

12.HERTFORD

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 Hertford, the county town of Hertfordshire, benefits from over 1,000 years of history some predating the Saxon period. Its Castle has been in continuous occupation since the Normans first built their wooden Motte and Bailey on the bank of the River Lea. The confluence of the Lea with the three other Rivers Beane, Mimram and Rib in Hertford's valley setting have marked the town's development pattern. The rivers, including the River Lee Navigation, continue to have an important influence on the town and present both opportunities and constraints in shaping the future development of Hertford.

12.1.2 The town has retained much of its heritage; the substantial Conservation Area contains many fine historic buildings including the Shire Hall, said to be the inspiration for Jane Austen's Assembly Room at Meryton in 'Pride and Prejudice', and the oldest Quaker Meeting House in the world, still in use today.

12.1.3 Although Hertford enjoys many historical links, the town is very much a place of today with a bustling commercial core, employment sites and residential areas for its population, currently around 24,200. The two railway stations and its close proximity to the A1, M25, and M11 provide Hertford with good regional transport links.

12.1.4 Hertford, like many historic market towns, faces a difficult challenge in achieving a successful balance between modern lifestyle requirements and the preservation and enhancement of its unique historic characteristics. Ultimately, hard choices have to be made to ensure that the needs of the town are able to be met in terms of housing, employment and economic viability without jeopardising Hertford's interesting, important, but vulnerable, environment.

12.1.5 This chapter sets out the planning issues specific to Hertford and the Council's policy intentions. These seek to retain the existing character of the town, whilst making provision for appropriate development, to meet the needs of the foreseeable future. The aims and objectives of the Local Plan for Hertford are as follows:

Aims

- A. To maintain and enhance Hertford 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, in a way which is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
- C. To further address vehicular movement and penetration problems and promote non-motorised movement in the town centre.
- D. To prevent the further coalescence of the town with the surrounding settlements of Ware, Hertford Heath, Hertingfordbury, Waterford, and Chapmore End.

Objectives

1. To ensure that a sufficient supply of housing land is identified for Hertford during the plan period, in accordance with the District Housing Provision Strategy, contained in the Housing Chapter.
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.

12.HERTFORD

4. To maintain and encourage employment opportunities for local people, by retaining sufficient employment land and protecting existing Employment Areas for such purposes.
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.
7. Where resources permit, to continue to improve the built environment of Hertford, through street enhancement works and maintenance of its historic character.
8. To facilitate the provision of additional leisure and recreation facilities for the benefit of Hertford's residents and the surrounding population.
9. To protect and enhance the River Lea and encourage its use for nature conservation, recreation, transport, and other appropriate uses.

12.2 Settlement Limits

12.2.1 Hertford is one of four main towns in the District, which is surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt, and where Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1991-2011, Policy 6 provides that development will generally be concentrated. The over-riding planning aim in defining settlement limits is the prevention of urban sprawl and coalescence with nearby settlements, and the protection of the town's special character.

12.2.3 Where Green Belt land is released for new development, it will be on a controlled basis, which may involve phasing and planning obligations being sought (inter alia), to enhance the quality of adjoining countryside to compensate for the loss of green space, in accordance with Policy IMP1.

12.2.4 The following Green Belt alterations, as shown on the Proposals Map, are proposed at Hertford, as part of this Local Plan Review.

(a) Land to be removed from the Green Belt:

University Land West of Mangrove Road
The northern part of this site is within the Hertford settlement limits and excluded from the Green Belt, whilst the remainder of the site is in the Green Belt. It is proposed to exclude the Green Belt part and identify the whole site as a Housing Site Allocation, in accordance with Policy HE1(I) and HE6.

Sacombe Road Area
In accordance with Housing Policy HSG1 and Hertford Policy HE2, it is proposed to exclude a site from the Green Belt, and identify it as Reserve Housing Land. In so doing it is considered logical to also remove from the Green Belt, the recreation area and school, immediately north and south respectively, of the proposed Reserved Housing Land. The Green Belt boundary would, consequently run along Sacombe Road.

(b) Land incorporated into the Green Belt:

Mead Lane
Land at the eastern extremity of Mead Lane had been previously reserved as an "Employment Constraint Site" following the Inspectors report into the last full Local Plan Review Public Local Inquiry. This was to enable further studies to be completed into the highways capacity and site access issues (then pending) to be completed before determining the site's final status. A proposal for a secondary means of vehicular access to the Mead Lane area (via Rowleys Road) has now been abandoned. In addition, the site's development would adversely impact the landscape of the greater Kings Meads area and local wildlife habitats. Given these accessibility, landscape and ecological constraints, the site has been incorporated into the Green Belt.

12.HERTFORD

12.3 Housing

12.3.1 Based on the Housing Provision Strategy, as detailed in the 'Housing' Chapter, Hertford needs to make provision for an additional net 505 dwellings between 1999 and 2011. These dwellings will cater for the housing needs of the town and a proportion of the surrounding hinterland. It is expected that affordable housing will be provided in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4 in Chapter 3 (Housing).

12.3.2 With Hertford being tightly constrained by its Metropolitan Green Belt boundaries, heavy emphasis needs to be placed on making the best use of land within the settlement limits. 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 Hertford. The application of such urban regeneration will result in the achievement of the majority of the required amount of housing for Hertford, leaving a need for the release of only a small amount of valuable Green Belt land. The release of these sites will be in accordance with Policy HSG1 in Chapter 3 (Housing).

12.3.3 Sites identified in the Deposit Version of the Local Plan, completed between April 1999 and March 2003, have been removed from Policy HE1 and are detailed below in Table 12.1:

12.3.4 Deposit Plan allocated sites, granted planning permission but not completed between April 1999 and March 2003, contribute towards the original required provision and are, therefore, incorporated in Policy HE1 (I). The remaining Hertford provision will come from the other allocated sites listed in Policy HE1 (I).

12.3.5 The dwelling capacity of the sites listed in paragraph 12.3.3 and Policy HE1 amounts to 681 units. This is more than sufficient to meet the Hertford apportionment of 505 dwellings. This surplus enables a degree of flexibility on the above sites, particularly if the estimated capacities cannot be achieved at the detailed planning consideration stage.

Table 12.1 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
Cranbourne Close	314	Brownfield	N/A	0	18	18
East Herts Hospital site, Stansted Road	312	Brownfield	HE3	56	18	74
R/O 91/93 Fore Street	311	Brownfield	N/A	9	0	9
Upper Floors, 29-33 Maidenhead Street	315	Brownfield	N/A	8	0	8
8 Ware Road	316	Brownfield	N/A	6	0	6
			Total	79	36	115

12.HERTFORD

HE1 Housing Allocations - Hertford

In accordance with Policy HSG2 (II) the following sites, as defined 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
Former Addis, Site, Ware Road	56	Brownfield	N/A	163	55	218
Riverside Yards (various sites) Mixed-Use site	313 (part)	Brownfield	HE7	40 (Maidenhead Yard 6; Barber's Yard 12; Dolphin Yard 16; Haulage Yard 6)	0	40
Goldings, North Road	310	Greenfield	N/A	44	0	44
			Total	247	55	302

(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
Riverside Yards	313 (part)	Brownfield	HE7	9	0	9
Mead Lane (West of Marshgate Drive)	313 (part)	Brownfield Estimated	HE5	70	30	100
Mangrove Road, University Land	317	Part Greenfield	HE6	38	17	55
Mill Road Depot	524	Brownfield	HE4	60	40	100
			Total	177	87	264

12.HERTFORD

HE2 Reserve Housing Land - Hertford

(I) In accordance with Policy HSG2 (II) the following site is defined on the Proposals Map as Reserve Housing Land for residential development in Phase 3:

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Land off Sacombe Road	48	Greenfield	N/A	42	28	70

Reserve Housing Land

12.3.6 It should also be recognised that an additional contribution to the housing provision for Hertford can be made from the conversion of suitable buildings or the use of vacant space above or within shops and other commercial premises by infill development and windfall sites, in line with Policies HSG7, HSG8 and STC5. Should, however, the number of dwellings provided by these means not reach the estimated figure, it may be necessary to find additional land towards the end of the Plan period. Therefore, as a contingency measure, Policy HE2 identifies Reserve Housing Land that will only be released when and if monitoring reveals a significant shortfall in numbers achieved through allocated and windfall sites and conversions.

Housing - Site Specific Policies

12.3.7 While the numbers allocated to specific sites are given in the policies above, there are certain sites which the District Council considers would benefit from specific policies, in order to guide future development and provide information for interested parties. The sites discussed below involve those areas allocated solely for housing purposes. Other sites involving mixed-use proposals are detailed at section 12.4 below.

12.3.8 *County Hospital Site, North Road* - A document on the future of healthcare for the Hertford area was prepared by the East Hertfordshire National Health Trust and subject to public consultation between August and November 1998. This consultation put forward options for sites currently operated by the Trust in Hertford. One of the sites discussed, as part of the

consultation was the County Hospital, the front block of which is a Grade II listed building. Following the completion of the public consultation, the decision was taken to construct a new hospital in the grounds of the existing facility. It is anticipated that the main front block (Grade II listed), the hospital chapel and Sele Lodge will be converted for residential purposes with further residential development in the grounds (Site 333a) at some time during the Plan period. NB this site is not included in the schedule of Housing Sites above as it featured as a committed site at 31st March 1999 within the Council's November 1999 Residential Land Availability Monitoring Statement.

HE3 County Hospital Site, North Road

- (I) In the event that the Local Health Trust concludes that part of the existing Hertford County Hospital site is surplus to its operational requirements, favourable consideration will be given to the conversion and redevelopment of the site (or parts of the site not required for health care use), as defined on the Proposals Map, for residential purposes.
- (II) Proposals for residential use of the site should provide for the retention by conversion or other adaptation of the main front block (Grade II listed), the hospital chapel and Sele Lodge.

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12. HERTFORD

- (III) The development of the site shall make provision for at least 30% affordable housing.
- (IV) The Council will resist proposals for the redevelopment of the site for retailing purposes.

12.3.9 Former Mill Road Depot - This area (Site 524) is the site of a former Council Depot and is currently vacant. The Council had initially sought a mixed-use development for the site, involving town centre related uses with part of the development given to a leisure related use (of bowling alley and/or cinema). As this aim did not come to fruition, the District Council is now prepared to accept proposals involving the residential use of the site. This would not, however, preclude proposals involving the leisure related uses detailed above. The information pack for the disposal of the site, April 2003, details the key criteria that any development should follow, including a Design Framework, and copies of this document are available from the Property Section of the District Council.

HE4 Former Mill Road Depot

- (I) The Former Mill Road Depot, as defined on the Proposals Map, is to be redeveloped for residential purposes.
- (II) Proposals for the site should make provision for the construction of an at grade pedestrian bridge to link the north-west corner of the site across the river to the car park at Hartham utilising the existing former railway bridge abutments and a 3m wide footpath/cycleway across the front of the site by the river basin to link to the public highway.
- (III) The development of the site shall make provision for up to 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4.

12.3.10 Mead Lane Area - This area is currently identified as an Employment Area. The Council is of the view that part of the area has potential for residential development. The proposed residential

area is west of Marshgate Drive, north of Mead Lane and bounded by the Lee Navigation to the north. Any development proposals should respond positively to, and enhance the setting of, the river.

12.3.11 Such a proposal would need the co-operation of existing landowners and occupiers. Existing users could be relocated to other alternative premises within the remainder of the Mead Lane Employment Area.

12.3.12 Should environmental, ground contamination, traffic and highway access problems prove surmountable, there may be potential for further residential development, east of Marshgate Drive. Such proposals could include a mix of uses, such as employment, housing and leisure uses. It is expected that in the event that the redevelopment of the site proves practicable, the site would be subject to a Development Brief, to be prepared or approved by the District Council.

12.3.13 The District Council has 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 HE5.

HE5 Mead Lane Area West of Marshgate Drive

- (I) Favourable consideration will be given to the redevelopment of the Mead Lane Area, west of Marshgate Drive, as defined on the Proposals Map, for residential purposes.
- (II) The development of the site shall make provision for up to 40% affordable housing, in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4.
- (III) Should development of a mixed use nature be appropriate and feasible on further land in the Mead Lane Area, east of Marshgate Drive, consideration should be given to rail and water as modes of transport for employees, residents and goods entering or leaving the area, along with the provision of

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12.HERTFORD

a ramped footbridge, in place of the footpath level crossing, in recognition of the likely increased use of the crossing point.

12.3.14 University Land - West of Mangrove Road - This site was formerly occupied by the University of Hertfordshire, and used for student accommodation. With the departure of the University from Hertford to Hatfield, this site has become surplus to requirements.

12.3.15 The northern part of the site, amounting to about 0.8 hectares (2 acres) is within the Hertford settlement limits and excluded from the Green Belt. The southern site of approximately 2.2 hectares (5.4 acres) is within the Green Belt.

12.3.16 It is proposed to exclude the Green Belt part of the site from the Green Belt, and identify the whole site as a Housing Allocation in accordance with Policy HSG2 (II), HE1 (II) and site-specific policy HE6, below.

12.3.17 The District Council has 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 HE6.

HE6 University Land West of Mangrove Road

- (I) Favourable consideration may be given to development of the University Land, West of Mangrove Road, as defined on the Proposals Map, for residential purposes, in accordance with Policies HSG2 (II) and HE1 (II).
- (II) The development of the site shall make provision for up to 40% affordable housing, in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4.
- (III) Proposals for the residential use of the site should provide for the retention of the existing trees on the site.

12.4 Mixed-Use Sites

12.4.1 The District Council is committed to the concept of urban regeneration and making the most of opportunities to ensure that optimum use is made of land within Hertford's settlement boundaries. To this end the Riverside Yards site has been identified which in the past has been associated with industrial uses that have been considerably under-utilised.

12.4.2 Riverside Yards - Despite the overall high quality of the town, the Riverside Yards area (incorporating Nicholas Lane, Maidenhead Yard, Adam's Yard and Dolphin Yard) of Hertford's town centre has suffered neglect over time and is in urgent need of attention to bring it up to a standard more fitting with its general environment.

12.4.3 Whilst containing some fine historic buildings and benefiting from fronting the River Lea, the site suffers from vacant buildings and dereliction. In order to address the problems of this area, the District Council published a Development Brief for the site in January 1998. The Development Brief looks to mixed-use development (with housing as a key element) for the area, and provides guidance on the Council's planning objectives of achieving retailing, residential and community uses on the site

HE7 Riverside Yards

The Riverside Yard Area, as defined on the Proposals Map, should be redeveloped for retail, residential and community purposes.

12.5 Economic Development and Employment

12.5.1 Hertford benefits from a variety of industrial uses, including its historic links with brewing and printing. It is important for the economy of Hertford that a wide range of employment opportunities are sought and retained. Ensuring a good mix of manufacturing, commercial, service, retail and educational operations is important to the local economy.

12. HERTFORD

12.5.2 Hertford's employment land is spread throughout the town with much of it located in fairly close proximity to the town centre. For some sites, this has led to problems over time in terms of access, limited opportunities for expansion and loss of amenity for residents in the vicinity. However this is not the case for all employment sites within the town. In particular, the Foxholes employment area, developed in the 1980's, offers good arrangements in keeping with the high profile, prestigious companies that have chosen to locate to this area. Further improvement to access facilities beyond the Foxholes employment area to enable a vehicular link with the Caxton Hill employment area will continue to be supported and sought by the District Council. Both Foxholes and Mead Lane employment sites have been identified as 'prime sites' to provide for short to medium term employment development requirements. These are the only two such countywide listed sites so identified in East Hertfordshire.

12.5.3 The Mead Lane Employment Area is in particular need of improvement and redevelopment. Any proposals involving environmental and access improvements to the area will be subject to public consultation.

12.5.4 In order to maintain a supply of employment land in Hertford, the Foxholes West, Hartham Lane/Station Approach, Mimram Road, Warehams Lane, and Windsor Industrial Estate, Ware Road sites will be primarily reserved for employment purposes.

HE8 Employment Areas

In accordance with Policy EDE1 the following sites are defined as Employment Areas on the Proposals Map and will be primarily reserved for industry, comprising Classes B1 Business and B2 General Industrial uses:

- (I) Caxton Hill/Ware Road.
- (II) Foxholes West.
- (III) Hartham Lane/Station Approach.
- (IV) Mimram Road.

- (V) Warehams Lane.
- (VI) Windsor Industrial Estate, Ware Road.
- (VII) Mead Lane (East of Marshgate Drive).

12.5.5 Beyond those existing, the Plan does not identify any new Employment Areas for Hertford, but seeks to encourage better utilisation of the existing areas. 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.

12.5.6 It is important that space is available for a variety of firms at different stages of their development, including new businesses. Within Hertford there are a number of smaller sites that are not specifically designated for primarily employment purposes, but which would be suitable (and are used) for such purposes e.g. the Taylor Industrial Estate in Ware Road. Such sites can and do provide for a diversity of uses that should, wherever appropriate, be retained.

12.6 Hertford's Green Fingers

12.6.1 Hertford's town boundaries are characterised by its 'Green Fingers', which are defined as areas of open undeveloped land which penetrate towards the centre of the town and are bounded on either side by its radiating urban development. Hertford has four 'Green Fingers' which are a priceless environmental asset to the town and have benefit to both local people and visitors alike. A programme of positive action to improve their amenity, wildlife value and leisure potential will be developed. Full advantage will be taken of aid from the Countryside Management Service and the Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust or any other potentially available resource or agency initiatives to implement improvements within the Green Fingers.

12. HERTFORD

12.7 Town Centre

12.7.1 Hertford, located at the confluence of four rivers and on the old London to Cambridge coach route, has developed over time as a traditional market town. Today the town retains much of the character and appearance associated with these roots. The environmental quality of the town is recognised in the substantial Conservation Area, which not only covers the Town Centre, but also virtually the whole town as it stood in the early 20th century.

12.7.2 The central area of Hertford contains many of the town's business and commercial interests. The area broadly consists of the medieval core, including many buildings of historic significance, and is of high townscape quality. This heritage of interesting buildings constructed along narrow streets, has led in the past to the town suffering many problems associated with other historic market towns including traffic congestion; competition from newer or larger centres; and lack of investment. However, partly because of the introduction of traffic management measures and enhancement of parts of the town centre, coupled with town centre management initiatives and established speciality outlets (such as St Andrew Street's antique shops), the town has managed to adapt successfully, whilst retaining many of its qualities.

12.7.3 The Council considers that a strong shopping presence in Hertford is the key to its continued vitality and viability, although a diversity of uses, services and functions will help to maintain the town centre as a focus for the community and as a source of employment. In order to generally preclude a dilution of the shopping functions in Hertford town centre, proposals for development or changes 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.

12.7.4 As part of the Council's Economic Development Strategy, assistance has been given to the setting up of a Town Centre Management Board for Hertford. 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 Hertford Town Centre. The District Council will continue to support the Hertford Town Centre Management Board.

12.8 Transport

12.8.1 The general planning policy stance of the District Council, in relation to transportation issues, is contained in Chapter 5 (Transport) of this Local Plan. This section relates specifically to conditions in the town of Hertford.

12.8.2 In April 1998, The Hertford Transportation Plan was published. The preparation of this Plan was led by Hertfordshire County Council, in partnership with East Hertfordshire District Council and supported by the Hertford Town Forum. The main aim of the document was to develop a more integrated and sustainable transport system for Hertford. It provides a framework for transportation improvements for the whole of the town, rather than concentrating solely on the town centre.

12.8.3 The Hertford Transportation Plan has now been subsumed within the Lea Valley Area Plan, an element of the Local Transport Plan (see Transport Chapter, Section 5.5). The Lea Valley Area Plan also covers Ware, Stanstead Abbots, and Great Amwell within East Herts, and the towns of Broxbourne, Cheshunt, Hoddesdon, and Waltham Cross in the Broxbourne Borough Council area. The Hertford Transportation Plan operates within the framework of the Lea Valley Area Plan. The vision of the Plan is to:

"Develop an effective and sustainable integrated transport system to serve all users and reduce the significance on motorised traffic and its adverse effects on the environment, in order to enhance the Lea Valley as an attractive place in which to live and work".

Schemes within both documents will be brought forward as funding permits.

12.HERTFORD

HE9 Lea Valley Area Plan - Hertford

In order to develop a more sustainable transport system in Hertford, measures to achieve this aim within the Lea Valley Area Plan (including the Hertfordshire Transportation Plan) will be sought in accordance with Policy IMP1.

12.8.4 National and local government policy has, in recent years, become more focused on the fact that it is neither sustainable nor desirable to continue to cater for unrestrained use of the motor vehicle, especially in town centre locations. In common with many other market towns, Hertford, being constrained by its medieval street pattern, is not equipped to deal with unfettered vehicle access. In 1993 the District Council, in conjunction with the County Council, implemented a revised system of traffic management, which has helped reduce the number and speed of vehicles entering the central area and improved conditions for pedestrians.

12.8.5 In conjunction with the provisions of Chapter 5 (Transport), the Council is committed to continued support of traffic management initiatives.

12.8.6 Although current thinking is to reduce the need to travel by car, there will still be a need to provide for the motor car, and in particular availability of car parking spaces will continue to be an important factor in deciding whether to visit a particular town. Hertford's retail function, often in direct competition with out-of-town centres with associated free parking, relies on adequate provision of short stay parking. The District Council will continue its commitment to reducing the number of through movements and speed of vehicles in the central area. The provision, allocation and location of on-street and off-street car parking within the central area will continue to be reviewed. On-street car parking will be designed in such a way that it is compatible with the environmental objectives for the town centre and managed in a way that will deter both displacement parking and motorists cruising around the town in search of a parking space.

Subject to the provisions of Policy TR8, the use of accessibility contributions in lieu of on site parking provision in Hertford town centre will be considered.

12.8.7 In addition to the town centre of Hertford, it is recognised that there are certain residential areas of the town where conflict exists between the needs and amenity of residents and the dominance of vehicular traffic utilising the area. Particular problems are experienced in Bengoe; the area around Hertford East Station; and Folly Island. It is also recognised that there are other residential areas in Hertford that are adversely affected by traffic problems including displacement parking and rat-running.

12.8.8 For Folly Island, the Council is supportive of the relocation of vehicular access to the Island via Hartham Lane to improve conditions for residents, and to reduce the amount of traffic using the town centre for access purposes. In the event that any of the industrial uses cease on Folly Island, the Council will support the redevelopment of such areas for residential purposes in line with the Development Brief published January 1998 to improve residential amenity.

12.8.9 In conjunction with Strategy S11 of the Hertford Transportation Plan, which aims to "enhance residential areas in partnership with residents by reducing car dominance and creating a safer environment for children, pedestrians and cyclists", the District Council is keen to work with Hertfordshire County Council towards improving the conditions of residents in the above areas.

12.9 Passenger Transport

12.9.1 Within Hertford there are good passenger transport links with two mainline stations at Hertford East and Hertford North, serving London's stations at Liverpool Street and Moorgate/Kings Cross respectively. Hertford Bus Station at Bircherley Green provides a central location for accessing the bus network. These stations provide the nodes for linking passenger transport provision to, from and within Hertford.

12.HERTFORD

12.9.2 Specific to Hertford, there are proposals to further develop the Green Route (a bus priority corridor) within the town that will link in to the wider Green Route Network that is being constructed within the Lea Valley Plan Area. The proposals within the Lea Valley Area Plan that are relevant to Hertford include improved bus priority, bus vehicle improvements (including low-floor buses), addressing car parking problems, at railway stations and additional improvements to Hertford Bus Station involving the provision of a suitable shelter/covered waiting area for passengers. The District Council supports these proposals in principle, without prejudice to consideration of the details of implementation of specific schemes in accordance with Policy HE9 above.

12.10 Cycling

12.10.1 The District Council recognises the importance of cycling for the promotion of health, travel (especially to work, school and for shopping purposes), for leisure and because it can be used as a viable sustainable alternative to the motor vehicle. The Council's commitment to supporting Cycling is detailed in the 'Transport' Chapter.

12.10.2 In addressing Hertford, it is important to note that cyclists are constrained by the existing pattern of traffic routes, particularly resulting from the one-way system and the A414 Gascoyne Way dual carriageway, which bisects the town and provides no satisfactory safe means of crossing for cyclists. The District Council is committed to aiding an improvement of conditions for cyclists throughout the town.

12.10.3 Specific research undertaken as part of the Hertford Transportation Study in 1992 and by Sustrans (a national transport charity promoting cycling, cycle routes and particularly the National Cycle Network) in 1994, has been developed by Hertfordshire County Council into proposals for a cycle route network for Hertford. This has resulted in the inclusion of measures, which undergo continual refinement, within Hertfordshire County Council's Hertford Transportation Plan and Lea Valley Area Plan, both of which have the

endorsement of the District Council. In association with Policies TR9, TR10, TR11, TR12, TR13 and TR14, due consideration will be given to the needs of cyclists using Hertford. Support will be given to the development of cycle routes and other initiatives, intended to improve conditions for cyclists throughout the town. Where relevant and reasonable, developers will be expected to provide contributions to assist in advancing the aims of these initiatives.

12.11 Pedestrian Priority

12.11.1 The District Council is committed to ensuring that the imbalance between motorist and non-motorist groups is addressed with the intention of improving conditions for pedestrian and other non-motorist user groups, including disabled people. As part of any future traffic management or environmental improvement initiatives proposed for the further improvement of Hertford Town Centre, in which the District Council is involved, full consideration will be given to the needs and safety of pedestrians, including disabled people and other non-motorist groups.

12.11.2 Despite the construction of Gascoyne Way to relieve the town centre of traffic, and the more recent central area traffic calming and enhancement measures, there remain problems of congestion and attendant pedestrian health and safety issues in the town centre. These are particularly acute in the narrow section of Fore Street, between Parliament Square and Shire Hall.

12.11.3 The Council has resolved that the conditions in this part of Fore Street are "undesirable and unsustainable" in the longer-term and that measures, possibly in association with other town-centre initiatives, should be introduced to reduce the volumes of traffic using Fore Street provided that access for deliveries to businesses, passenger transport and other essential users can be ensured by appropriate routes.

12.HERTFORD

12.12 Town Centre Environmental Improvements

12.12.1 The District Council has long been committed to improving the physical fabric of Hertford's town centre, and embarked upon a phased programme of environmental enhancement works, following the introduction of traffic management measures in 1993. Since completion of the initial phases, the enhancement works have aided the well being of the town, making the central area a more attractive location in both visual and economic terms. The District Council supports the continued enhancement of the fabric of the town centre. Particular importance is attached to the need to improve Hertford's unsightly footways and central area roads. In pursuing its commitment to environmental enhancement works the District Council will support durable and attractive re-paving and surfacing, through the implementation of the Lea Valley Area Plan and Hertford Transportation Strategy; District Council funding (up to the limit of available resources); and where relevant and reasonable, contributions from developers.

12.13 Leisure and Community Facilities

12.13.1 Hertford currently benefits from a range of leisure, recreation and community facilities. Hartham Park provides a variety of formal and informal leisure opportunities including swimming, tennis, putting, trim-trail, and cycling. There are a number of other parks and playgrounds throughout the town, which are also available for sport and recreation, including Hertford Town Football Club, which has its own grounds. There are also river-based activities, including fishing, canoeing, and leisure boat trips. The District Council is, in principle, supportive of development proposals that increase public access to river frontages or reserve space for future access. Access from the town to the surrounding countryside is achievable via many public footpaths. Castle Hall is much used for numerous activities, some of which include stage productions, antique fairs, auctions, club meetings, and the showing of films.

12.13.2 It is recognised that the provision of further facilities and on-going upgrading of existing facilities could improve the choice for residents. Recent improvements at the Hartham Swimming complex, including the provision of improved indoor fitness suite facilities, have proved popular. However, the town is lacking either a permanent cinema or bowling alley. The District Council supports the principle of the provision of additional leisure facilities for the town.

12.13.3 Within Hertford 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.

12.14 Balls Park

12.14.1 Balls Park, as defined on the Proposals Map, is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt on the edge of Hertford and centred on a Grade I listed mansion and registered garden. The site is approximately 25.7 hectares in extent. There are a number of modern teaching blocks and car parks in close proximity to the historic buildings and gardens associated with its former occupation by the University of Hertfordshire. Located in one of Hertford's 'Green Fingers' the site is connected with a significant range of landscape and ecological features (including wildlife site designation), sports uses and opportunities for informal public access. It is also identified as a Major Developed Site (see Policy GBC4).

12.14.2 With the relocation of the University and the consequent disposal of this surplus site, the District Council has prepared a document to provide a Planning Framework for the future uses of this valuable resource (see paragraph 8.3.3 concerning the status of development briefs). This document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the 1999 Local Plan by the Council in November 2000.

12.HERTFORD

12.14.3 The objectives of the Framework are to:

- i. resisting development and conversion of the mansion for residential use, but allowing for limited residential development elsewhere on site;
- ii. repair and restore the listed buildings and the registered park and gardens and their settings;
- iii. preserve and enhance the formal and informal leisure potential of the site; and
- iv. improve the highway and access requirements of the site.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- i. resisting redevelopment and conversion for residential use;
- ii. preparing a schedule of repairs and restoration programme and agreeing a management plan for future maintenance;
- iii. facilitating the continued sports uses and identifying areas of public access and rights of way; and
- iv. creating pedestrian and cycle links to Hertford, and improving the vehicular access from the A414, rather than from Mangrove Road.

HE10 Balls Park

- (I) The redevelopment of Balls Park is expected to preserve and enhance the historic, ecological and leisure significance of the location, allowing for public access to a substantial part of the open space. The conversion of the Grade I mansion for residential use will not be permitted.
- (II) Development proposals for the Balls Park site are subject to a Planning Framework prepared by the District Council. The objectives of the Framework are to be achieved via an appropriate legal agreement and/or planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (or as subsequently revised), prior to any development being granted planning permission.