

11.BISHOP'S STORTFORD

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Bishop's Stortford is a prosperous market town of pleasant character set within the attractive countryside of the Stort Valley. Historically sited on an important route intersection, the town continues to evolve today, yet it successfully maintains its medieval heritage for the enjoyment of present and future generations. An extensive Conservation Area, with numerous listed buildings, is centred on the North Street - Bridge Street - Windhill area.

11.1.2 Recent development has been concentrated towards the west and south west of the town, where considerable numbers of homes have been built, to cater both for the needs of the expanding Stansted Airport, which lies only three miles to the north-east of the town, and the town's share of East Herts own needs.

11.1.3 This chapter sets out the planning issues and policies specific to Bishop's Stortford. These seek to make the most of the opportunities which are available for the town, whilst ensuring the retention and enhancement of its existing attractive character.

11.1.4 The aims and objectives of the Local Plan for Bishop's Stortford are as follows:

Aims

- A. To maintain and enhance the attractiveness of Bishop's Stortford as a pleasant place in which to live, grow up, work, shop, and spend leisure time.
- B. To make appropriate provision for the necessary needs of the present and future generations, including those dependent on Stansted Airport, in a way which is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
- C. To further ameliorate the effects of traffic on the town centre.
- D. To maintain the Green Belt surrounding the town.

Objectives

1. To ensure a sufficient supply of housing land is identified for Bishop's Stortford (including that associated with any possible further expansion of Stansted Airport in the Plan period), in accordance with the District Housing Provision Strategy contained in Chapter 3 (Housing).
2. To ensure that development meets the principles of sustainable development, as set out in Chapters 1 (Introduction) and 2 (Sustainable Development) of this Local Plan.
3. To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre through measures to: encourage a range of shops, services, and employment; prevent erosion or dilution of its retail and service function; encourage provision of residential accommodation and diversification of functions and services and, on appropriate sites, a mix of uses; and to maintain the town centre as a social focus for the community.
4. To maintain and encourage employment opportunities for local people, by retaining sufficient employment land and protecting Employment Areas for such purposes, whilst continuing to recognise the growing employment opportunities at Stansted Airport.
5. To assist, through the preparation of development briefs, in the regeneration of derelict, under used or vacant land.
6. To continue to address problems of traffic congestion in the town, through encouraging travel by means other than the car and other appropriate demand management measures.

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7. Where resources permit, to continue to improve the built environment of Bishop's Stortford, through street enhancements and maintenance of its historic character.
8. To maximise the use of previously developed land and other sites within the defined limits of the town for development and restrict to the greatest extent possible the need for 'greenfield' sites (including long-term strategic reserve sites, i.e. the ASR's).
9. To maintain and consolidate the Metropolitan Green Belt around Bishop's Stortford, with additions to it where appropriate.
10. To protect and enhance the River Stort and encourage its use for nature conservation, recreation, transport and other appropriate uses.

11.2 Issues

11.2.1 Continued expansion of Stansted Airport, together with a significant local need for housing, means the key issue and priority for the town in the Plan period will be the accommodation of further residential development and associated infrastructure, including shops and services. This should not, however, be considered as a threat to the quality of the town, but an opportunity to provide for a better overall structure for Bishop's Stortford. The challenge is to take this opportunity created by further development and address the wider, but fundamental needs of the town, in the fields of:

- transportation
- education - both primary and secondary
- leisure and recreation
- community facilities
- sustainability

11.2.2 There is also the added pressure of a growing population in the smaller settlements in nearby west Essex, who will naturally look to Bishop's Stortford as their local centre. This again

has the potential to create opportunities for Bishop's Stortford, but it does also pose problems, and this has to be borne in mind in evolving a development strategy for Bishop's Stortford.

11.3 Settlement Limits

11.3.1 Despite its steady growth Bishop's Stortford has, in the main, been successfully contained within the confines of the valley of the River Stort. The surrounding attractive countryside thereby remains an accessible asset to the town's inhabitants, whilst the town itself remains remarkably well hidden from distant views.

11.3.2 With the exception of most of the area inside the northern bypass, Bishop's Stortford is tightly surrounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Adopted 1st Review Local Plan (Incorporating Alterations) identified a significant amount of land within the northern bypass as five Areas of Special Restraint and an additional Special Countryside Area (see below), all of which were excluded from the Green Belt. This area of non-Green Belt land will not be required in the Plan period, other than for reasons set out in section 11.6.

11.3.3 An area where the Green Belt boundary requires clarification is at Heron Court. This formed part of the Green Belt but housing development took place some time ago. To properly reflect the situation on the ground this area has been removed from the Green Belt and included within the settlement limits of the town.

11.4 Special Countryside Area

11.4.1 As referred to above, within the inner Green Belt boundary around the bypass lies an area of land not comprising an ASR and in respect of which no long-term strategic need has been established. The 1999 Adopted Local Plan identified the land as Special Countryside Area (SCA). The District Council attaches great importance to the retention of this land as open countryside for the foreseeable future.

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BIS1 Special Countryside Area

- (I) The land between ASR3 and the by-pass, as identified on the Proposals Map, is maintained as a Special Countryside Area where the provisions of Policy GBC1 will apply, until such time as a strategic need for development is established.
- (II) The status of the land as a Special Countryside Area shall only be reassessed as a result of a review to this Plan; and only then in the event that strategic planning requirements dictate such a reassessment as being necessary.

11.5 Housing

11.5.1 Based on the Housing Provision Strategy, as outlined in Chapter 3 (Housing), Bishop's Stortford needs to make provision for 1,448 dwellings between 1999 and 2011. Of these, 756 dwellings are to cater for the housing needs of the town and a proportion of the surrounding hinterland. The remaining 692 dwellings are identified for the continued expansion of Stansted Airport, to its currently permitted level of 25 million passengers

per annum within the Plan period. It is expected that affordable housing will be provided in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4 in Chapter 3 (Housing).

11.5.2 The District Council is committed to accommodating as many as possible of its dwelling requirement on appropriate 'brownfield' or 'previously-developed' sites within its towns, including Bishop's Stortford. Brownfield sites in Bishop's Stortford actively supported by the Council for development are detailed in the Policy below, with an indication of the estimated dwelling capacity for each site.

11.5.3 Sites identified in the Deposit Version of the Local Plan, completed between April 1999 and March 2003, have been removed from Policy BIS2 and are detailed on Table 11.1:

11.5.4 Deposit Plan allocated sites, granted planning permission but not completed between April 1999 and March 2003, contributed towards the original required provision and are, therefore, incorporated in Policy BIS2. The remaining Bishop's Stortford provision will come from the other allocated sites listed in Policy BIS2.

Table 11.1 Completed Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2 (b) in Chapter 3, Housing)

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
103/105 London Road	307	Brownfield	N/A	21	0	21

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BIS2 Housing Allocations - Bishop's Stortford

In accordance with Policy HSG2 (II) the following sites, as identified on the Proposals Map, are allocated for residential development:

(I) In Phase 1:

Permitted Deposit Version Housing Allocations (pre-April 2003) (included in Table 3.2 (c-e) in Chapter 3, Housing)

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Hillmead School	195	Brownfield	BIS6	32	11	43
23 North Street	308	Brownfield	N/A	6	0	6
4 Newtown Road	309	Brownfield	N/A	5	0	5
			TOTAL	43	11	54

Remaining Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2 (h) in Chapter 3, Housing)

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Herts & Essex Hospital site	194	Brownfield	BIS4	189	81	270
Goods Yard site, London Road/ former John Dyde Training College site, Anchor Street	190	Brownfield	BIS11	490	210	700
Mill Site, Station Road/Dane Street	187	Brownfield	BIS12	60	40	100
Riverside/ Adderley Road	184	Brownfield	BIS13	105	45	150

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Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Apton Road Car Park (above retained public car park)	179	Brownfield	N/A	10	6	16
117-121 Hadham Road	171	Greenfield	BIS5	10	3	13
95-97 London Road	406	Brownfield	BIS14	91	39	130
			TOTAL	955	424	1,379

(II) In Phase 2:

Remaining Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2 (h) in Chapter 3, Housing)

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Reserve Secondary School site, Hadham Road	164	Greenfield	BIS7	150	100	250
			TOTAL	150	100	250

11.5.5 The dwelling capacity of the sites listed in paragraph 11.5.3 and Policy BIS2 amounts to a total of 1704 units. This is more than sufficient to meet the Bishop's Stortford apportionment of 1448 dwellings (756 plus 692 airport-related dwellings). The provision for the 692 airport-related dwellings is therefore made on the allocated sites contained in Policy BIS2, rather than on the Areas of Special Restraint (ASRs), as has previously been allocated. Nevertheless, while the Council expect the large brownfield town centre sites to come forward within the Plan period and has allocated them accordingly, circumstances may change and it is therefore considered appropriate to retain ASRs 1 and 2 for development should these large town centre sites

not come forward in sufficient quantity. This is considered to be the most appropriate way of ensuring an adequate supply of housing land in Bishop's Stortford. This modest surplus enables a degree of flexibility on the above sites, particularly if the estimated capacities cannot be achieved at the detailed planning consideration stage.

11.5.6 In accordance with Policy HSG2, the above policy permits the release of housing sites in phases. One of the fundamental principles of phasing the release of sites is to protect greenfield/Green Belt land in favour of previously developed/brownfield land. In Bishop's Stortford only two non-previously developed areas of land are identified (see above), though the

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Hillmead site is partially undisturbed land. Of the two greenfield sites, the site of 117-121 Hadham Road is surrounded on all sides by built development, is not currently accessible public land, and is relatively close to the town centre. As such, development in the first phase is not considered to be in conflict with either sustainable development principles or Policy HSG2. In February 2004 the District Council resolved to grant planning permission for residential development on the site, subject to a Section 106 Agreement.

11.5.7 The District Council, therefore, considers that only the Reserve Secondary School site falls in the Phase 2 category, being relatively open and undisturbed.

11.6 Airport-Related Housing

11.6.1 East Hertfordshire has an historical allocation of 3,000 airport-related dwellings dating back to Government decisions in the mid-1980s. 2,500 of these dwellings were to be provided at Bishop's Stortford, while the remaining 500 were to be dispersed within the District. This provision was based mainly on the number of on-airport employees. The actual number of staff employed at the airport (around 10,500 in 2003) is currently significantly below previous estimates of airport-based employment (estimates ranged between 21,300 and 24,300 employees). Of the original total of 2,500 airport-related dwellings, a 'residual' 692 dwellings have been identified as yet to be provided at Bishop's Stortford.

11.6.2 Stansted Airport now has permission to expand to 25 mppa and employment is anticipated to reach 16,000 by 2011. The need for additional dwellings as part of this expansion has been considered and it has been concluded that existing numbers of dwellings already allocated in adopted and emerging local plans would be sufficient. The residual 692 dwellings were included in the calculations. These airport-related dwellings are still considered to be required to accommodate airport employment growth to 2011. Appendix I (Housing Strategy Background) contains more detail on the background to the airport-related dwelling allocation.

11.6.3 The 'residual' 692 airport-related dwellings are an integral part of the East Hertfordshire 11,100 housing requirement, for which provision needs to be made by 2011. In order to be in general conformity with Structure Plan Policy 37 (Stansted Airport-related development in Hertfordshire), the District Council has decided to designate Areas of Special Restraint (ASRs) 1 and 2 as land able to accommodate the 'residual' 692 dwellings. In accordance with Policy HSG2 (III) ASRs 1 and 2 will only be released for Stansted Airport related housing development, post 2006, if monitoring shows that the 692 airport related dwellings are unable to be accommodated on other Bishop's Stortford Phases 1 and 2 allocated and windfall sites.

BIS3 Areas of Special Restraint 1 and 2 - Bishop's Stortford Local Housing Need and Stansted Airport Related Housing

To safeguard sufficient housing land at Bishop's Stortford, in the event that monitoring shows that the town's apportionment of 756 dwellings, together with the 692 airport related dwellings, are unable to be accommodated on other Bishop's Stortford Phases 1 and 2 allocated and windfall sites, provision is made for new dwellings on land to the north west of Bishop's Stortford known as ASRs 1 and 2, as defined on the Proposals Map, to cater for:

- (I) Local arising need. This criterion will not come into force until 2006, after which a reasonable judgement can be made as to the likelihood of this being necessary (See also Policy HSG2).
- (II) Airport related dwellings. The maximum number of additional airport-related dwellings permissible under this Plan will be the 692 residual amount reserved as a contingency for this purpose. Any amount over and above 692 dwellings would require a strategic need being identified as part of a review of Regional Planning Guidance/Regional Spatial Strategy, which, in turn, would require a review to this Plan.

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11.6.4 The development of ASRs 1 and 2, identified in Policy BIS3 above, is expected to be subject to a Development Brief, prepared or approved by the District Council. The brief should comprehensively cover all the relevant issues as identified in this Local Plan, including sustainable development principles, affordable housing, and education provision. Development proposals will not be approved until such a brief is in place.

11.6.5 In particular the brief should examine Green Belt land to the east and south-east of ASR 2, as defined on the Proposals Map, which shall be set aside for public recreational purposes, and appropriate arrangements made to ensure that the land remains under such uses in perpetuity, before any development proposals are approved in accordance with Policy BIS3.

11.7 Herts and Essex Hospital Site

11.7.1 As a result of changes to the way in which the local National Health Trusts will deliver their services, the Herts and Essex Hospital Site, Haymeads Lane, has recently come forward for re-development. The health strategy has been to accommodate an extended range of hospital facilities on part of the site, and to release the remainder as surplus to NHS requirements.

11.7.2 The site amounts to approximately 8.5 hectares, within which is located a Grade II Listed former workhouse building.

11.7.3 In 1999 a Development Brief for the hospital site was prepared and published jointly by the District Council and the Essex & Herts Community NHS Trust. The District Council adopted the brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the 1999 Local Plan. It provides guidance to developers on the scale and form of development that may be considered acceptable by the District Council. The new community hospital was completed and opened in 2003.

11.7.4 In November 2003 the District Council resolved to grant planning permission for residential development on the remainder of the site, subject to a Section 106 Agreement. Should this permission not be implemented the development of the site will be considered in

accordance with Policy BIS4, the 1999 Development Brief and the November 2003 development proposals.

BIS4 Herts and Essex Hospital Site

- (I) The Herts and Essex Hospital Site, as defined on the Proposals Map, is reserved for health facilities and residential uses. Conversion and development of the site will be permitted for those uses only.
- (II) The development of the site shall make provision for up to 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4.

11.8 117-121 Hadham Road Site

11.8.1 A former Area of Special Restraint, it is considered that this 1.15 hectare site could accommodate around 13 dwellings.

11.8.2 The District Council will seek an element of affordable housing in any development proposals for the site, in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4. A contribution towards the provision of cycling facilities in the adjacent area, in accordance with the Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan, together with a public footpath running parallel to Hadham Road but on the southern side of the mature trees and other shrubbery which currently abuts Hadham Road, will also be required.

11.8.3 In February 2004 the District Council resolved to grant planning permission for residential development on the site, subject to a Section 106 Agreement. Should this permission not be implemented the development of the site will be considered in accordance with Policy BIS5 and the February 2004 development proposals.

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BIS5 117 - 121 Hadham Road Site

- (I) The site at 117-121 Hadham Road, as defined on the Proposals Map, is reserved for residential development only. Permission for other uses will not be granted.
- (II) The development of the site shall make provision for up to 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4.
- (III) Development proposals will be expected to preserve and reinforce as much of the urban landscape as possible, including the retention of mature trees and hedgerows, and the planting of a significant amount of new trees.
- (IV) A contribution will be expected towards cycling facilities as set out in the East Hertfordshire Area Plan (Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan).

11.9 Hillmead School Site

11.9.1 The County Council received permission from the Secretary of State in February 2000 to relocate Hillmead Primary School from its present site in the far north-east of Bishop's Stortford, to the reserve primary school land to the south of Bishop's Park, in the west of the town (see below). This relocation has now taken place and, there is, therefore, a need to consider the designation of the existing school site.

11.9.2 The site lies to the north-eastern edge of the town, adjacent to the County boundary and Birchanger Wood. It is served from Heath Row between groups of existing dwellings and has a playground and small playing field attached. It lies within the built-up area of the town, wherein there is a presumption in favour of re-development for residential purposes. In October 2002 the District Council granted planning permission for residential development on the site. Should this permission not be fully implemented the development of the site will be considered in accordance with Policy BIS6 and the October 2002 development proposals.

BIS6 Hillmead School Site

- (I) The District Council will give favourable consideration to the re-development of the existing Hillmead School Site, as defined on the Proposals Map, for residential uses.
- (II) The development of the site is expected to make provision for predominantly residential development, including up to 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4. The types and size of dwellings are expected to be mixed.

11.10 Reserve Secondary School Site, Hadham Road

11.10.1 Having undertaken a considerable amount of research on identifying brownfield land for housing development in Bishop's Stortford, the District Council still requires additional housing land to be found. Conscious of the need to minimise the development of greenfield sites, the District Council considers that a large area of land to the south of Hadham Road which had previously been reserved by the County Council for additional Secondary School purposes is now unlikely to be utilised for such a purpose. The District Council has, therefore, decided to redesignate the Hadham Road site for residential uses. This site shall only be released for development if sufficient additional secondary school capacity is provided elsewhere in the town.

11.10.2 Due to the relatively undeveloped nature of the site, the District Council considers it should be released for development in the latter phase of the Plan period, i.e. after 2006, in accordance with Policies HSG2 and BIS2.

11.10.3 In order to integrate fully all the issues pertinent to the development of the site, a development brief will be required to be prepared or approved by the District Council prior to the favourable consideration of a planning application, with development proposals expected to be in conformity with that brief. The brief should, as a minimum, consider issues of sustainable development, site layout, affordable housing, dwelling types and sizes, access, landscaping,

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woodland planting and management, cycle and footpath linkages in and through the site, and open space/play areas.

BIS7 Reserve Secondary School Site, Hadham Road

- (I) The Reserve Secondary School Site, Hadham Road, as defined on the Proposals Map, is reserved for residential development as a Phase II site and will only be released for development if sufficient additional secondary school capacity is provided elsewhere in the town.
- (II) Development of the site is expected to make provision for predominantly mixed residential development, including up to 40% affordable housing, together with significant areas of open space/recreation.

11.11 Areas of Special Restraint

11.11.1 The Local Plan First Review Incorporating Adopted Alterations 1999 set aside six areas of land in the town as Areas of Special Restraint, five of which were located within the A120 bypass and the sixth being the smaller Hadham Road site described in Section 11.8 above. Of the five within the A120 bypass, ASR's 1 and 2 are proposed for possible development in this Plan period (see Policies HSG2 and BIS3 above). The remaining three ASRs, known as ASR's 3, 4, and 5, are subject to Policy BIS8.

11.11.2 The boundaries of the ASR's have been re-appraised as a part of this Plan Review. The objective has been to test their definition against:

- (a) The strategic need to retain them.
- (b) Their landscape setting and relationship with topography, trees and hedgerows, beyond their area into open countryside.
- (c) Their ability (should the need arise) to accommodate new development in a way which complements, and integrates with, the existing town.

11.11.3 The boundaries of the ASR's were examined thoroughly at the Local Plan Inquiry in 1991, following an independent landscape consultant's report and recommendations. In his report, the Inspector at the 1991 Inquiry concluded that,

"the boundaries of ASR's 3 and 4 to the north-east of Hoggate's Wood, follow well defined natural features and I regard them as satisfactory."

11.11.4 The District Council does not, therefore, propose to make alterations to the ASR boundaries.

11.11.5 The following Policy applies to development proposals within ASR's 3, 4 and 5. See also Policy BIS1.

BIS8 Areas of Special Restraint 3, 4 and 5

Within the Bishop's Stortford Areas of Special Restraint 3, 4 and 5, as defined on the Proposals Map, development will not be permitted, other than would be allowed in the Green Belt, until such time as the land so identified is shown to be needed for, and proposed for development, as a result of a review of this Plan.

11.11.6 The future strategic use of this land will be determined as part of a future Review to this plan. This reconsideration would include an assessment of capacity, if a need for dwellings were shown as part of the strategic review of the land.

11.12 Economic Development and Employment

11.12.1 Bishop's Stortford is economically the healthiest town in the District. However, the District Council is mindful of the need to protect the current employment-generating industrial base, to ensure job opportunities persist for the local workforce, and to avoid the dangers of an over-dependency on service sector employment.

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11.12.2 The development of Stansted Airport to a passenger handling capacity of about 25 million passengers per annum will also produce further substantial employment opportunities, though the District Council continues to consider that Bishop's Stortford is not appropriate for the location of airport-related industries. The definition of airport employment is summarised in the Annual Stansted Airport Monitor (see Appendix V (Glossary) for details).

11.12.3 At the Pre-Deposit Consultation stage of this Plan, representations were made by the Bishop's Stortford Chamber of Commerce seeking some allocation of land for new employment generating developments.

11.12.4 The District Council, after careful consideration of the issue and an examination of possible sites, has concluded that no such new allocation is appropriate at present for the following reasons:

- Unemployment levels are consistently low giving rise to concerns over skills and general labour pool shortages.
- Airport employment will continue to grow strongly in the medium term (at least).
- Stimulating labour demand will increase pressure for further new housing and may add to local house price inflation.
- New employment opportunities, given the constraints listed above, would probably increase in-commuting by road, thereby adding to the existing problems of traffic congestion.
- The District Council believes that other policies in the Plan to stimulate town-centre redevelopments and expansion has the potential to create new job opportunities.

11.12.5 Accordingly, the District Council does not make any new employment land allocations in Bishop's Stortford in this Plan, but

will continue to monitor the position and review it as necessary.

11.12.6 The District Council has identified the same five employment areas to be reserved for employment uses as were identified in the previous Local Plan (1999). All these Employment Areas have been identified on the Proposals Map.

BIS9 Employment Areas

In accordance with Policy EDE1 the following sites are defined as Employment Areas on the Proposals Map and will be reserved for industry comprising Classes B1 Business, B2 General Industrial Uses and, where well related to the transport network, B8 Storage and Distribution Uses.

- (I) Raynham Road/Dunmow Road Industrial Estate.
- (II) Haslemere Industrial Estate, Pig Lane.
- (III) Twyford Road/Twyford Road Business Centre.
- (IV) Stansted Road.
- (V) Woodside Industrial Estate, off Dunmow Road.

11.12.7 Where proposals arise for employment development outside the identified Employment Areas, these will be appraised on their individual merits, taking into account sustainability criteria and the impact on neighbouring occupiers and the local area, as set out in Policy EDE3.

11.12.8 It is important that space is available for a variety of firms at different stages of their development, including new businesses. A number of smaller areas and sites exist in Bishop's Stortford, which have not been identified as Employment Areas, but which are suitable for the continued use for diverse employment purposes.

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11.13 Town Centre

11.13.1 The attractive and historic town centre faces a complex set of inter-related physical, traffic, commercial, and environmental issues. Addressing these issues remains a key objective of the District Council.

11.13.2 As part of the Council's Economic Development Strategy, assistance has been given to the setting up of a Town Centre Management Board for Bishop's Stortford. Membership of the board is drawn from representatives of the business community, residents, local interest groups and local authorities. The Town Centre Management Board works to help improve and promote Bishop's Stortford Town Centre. The District Council will continue to support the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Management Board.

11.13.3 The town centre underwent a series of enhancement works several years ago, aimed at improving the environment for shoppers and workers alike. However, traffic in and around the town centre is a growing problem, and new town centre development should ensure it works towards, rather than against, resolving this problem.

11.13.4 Proposals for new developments identified in Policy BIS10 will be assessed by means of a Transport Assessment, as required under the Policy.

11.14 Town Centre Sites for Redevelopment

11.14.1 Three sites in the town centre are identified by the District Council for redevelopment. The sites are to the east and south-east of the town centre, and offer superb opportunities for redevelopment for a variety of uses. The following overarching Policy, together with the three site specific Policies, outline the District Council's expectations for these sites.

BIS10 Town Centre Sites for Redevelopment

(I) Within or adjacent to Bishop's Stortford town centre the following three potential

development or re-development sites are defined on the Proposals Map:

- (a) The Goods Yard / John Dyde Training College Site.
- (b) The Mill Site, Dane Street.
- (c) The Riverside / Adderley Road Site.

(II) In its detailed determination of proposals for the development of these sites, the District Council will pursue the following strategy:

- (a) market demands for new development will be channelled to the town centre as a means of improving the townscape;
- (b) new developments should introduce a variety of new civic, commercial, retail, residential, and leisure buildings to stimulate and encourage all aspects of town centre life;
- (c) the form of new development should improve and complete open areas in the townscape and strengthen and enhance pedestrian and cycling movement in the town. Routes should be established between the town, the river, shopping areas, car parks, and passenger transport stops / interchange;
- (d) new development should respect and take into account both the amenity and the recreational and leisure potential of the river frontage, and should aim to integrate public use of the riverside with the day-to-day activities of the town. Consideration should be given to the provision of a new mooring basin;
- (e) new public spaces should be created to provide comfortable and attractive destinations for pedestrians in the town;

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- (f) A civic quality in the town should be established with buildings of a public and cultural form;
- (g) car parking facilities at the north and south edges of the town centre should be designed, in terms of location, size and accessibility, with the aim of alleviating traffic pressures in the core;
- (h) car parking demand in the town centre should be accommodated, positioned and integrated in a manner that considerably reduces its visual impact while maintaining ease of pedestrian access.

(III) Proposals for new development or redevelopment on these town centre sites will be required to include a comprehensive Transport Assessment, which should take into account the effects of the development proposed, together with other known or anticipated proposals.

(IV) Development or redevelopment on each of the three sites will be required to contribute to facilities for leisure and recreational opportunities on the River Stort.

11.15 The Goods Yard/Former John Dyde Training College Site

11.15.1 The largest of the four sites (6.8 ha), the District Council sees this site as having two key features:

- (i) a large area in which to accommodate a variety of development types; and
- (ii) in conjunction with the Station Road and Dane Street highway improvement, an opportunity to ease traffic congestion in this part of town, by the construction of a new road between the Station Road/Dane Street junction and London Road to the south.

11.15.2 In recognition of the importance of the redevelopment of this site, including the introduction of residential properties, the District Council has agreed for the purposes of Development Control a revised development brief for the site. This brief seeks to provide an updated framework for the development of the site in the light of recent Government guidance.

11.15.3 The District Council now places more emphasis on achieving new dwellings on brownfield land within urban areas. This site is seen as an excellent opportunity to further this aim and a revised estimate of the site's dwelling capacity has been made in Policy BIS2. However, the site should also aim to strengthen the viability and vitality of the town centre as a whole, and a mixed use development scheme is therefore still regarded as appropriate. In October 2004 the District Council resolved to grant planning permission for residential development for 208 units on the John Dyde site.

11.15.4 On part of the site there exists an aggregates depot, serviced by the railway. Whilst freight carried by rail is, in principle, supported by the District Council, it is considered in this instance that redevelopment of the town centre site without such a depot would better serve the principles of sustainable development. Recently substantial progress has been made on bringing forward the site and arrangements have now been made to secure the relocation of the aggregates depot to a new site at Harlow Mill.

11.15.5 The following Policy sets out the District Council's expectations with regard to the development of the site.

BIS11 The Goods Yard/John Dyde Training College Site

The District Council has identified the Goods Yard/John Dyde Training College Site, as defined on the Proposals Map, as having development potential. Subject to the constraints of highway network capacity and railway operational requirements, a comprehensive development comprising a mixture of town centre uses will be

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acceptable, including: residential; leisure; public house/restaurant and/or hotel; retailing including some food retailing; boating and mooring basin; and uses falling within class B1 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended). Development proposals will be expected to meet, in addition to those set out in BIS10, the following requirements:

- (a) any development should safeguard the ability to construct a new road linking the junction of Station Road with Dane Street and London Road, and provide land for the same. If development of the site occurs prior to the construction of this road, such development is expected to make an appropriate contribution to the provision of the new road, it being recognised that the land site of the new road forms an integral part of such contribution. Development of the whole site will require the full implementation of the link road;
- (b) development proposals should include residential development, with the aim of creating a minimum of 700 dwelling units on the site as a whole. The dwellings should predominantly be of a small size (i.e. one and two bedrooms), and include a significant proportion of affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4;
- (c) proposals for development are expected to accommodate adequate rail commuter car parking plus land sufficient for additional town centre parking in accordance with the Vehicle Parking Standards in Appendix II;
- (d) development proposals on either site are expected to include a fully integrated rail-bus passenger interchange, in accordance with the guidance as set out in the most recent Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan, and include good pedestrian/cycle links towards the town centre;

11.15.6 It should be noted that, whilst acknowledging the numerous benefits of the Link Road through the site, the Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan (see section 11.19) states that:

"there is no long-term reduction in congestion to be achieved by constructing this Link and it would therefore only be pursued as part of a redevelopment of the Goods Yard Site".

11.15.7 It is unlikely, therefore, that the Link Road will be constructed without substantial development of the site.

11.16 The Mill Site

11.16.1 The District Council has identified this site as having redevelopment potential in the longer-term, including the potential for a significant amount of new dwellings. Whilst not seeking to encourage the closure or relocation of this local employer, the Council recognises that the site is constrained by size and shape, and problems associated with the heavy vehicle movements which the mill generates.

BIS12 The Mill Site

- (I) The District Council identifies the Mill Site, Dane Street, as defined on the Proposals Map, as having redevelopment potential.
- (II) In the event of the site coming forward for redevelopment the following mix of uses may be appropriate, subject to the provision requirements of Policy BIS10:
 - (a) residential development of around 100 dwellings, including up to 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4, taking into account the amenity potential of the River frontage and the proximity of the town centre, and particularly opportunities to enhance pedestrian and cycle links between this site and the town centre;
 - (b) small scale office development.

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11.17 The Riverside/Adderley Road Site

11.17.1 The site's close proximity to the commercial heart of the town centre and its long river frontage make it an outstanding development opportunity. The present relatively poor environmental quality of the site, based generally on a mix of car parking forms, renders it even more desirable to develop.

11.17.2 The District Council believes that an appropriately designed and built extension to the town centre here would make an outstanding contribution to the future attractiveness and economic security of the town centre, as well as improving the potential for recreational activities on the river.

11.17.3 In July 2003 the District Council resolved to grant outline planning permission for mixed-use development on the site, subject to a Section 106 Agreement. Should this permission not be implemented the development of the site will be considered in accordance with Policy BIS13 and the July 2003 development proposals.

11.17.4 In addition, in these circumstances the development of the site would be expected to be subject to a Development Brief, prepared or agreed by the District Council. This Development Brief will need to re-examine the need to implement the two-way working of traffic along Station Road and Dane Street. Should such works prove necessary they should be undertaken prior to the completion of buildings on the site and be funded by the developer of the site, via a Planning Obligation/S106 Agreement (or as subsequently revised).

BIS13 The Riverside/Adderley Road Site

- (I) The development and redevelopment of the Riverside/Adderley Road area, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be permitted in accordance with Policy BIS10 and the following requirements:
- (a) the formation of a riverside walk, together with footbridge(s) across the River Stort;

- (b) improved pedestrian access to the site from both the town centre (i.e. Potter Street and Jackson Square) and the rail/bus station interchange.
- (II) Any Proposal for the development of the site should incorporate the following mix of uses:
- (a) a significant development of mixed retail units;
 - (b) a modest amount of office floorspace;
 - (c) approximately 150 residential units, possibly including units on the upper floors of other forms of development; including up to 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4;
 - (d) a significant number of public car parking spaces;
 - (e) the creation, by suitable design and layout, of an area adjacent to the river that enables improved opportunities for the recreational use of the river.

11.18 95-97 London Road

11.18.1 In addition to these longstanding, mixed-used allocations, a further site has come forward for potential redevelopment. While previously identified as an Employment Area, this site was examined by the East Hertfordshire Employment Land Study 2004 and was considered suitable for re-development for mixed-use. This recommendation has been accepted on the basis that it makes more efficient use of the land and will enhance the waterside environment.

11.18.2 In September 2004, the District Council granted planning permission for mixed-use development on the site. Should this permission not be fully implemented the development of the site will be considered in accordance with Policy BIS14 and the September 2004 development proposals.

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BIS14 95-97 London Road

The District Council identifies this area of London Road as defined on the Proposals Map, as having redevelopment potential. Proposals for redevelopment should include provision for the following:

- (a) a significant element of B1 Business Use;
- (b) residential development;
- (c) affordable housing, in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4;
- (d) environmental improvements related to enhancing the waterside setting;
- (e) access improvements;
- (f) sustainable transport features.

11.19 Transport

11.19.1 Like many historic towns, Bishop's Stortford suffers from traffic problems. Pedestrians and cyclists are subjected to uncompromising levels of noise, fumes, vibration, and sheer physical presence and speed of traffic. Some progress has been made, in particular with the completion of the traffic-calming measures in South Street and Potter Street, and this has greatly enhanced the environmental conditions of this area of the town centre.

11.19.2 However, traffic still remains a problem and without remedial action it can only get worse. Fortunately, Bishop's Stortford has two opportunities to help resolve some of the problems: the Eastern Hertfordshire Area Plan (including the Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan); and the development of further housing land in Bishop's Stortford.

11.19.3 The Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan (1996), prepared by Hertfordshire County Council in conjunction with the District Council, aims to develop integrated sustainable transport facilities for the town.

This Transportation Plan has now been subsumed into the Eastern Hertfordshire Area Plan, an element of the Local Transport Plan (see Chapter 5 (Transport), Section 5.5). The Eastern Hertfordshire Area Plan also covers the Sawbridgeworth area.

11.19.4 Whether any, some or all of the proposals contained in the above Plans are implemented, many of which are not directly town-planning related, will depend on a number of factors, none more so than the availability of financial support being made available from public and private sources. This includes any funds awarded as part of the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2001/02 - 2005/06.

BIS15 Eastern Hertfordshire Area Plan - Bishop's Stortford

Proposals for development in Bishop's Stortford are expected to take into account and, where reasonable and appropriate, make positive contributions to fulfilling the aims and objectives of the Eastern Hertfordshire Area Plan (including the Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan). Planning Obligations may be sought to ensure that contributions are made from developers towards the implementation of measures and services/facilities outlined in the Plan.

Bishop's Stortford Major Developments

11.19.5 The development of substantial areas of land in Bishop's Stortford lend themselves to an opportunity to resolve substantially some of the town's traffic problems. Whilst on face value more houses will mean more cars in the Bishop's Stortford area, the transportation issues arising as a result of this new development do not have to be confined to the area being developed.

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11.19.6 It is now common practice for major development schemes to make a substantial financial contribution to helping with the transportation problems of both the site itself and the surrounding area. The larger the development scheme, the larger the contribution can be expected. It is too early to state at this stage what transportation measures will be expected from developers at the various major sites throughout Bishop's Stortford. However, with the exception of the Goods Yard/John Dyde Training College Site and the Adderley Road Site, because no major link roads to or around any of the sites are needed (which would normally be provided by the developer of a site), then a substantial sum of money can instead be directed to passenger transport, walking and/or cycling. The two exception sites mentioned require road improvement works, though contributions to passenger transport, walking and cycling facilities would still be expected as part of the development proposals. The Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan will help to determine the most appropriate, yet reasonable, measures to be provided by developers. Chapter 18 (Implementation) and, in particular, Policy IMP1 address the issue of developer contributions in the wider sense.

11.20 Cyclists and Pedestrians

11.20.1 Schemes to assist cyclists and pedestrians are detailed within the Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan. However, considering the importance of trying to encourage the movement of people via these forms of travel, an individual section and policy is included within the Bishop's Stortford Chapter to cover this issue. This reflects the emphasis in PPG13 which indicates that priority should be given to people over ease of traffic movement.

11.20.2 Facilities for cyclists within Bishop's Stortford need to be improved upon throughout the duration of the Plan and beyond. All development proposals in Bishop's Stortford will be expected to comply with Policies TR9 to TR14 of the Transport Chapter.

11.20.3 Due consideration will be given to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists within Bishop's Stortford town centre and support will be given to

the development of cycle routes and other initiatives to improve conditions for cyclists throughout the town, particularly where the proposals are compatible with the aims of the Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan.

11.20.4 In preparing the Bishop's Stortford Transportation Plan it was found that pedestrians fared much better than cyclists in terms of existing provision. However, the Transportation Plan states that, "there is scope for improving the existing network and adding to it in a manner which makes pedestrians feel safer and gives them more space and comfort". Schemes to aid pedestrians are stated in the Transportation Plan.

11.20.5 The enhanced area of South Street and Potter Street should be further improved by a reduction in the volumes of traffic still using it. The District Council will, either in association with a redevelopment of an adjacent town centre site or via a proposal advanced through the Transportation Plan, seek the introduction of measures to limit traffic in South Street and Potter Street.

11.21 Environment and Design

11.21.1 All new developments in the town, including those for highway improvements, will be expected to contribute to the overall enhancement of the surrounding area. Even relatively small detailing on new buildings and other proposals can substantially improve the overall quality of the development.

11.21.2 In this respect, all proposals should ensure that, in particular, the requirements of Chapter 8 (Environment and Design) and Chapter 9 (Built Heritage) are adhered to.

11.22 Shopping

11.22.1 Many of the policy intentions of the preceding sections are aimed, in part, at ensuring a viable and vital Bishop's Stortford town centre. Specific sites for retail development are given in Sections 11.15 - 11.18.

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11.22.2 In order to generally preclude a dilution of the shopping functions in Bishop's Stortford Town Centre, proposals for development or change of use from shop (A1) uses to non-shop (non-A1) uses within the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages as defined on the Proposals Map will be considered against Policies STC2 and STC3.

11.23 The Town Meads

11.23.1 The Meads in Bishop's Stortford cover an area of approximately 9.3 hectares (23 acres) close to the centre of the town, and form the end of an important wedge of undeveloped land extending northwards through Grange Paddocks to the open countryside beyond.

11.23.2 The area is of considerable recreational and amenity importance to the town, but is in need of appropriate management. The District Council will continue its active support of, and participation in, the Bishop's Stortford Town Meads Management Plan in association with the Town Council, the Countryside Management Service and Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust. The overriding aims are to make the area safe, enhance the wildlife value of the area, and improve public access.

11.24 Leisure and Community Facilities

11.24.1 Bishop's Stortford has a range of leisure, recreation and community facilities. All sites of public or private, outdoor sports, recreation and open space facilities or school playing fields to be protected are shown on the Proposals Map. Any proposals for development that would result in the loss of these areas will be refused unless the proposed development complies with Policy LRC1.

11.24.2 In addition to formal leisure and recreation facilities available at centres such as Grange Paddocks and the Rhodes centre, there are other areas of parks and playgrounds available for formal and informal recreation. The River Stort also offers limited water based activities. The District Council is keen to enhance its role in this respect. Proposals for development on the town centre sites identified earlier will be expected to support this objective.

11.24.3 Access from the town to the countryside is possible via a network of footpaths, and the District Council will aim to maintain and enhance these routes as and when opportunities arise.

11.25 Bishop's Stortford Crematorium

11.25.1 The Town Council has identified a need for a crematorium to serve the town and its hinterland. Whilst no site has, so far, been identified, a search has commenced. It is apparent that the most suitable sites are likely to be within the Green Belt or in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt and thus subject to considerable restraint policies. It is expected that the promoter of any plan for a crematorium will produce evidence of particular need for the facility, and the District Council will take cognisance of this.