development, unless it is to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness.

7.7 In addition to the PPGs, other reports and guidance have been published which seek to raise design quality. The Urban Task Force report, published in June 1999, recognises the importance of design excellence in producing sustainable development, as well as social inclusion and environmental responsibility. This has been reflected in the Government's Urban White Paper, 'Our Towns and Cities: The Future' published in November 2000. More detailed design guidance can be found in 'By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice', published in May 2000 by DETR and CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) and also in 'By Design: Better Places to Live' published in September 2001 by the DTLR and CABE, which is a companion guide to PPG3. The County Structure Plan states that the design of development will be expected to help achieve the sustainability aims and objectives of the Plan.

7.8 The Crime and Disorder Act introduced by the Government in 1998 obliges local authorities to take account of community safety in its plans and decisions. 'Designing out Crime' is an important element of good design, to make environments safer and enable people using them to feel safe. Circular 5/94, 'Planning Out Crime' contains further information on this and developers may also wish to contact the Hertfordshire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer before submitting planning applications.

7.9 In the past the emphasis has been on preserving and enhancing 'special' areas with recognised quality such as Conservation Areas, i.e. making the best better, but it is now recognised that high quality design should be incorporated in all new development. Also, up to now rigid, quantitative standards have been applied to design, resulting in development which is often stifled in terms of imaginative and innovative design and is of a mediocre standard.

STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

- 7.10 The strategy and objectives of the Plan for design are set out below:
- (a) To ensure the highest quality of design in all new developments to help create vital and viable environments in which to live, work, shop, spend leisure time and invest;
 - (b) The design of new developments will be expected to respect and enhance local distinctiveness and character, whilst allowing for innovative design and new technology to be used;
 - (c) Applicants for planning permission will be expected to show how their proposals meet the design principles and policies in the Plan and the Supplementary Design Guidance.

POLICIES

Quality of Design

- 7.11 The quality of design in parts of the district is historically of a high quality and the Council wish to see good quality design in all new developments in the district. The district is home to two planned towns; Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City, which is internationally famed as an example of a Garden City. In the towns can be seen some early examples of good urban design; the importance of this should be built on to make the whole district a good example of urban design.
- 7.12 The architecture of all new development should contribute to the quality of design in the district, be appropriate to the setting and context of the area of development and be of the highest standard.
- 7.13 The good quality design of new developments should help promote sustainable development, improve and enhance the quality of the existing environment, attract business and investment into the district and help reinforce civic pride and create a sense of place. Good design should help public acceptance of necessary new development.

Policy D1: Quality of Design

The Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. The design of new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan and the guidance contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance.

Design Principles

- 7.14 The Council has adopted a design-led approach to new development, in which it will seek to apply the following design principles:
- *Character*
 - *Continuity and Enclosure*
 - *Quality of the Public Realm*

- *Ease of Movement*
- *Legibility*
- *Adaptability*
- *Diversity*

7.15 Developments which take account of these principles should promote sustainable, more responsive environments which will in turn provide a better quality of life for those who live and work in the district. These principles are explained more fully below with further information on how to achieve them in the Supplementary Design Guidance.

Character and Context

- 7.16 The context of a site i.e. the character and setting of the area in which it is located is crucial, and a clear understanding and appreciation of this in the design of new development is the starting point for creating distinctive and attractive places.
- 7.17 Character is one of the main issues affecting design in this district. Welwyn Hatfield has a diverse character comprising of both urban and rural settings, and settlements of different sizes and ages. Within both these settings there are different character areas, therefore each development has a unique context.
- 7.18 New development should respect and relate to the area in which it is proposed. This is not to say that new development must mirror the local character, rather that it must be sensitive to it and not harm it. It should seek to enhance key characteristics which contribute to the landscape and architectural quality. Where an area is accepted as being of poor quality and undistinguished, the challenge is to create a new area of distinctiveness and quality. Character and innovation can exist together with old and new buildings fitting together provided they are carefully designed. Innovative design that has similar scale and massing to the existing will be welcomed where it enhances the character of the area.
- 7.19 In considering the character and context of an area, account should be taken of its history, the geography and geology of the area, the landform of a site, the existing vegetation and landscaping, including trees, the existing street layout and pattern and form of building, and use of space, the local materials, the scale, height and massing of the built form and boundary treatments, and of any distinctive architectural and landscape quality and features such as trees, fenestration and brickwork. Further guidance can be found in the Supplementary Design Guidance.
- 7.20 Where other Supplementary Planning Guidance has been adopted such as Village Design Statements, Character Appraisals and Landscape Character Area Statements, these should also be used as a principal source of information about the design context of the development. Policy R24 states that character appraisals will be produced for the Conservation Areas, and these appraisals should be used to help new development proposed in Conservation Areas respect and relate to the area. In addition, design statements accompanying planning applications for development should

demonstrate that the developer has taken character and context into account. Further guidance can be found in the Supplementary Design Guide.

Policy D2: Character and Context

The Council will require all new development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. Development proposals should as a minimum maintain, and where possible, should enhance or improve the character of the existing area.

Continuity and Enclosure

- 7.21 This helps distinguish between public and private spaces. All developments should promote the continuity of street frontages, with buildings that clearly define public and private spaces and give enclosure to the public realm whilst promoting safety and security.
- 7.22 The means of enclosure should provide both privacy and security without becoming a dominant visual feature of the site. Regard should be paid to the character of the area when choosing the form of enclosure to be incorporated.
- 7.23 New development should:
- Relate to the line of the buildings in the street and provide an active and where possible continuous street frontage;
 - Incorporate pedestrian access from the street rather than from the rear or from internal courtyards;
 - Have distinctive fronts and backs;
 - Define and enclose private space to the rear of buildings;
 - Define open spaces and streets i.e. by the use of appropriately scaled buildings and trees;
 - Clearly define the relationship between the fronts of buildings and the street.

Policy D3: Continuity and Enclosure

The Council will require all new development to incorporate the principles of continuity and enclosure to distinguish between public and private spaces.

Quality of the Public Realm

- 7.24 Historically, the public realm has been important in the district, particularly in the central open space areas of the planned settlements. It is important that any development which incorporates public realm is well designed to ensure that the public areas are both attractive and successful, i.e. the space is usable by every sector of the population. Public areas must not be land which is left over after the buildings have been designed, but should be designed to form a part of and feature of the development. Where possible the open spaces should have natural surveillance; this will make them both feel and be safer. Design of the Public Realm should also meet the requirements of Policy D8 on Landscaping.

- 7.25 Developments will be expected to enhance the public realm by:
- Being accessible to all;
 - Ensuring that the ground floor use of units in central areas creates activity and interest;
 - Incorporating spaces into the design of developments so that they are not simply left over spaces;
 - Ensuring that the design provides natural surveillance over public spaces and areas;
 - Taking the microclimate into account in the orientation and design of buildings and spaces;
 - Integrating street furniture and public art into the design of development to give areas identity.

Policy D4: Quality of the Public Realm

The Council will expect new development where appropriate to either create or enhance public areas and the public realm.

Design For and Ease of Movement

- 7.26 It is important that all new development helps create places which are both easy to get to and move through. It should be remembered that streets are more than just channels for vehicles; they should offer a safe and attractive environment for all users to help make going outside a safe and pleasant experience. It is essential that transport routes reflect urban design qualities and not just traffic considerations, i.e. a street should be a public space.
- 7.27 One of the main priorities of the Plan is to reduce dependence on the car and encourage the use of other more sustainable forms of transport including walking, cycling and passenger transport. The impact of this on the design of new developments is that highway engineering standards should no longer be the starting point in the design of layouts. Encouragement will be given to schemes that give maximum space to pedestrians and cyclists and minimum space to the car.
- 7.28 A well-designed urban structure has a network of routes and spaces allowing for use by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, with that order of priority. All new routes should connect to existing routes and movement patterns and where possible follow established short cuts. The design of a street layout should where possible include public transport facilities, and walking distances between major land uses and public transport stops should be minimised to encourage the use of public transport and make it more popular.
- 7.29 Whilst the Council is keen to ensure that design is not dominated by roads and provision for the car user, it must be remembered that it is unrealistic to design out the car and therefore parking provision should be incorporated as an integral part of design. In commercial, business and leisure developments this should be carefully designed to prevent an over dominance of car parking and in residential developments the parking may either be within the curtilage of development or in carefully designed parking courts.

Policy D5: Design For Movement

The Council will require all new development to take account of its impact on existing and proposed movement patterns. New development will be required to make provision for pedestrian, cyclist and passenger transport facilities. Parking and traffic management provision must be included in new development.

Legibility

- 7.30 A legible place is one which has a clear identity and which is easy to understand i.e. the ability to recognise where you are and where you can go in a development. This can be achieved by creating interesting places and views between the most important parts of the site. Traditional urban design features, such as landmark buildings, good views and a variety of roads radiating from one point will help people recognise where they are at all times and to distinguish one place from another. Roads and footpaths, and areas of public and private open space will need to be clearly identified to encourage confidence, legibility and safety.
- 7.31 All new developments in the district, especially large scale ones, should reinforce the identity of the district and be clearly legible to the user.
- 7.32 New development will be expected to:
- Be sited to respect and enhance existing views and vistas or create new ones;
 - Position buildings with active uses at junctions or nodal points;
 - Pay careful attention to the design of corner developments and ensure they are interesting and distinctive and become points of local identity;
 - Aid legibility through the use of detailing and materials, particularly at ground level.

Policy D6: Legibility

The Council will require all new development to enhance and contribute to the legibility of the development itself and of the area in which it is located.

Adaptability

- 7.33 Adaptability of development is allowing for change relatively easily, i.e. the most successful places are those that have prospered in changing circumstances. Developments should promote flexible and versatile buildings and open spaces that can respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions; this avoids large scale blight and dereliction and the need for comprehensive redevelopment. Within the district, areas such as the town centres and employment areas need to be able to adapt and respond to changes in economic climates resulting in the rise and decline of industries and changes in demand for housing, workspace, infrastructure and buildings. (See Policy EMP13 in Chapter 12 Employment).
- 7.34 Residential development needs to be able to adapt to the occupiers' changing needs such as working from home or changes in requirements due to health

and age changes, or through permanent or temporary disability. This adaptability can be found by building to Lifetime Homes standards (see Policy H10 in Chapter 9 Housing).

Diversity

7.35 The Council considers it important that the area is diverse and is able to provide choice and variety to the user. Developments should promote a fine-grained mix of uses, users and forms that serve to create important, sustainable places. How well used a place is, can be affected by the mix of uses (within a building, street or area) and what economic and social activities the place supports. Mixed uses can occur and be appropriate at a variety of scales: within a building, a street, neighbourhood, village or town. The Plan identifies particular areas where mixed uses may be appropriate such as the town and neighbourhood centres e.g. Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City and Hilltop in Hatfield. In town centres residential use provides customers for shops, makes use of space above shops and generates activity when shops are closed, whilst in residential areas, workplaces and other commercial uses can create activity within otherwise predominantly dormitory areas i.e. live work units (see Policy EMP14 in Chapter 12 Employment). Within residential areas a variety of tenures and mix of unit sizes can help create diversity (see Policy H8 in Chapter 9 Housing). Mixed-use development can be particularly good in higher density and more accessible locations and can help provide choice and variety.

Other Design Policies

7.36 Whilst all developments will be expected to conform to the Design Principles, there are other design policies which are applicable to all development in the district and which development should conform to. These policies are set out below; information on more specific design standards can be found in the Supplementary Design Guidance.

7.37 The Supplementary Design Guidance includes information on:

- Design principles: additional information to that above
- Energy efficiency including passive solar design
- Noise
- Sunlight and daylight
- Servicing and access
- Residential extensions
- Gardens and communal areas
- Overlooking and privacy
- Advertisements; general, in Conservation areas and in Welwyn Garden City Town Centre
- Shop front design
- Security shutters and grilles

- Blinds, awnings and canopies
- Development briefs

Information and policies on energy efficiency, waste and water conservation can be found in Chapter 5 Resources.

Designing Out Crime

7.38 The Council considers it important that all new development has regard to the safety of residents and users in its design and layout. Well-designed development can reduce the opportunity for crime and therefore reduce the fear of crime. One of the main ways of reducing crime is to allow natural or casual observation over the public realm and to ensure the separation of private and public space. Natural surveillance is a form of natural policing. With distinct separation between the fronts and backs of buildings, there should be no exposed private areas which could be accessed by criminals, and all the private areas should be overlooked, taking account of the need for privacy. Care needs to be taken in the planning of communal parking and entrances as they may lead to confusion over ownership and responsibilities which can lead to less effective security. Landscaping schemes should not obliterate public areas from natural vision and the possible mature size of plants should be taken into account in planting schemes. In considering design, the advice in Circular 5/94, 'Planning Out Crime' should be taken into account and developers may also contact the Hertfordshire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer before submitting planning applications. However, the approach adopted should be sufficiently flexible to allow solutions to remain sensitive to local circumstances.

Policy D7: Safety by Design

The Council requires the design of new development to contribute to safer communities, to help with the reduction of the fear of crime.

Landscaping

7.39 The design and use of spaces between and around buildings are as important as the design of the buildings. A poorly landscaped, leftover piece of land will detract from the quality of the built environment. A carefully landscaped piece of open space will benefit local residents and users both in terms of amenity land and in providing a buffer between the development and adjoining land. The incorporation of landscaping is important for increasing biodiversity and habitats and encouraging wildlife into urban areas. Within the district, particularly in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, there is a strong tradition of verges which the Council wish to see replicated in new development. The Council will expect landscaping schemes to incorporate native British species and, where possible, those commonly found in Hertfordshire, as well as those that are drought tolerant, low maintenance and beneficial to wildlife. All new landscaping schemes should be generous and not token.

7.40 Where established planting is removed to allow for development, the Council will expect a replacement planting scheme to be incorporated in the development proposals. The replacement planting should be appropriate and

equivalent to that which is lost, however, it may be appropriate to replace a mature tree with an equivalent biomass of vegetation.

- 7.41 The Council will require detailed site surveys, in accordance with British Standards guidelines, to ensure the retention of trees, hedgerows and woodland on proposed development sites. If important trees or hedges appear to be under threat from the proposals the Council may request for the development to be redesigned around them. Special measures should be used to protect trees during the course of development such as fencing off. The Council will ensure that existing and new planting is managed through the preparation and undertaking of a maintenance schedule.

Policy D8: Landscaping

All development, other than changes of use of buildings, should include landscaping as an integral part of the overall design. This should reflect the strong tradition of urban landscape design in the district.

Landscaping schemes will require the use of materials which respect the character of the area, the planting of trees, hedgerows and shrubs and details of future maintenance. The retention and enhancement of existing key landscape features such as trees and shrubs, ponds and watercourses will be expected where feasible; where this is not possible, replacement planting should be carried out.

The design of landscaped areas should be such that maintenance is straightforward. On larger schemes, certain landscaped areas will be required to be designed in a manner capable of adoption.

Tree Preservation Orders or planning conditions may be used to ensure continued future protection of particular trees, groups of trees or woodlands.

Access and Design for People with Disabilities

- 7.42 In the past, people with disabilities and mobility problems were often deprived of the opportunity to use a public facility, area or building because of inconsiderate design. More recently, changes in Building Regulations, the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act and increased awareness of disability, have led to buildings designed with better and more direct access for the disabled.
- 7.43 Applicants and developers must consider the needs of people with disabilities and impaired mobility at the earliest opportunity. Part M of the Building Regulations 1991, as amended by the Building Regulations (Amendment) 1998, came into effect on 25 October 1999 and is concerned with access and facilities for disabled people. The regulations include access to a building from the entrance to the site curtilage, the car parking on site and also that the external circulation between the parts of a building is suitable. The provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 required that by 2004, all public buildings have to be accessible to all.

- 7.44 The Council considers that every opportunity should be taken to improve access provision for all sections of the community and will undertake to support initiatives such as the Shopmobility scheme for major retail areas.

Policy D9: Access and Design for People with Disabilities

All new development should be designed to allow access by the disabled, young children in prams and pushchairs and those who are temporarily disabled through accident or injury. This includes access required to the site and access within the buildings and open spaces on the site. The Council will continue to provide for the movement needs of people with mobility restrictions in existing and proposed public areas and will support the promotion of mobility initiatives wherever possible.

Public Art

- 7.45 The provision of works of art in public areas and spaces can be an effective way of reinforcing or establishing the character of a particular area and creating a sense of place and civic pride. The Council will therefore encourage the use of such works of art which may take a number of forms from street furniture to major sculpture. The Council will encourage developers to commission and contribute towards the provision of public works of art for display adjacent to public buildings, business developments, street scenes and public open spaces.

Policy D10: Public Art

The Council will expect developers to include, as appropriate, the provision of an element of public art within proposals for new development.

Design Statements

- 7.46 The Council believes that all developers should be held responsible for design of their developments. The Council expects developers to take account of the design principles and policies in this Plan and the guidance in the Supplementary Design Guidance, when drawing up their proposals. This responsibility is reinforced by PPG1 which states that applicants for planning permission should be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design in their proposals and that they have had regard to relevant development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance.
- 7.47 To aid good design, the Council will expect developers to submit a design statement with planning applications for residential developments or for business and commercial developments. The design statement should justify the design approach used in the proposed development, how it accords with the design principles and guidance set out in the Plan and how the design responds to the local character and context of the area in which the site is located. The design of extensions or alterations to houses are also important. To aid good design, the Council will consider householder applications using a design checklist.
- 7.48 The following extract from the DETR's publication 'By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice' (May 2000) provides an

initial guide on the content of design statements. It says, '*Design statements should explain the design principles and the design concept and explain how the design relates to its wider context (through a full context appraisal where appropriate). The written design statement should be illustrated as appropriate by plans and elevations, photographs of the site and its surroundings and other illustrations such as perspectives.*'

Policy D11: Design Statements

Applicants will be required to submit a design statement with all applications for business, commercial or residential developments.

The statement should justify how the development meets the design principles, policies and guidance set out in the Plan and the Supplementary Design Guidance.

Householder applications will be considered against a design checklist.

Development Briefs

- 7.49 The development briefing process is designed to assist developers in providing detailed advice on appropriate and acceptable development solutions at an early stage in the planning process. This is done by interpreting the relevant development plan policies for the site and the characteristics of the site and its location, to ensure a high quality built environment which contributes to the local community. This approach reduces uncertainty for developers, by informing them about the constraints and opportunities presented by the site and the type of development expected by the local planning authority. It also improves the efficiency with which the subsequent applications can be considered by reducing negotiation time.
- 7.50 Each site will be unique and it is therefore expected that each development brief will be similarly unique, responding to the nature, size, ownership and location of the site. Although it is expected that each brief will be different, there are essential steps in the process of development briefing that are common to the preparation of each brief. More information as to what should be included in development briefs can be found in the Supplementary Design Guidance.
- 7.51 Where developers and/or landowners wish to prepare a brief, this must be done in consultation with the Council. All development briefs will be subject to public consultation before they are adopted.

Policy D12: Development Briefs

The Council will require development briefs for sites proposed for major residential, commercial, business, or mixed use schemes and any other sites for which it is felt to be appropriate.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 The strategy and policies of this Plan provide a framework for securing a more sustainable pattern of development in the district and, thereby, improving quality of life. However, if this is to be achieved the Plan must be effectively implemented and the impact of its policies must be monitored to measure whether they are meeting their objectives. This chapter explains what actions will be taken to put the Plan into effect and to monitor its progress.

POLICIES

Role of the Council and Other Agencies in Implementation

- 8.2 The successful implementation of the Plan will depend on the actions of a number of organisations and individuals. As the local planning authority the Council will have a major role. It will use its development control powers to grant or refuse planning permission for development and in doing so it will seek to determine proposals in accordance with the policies in the Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant and reasonable conditions will be attached to permissions, where necessary, to regulate the form and use of the development.
- 8.3 In addition, the Council can use its own resources of finance and land to facilitate development or bring about physical improvements. Where resources allow, the Council will commit expenditure to secure specific policy objectives.
- 8.4 However, it has to be recognised that the Council has limited resources and can only act within its statutory powers. Many services and proposals are the responsibility of other agencies or tiers of government. Therefore, a key role for the Council will be that of an enabler, working in partnership with these agencies to co-ordinate programmes and encourage investment to meet the needs of the community and help achieve the objectives and policies of the Plan. This may be on individual projects and area-wide or issue-based strategies.
- 8.5 The Council already has a number of partnerships established through which it will continue to work in this way. These include the Welwyn Hatfield Area Regeneration Partnership (WHARP), through which it is developing a regeneration strategy for Hatfield, and the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Forum, through which the town centre strategy has been devised. Other issue-based strategies already exist, listed in the Introduction to the Plan (paragraph 1.17), which have been taken into account in preparing the Plan and demonstrate how the actions of other agencies will help to implement the Plan. During the course of the Plan period, some of these strategies will need to be reviewed and new ones drawn up, as mentioned in other policies in the Plan and to satisfy the Government's requirement for Community Plans and the Structure Plan's aspiration for comprehensive settlement appraisals. In all cases, the Council will expect the Plan to provide the framework for any land

use related proposals and investment decisions in these strategies and will expect other agencies' land use proposals to be led by this Plan.

Policy IM1 - Non-Land Use Strategies

The Council will, where appropriate, bring forward and work with other agencies to formulate strategies to assist in implementing the policies and proposals contained in this Plan. In all cases the Council will expect policies or proposals with land use implications in these strategies to accord with this Plan.

Planning Obligations

- 8.6 Private sector investment will remain the most significant means by which policies of the Plan are implemented, from small extensions through to major housing and employment developments. Some developments can result in social, environmental and infrastructure costs to the existing community, such as placing additional demands on transport services, schools, community facilities and so on. Where this is the case, government guidance in Circular 1/97 provides for the use of 'Planning Obligations', whereby a developer agrees with the local authority to contribute towards these costs. The Council considers it essential that a development provides for the infrastructure, facilities and amenities needed to support it and makes appropriate provision to mitigate any possible adverse environmental impact.
- 8.7 In assessing the type and scale of contribution required for a development, the Council will have regard to advice in Circular 1/97 and any subsequent guidance or legislation. This states that obligations should only be sought where they are necessary to the granting of planning permission, relevant to planning, related to the development permitted and reasonable. It also states that obligations can be provided either directly by the developer on or off site or by means of financial payment to the local authority to make the necessary provision.
- 8.8 The nature of any contribution or obligation will vary according to the scale and type of development proposed and will therefore need to be assessed at the time the application is made, in consultation with the relevant service providing agencies, and agreed through negotiation with the developer. However, as a general guide, the types of infrastructure or facilities for which the Council considers development should be obliged to provide include:
- (a) Transport infrastructure or services, including new or improvements to existing footpaths, cycleways, roads and bus services and their associated infrastructure, to link development to surrounding areas and ensure it is accessible by all modes of travel;
 - (b) Affordable and special needs housing where there is a proven local need;
 - (c) Education facilities to meet any expected shortage in school places arising from the development;
 - (d) Community facilities, including buildings and play or open space, where existing provision is inadequate to provide for the new development;

- (e) Environmental improvements where necessary to mitigate the impact of a development or integrate it with surrounding areas;
- (f) Training, local employment and other economic development initiatives to improve local access to any employment provided by a new development.

8.9 Developers must also provide necessary infrastructure for water supplies and sewage disposal, which is covered by other legislation. Proposals for the reform of the planning obligations system were published by the DTLR in December 2001. Should this result in changes to the legislation or guidance governing planning obligations, the Council may need to bring forward alterations to this section of the Plan.

Policy IM2 - Planning Obligations

In order to satisfy the sustainability aims of the Plan and secure the proper planning of the area, development will be required to provide for the infrastructure, services and facilities which are directly related to it and necessary to the granting of planning permission. Developers will be required to provide or finance the cost of all such provision which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, including:

- (i) **On-site facilities directly related to the proposed development in the interests of proper planning and to mitigate any possible adverse environmental impact;**
- (ii) **Off-site improvements, services and facilities necessary as a result of the development in order to avoid placing an additional burden on the existing community and to mitigate any possible adverse environmental impact arising from the development; and**
- (iii) **Affordable housing in accordance with Policy H7.**

This will be implemented through planning conditions and obligations agreed between the Council and developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any related or subsequent legislation.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

8.10 The policies and proposals set out in this Plan reflect the circumstances, issues and trends as at 1st April 2000. However, the Plan runs until 2011 and inevitably there will be changes over this period which will have implications for Welwyn Hatfield. These may include changes in:

- (a) Environmental, economic, demographic and social trends at local, national or global levels;
- (b) Local, strategic, national or European policies and legislation.

8.11 It is essential that the Council continues to monitor these factors in order to ensure that the Plan is kept up to date and responds to change and new issues.

- 8.12 Irrespective of any changing circumstances, it is also important the Council keeps under review the effectiveness of the Plan in achieving its aims and objectives. The Council already has systems in place to monitor changes in housing, employment and retail development and works with the County Council and other district councils to monitor ecology and landscape issues. However, the strategy and policies of the Plan set out a clear framework for securing sustainable development in the district. Therefore, the Council will seek to monitor the Plan against a series of environmental, economic and social indicators at the district level, to see whether the Plan is being effective in securing a greater level of sustainability over time. This will be done in partnership with other agencies where necessary. Monitoring will be carried out regularly, following available best practice guidance. Annual Monitoring Reports will be published to explain any progress in or changes against the trends and indicators referred to above.
- 8.13 Where, as a result of monitoring, new policies or guidance are required, the Council will respond through publishing supplementary planning documents or informal policy reviews. Where more fundamental changes to the Plan are required, the Council will prepare Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents as required by the new measures in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Policy IM3 - Monitoring and Review

The Council will monitor and review the policies in this Plan to assess their effectiveness in meeting the aims and objectives of the Plan for sustainable development and to identify any new issues for the Plan to address. Annual monitoring reports will be published indicating changes in national or strategic policy and in economic, social or environmental trends in the district against key indicators. Where necessary the Council will bring forward new policies or guidance through the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents or informal policy reviews. Where more fundamental changes to the Plan are required, limited alterations or a full review will be carried out.